

# Gods, Gurus, and the Good News

September 28, 2025

## Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses in America

*The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly.*  
Proverbs 15:2

The "Mathematical Formula" of Cults  
(from *The Concise Guide to Today's Religions and Spirituality*)

**Addition:** Adding to Scripture by, additional works, revelation from God, or only that the Bible can only be understood by their teaching.

**Subtraction:** They subtract from the humanity of Christ or deny Christ's deity.

**Multiplication:** They multiply the requirements for salvation. They teach Christ's atoning work on the cross was not enough.

**Division:** By teaching one cannot be loyal to God without being loyal to their group or leader. They teach there is no salvation outside of their group. They forbid outside contact.

### Mormon Hierarchy of Authority

1. Living prophet's revelation (currently, Russell M. Nelson)
2. *The Book of Mormon*.
3. *The Doctrine and Covenants*
4. *The Pearl of Great Price*
5. *Bible* (only true as far as translated correctly)

### Mormon's Basic Beliefs

"Like Nailing Jello to the Wall"

1. The Bible is the Word of God to the extent that it has been translated correctly, which they believe it has not been and is corrupted.
2. The earth is only one of the planets that gods rule over.
3. These gods were human beings at one time, but have progressed to be gods.
4. Mormonism is "polytheistic" because they believe we are all gods, some of which will "progress" to where they will be gods like Jesus is now.
5. Humans are no different than God because God was once a human, as we are.
6. The Trinity is three separate Gods, the Father who begot Jesus and the H.S.
7. God and his wives (or Holy Mother) have spirit babies in heaven who are sent to earth to eventually progress to gods like Jesus and God.
8. They believe that salvation/exaltation requires a number of good works to earn the ability to progress.

Source: *The Kingdom of the Cults* by Walter Martin

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### Brigham Young's Leadership

Brigham Young

Born 1801- Died 1877. Lead the Mormons 1844 - 1877

- 1844 Young takes over as the Mormon leader.
- 1846 Young and the Mormons go to the valley of the Great Salt Lake.
- 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre ordered by Young to kill 120 non-Mormon immigrants.
- 1877 Young dies. Each Mormon President thereafter takes over the same leadership position as Smith and Young.

### Brigham Young's Background

- Young himself admitted he had very little formal schooling (about 11 days total).
- Young lived in the “Burned-Over District” of New York, an area filled with revivalism, folk magic, and treasure-seeking
- Grew up in poverty in Vermont and later New York; worked as a carpenter, painter, glazier, and handyman.
- Even before his Mormonism, acquaintances described Young as ambitious, stubborn, and prone to dominate others.
- 1856–57 saw fiery sermons in which he invoked “blood atonement” (the teaching that certain sins could only be forgiven by the shedding of the sinner’s own blood).
- Expanded Joseph Smith’s teaching of plural marriage, taking more than 50 wives himself.
- **Responsible directly or indirectly for the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 120 people in a wagon train.** He was “the mastermind behind a culture of violence” that allowed the massacre to occur,
- Considered by critics and former Mormons to be autocratic, violent, allowed no dissent, and religious despot who combined civil, military, and religious control.

### Brigham Young Criticism

- Declared that Black people of African descent were under a divine curse, barring them from the priesthood and LDS temple rites.
- He endorsed slavery in Utah Territory and warned against interracial marriage, saying interracial couples should be executed.
- Detractors accused Young of accumulating vast personal wealth through his position, while promoting communal sacrifice among his followers.
- Young became the first governor of the Utah Territory (1851-1858), while LDS Church president.
- Congress passed the **Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act (1862)** banning plural marriage in territories. Young refused to comply

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- **The Utah War (1857–1858)** Federal officials claimed Utah was in open rebellion, with Young exercising unchecked authority, James Buchanan sent 2,500 U.S. troops to install a new governor.

## Do Mormons Believe There Are Other Worlds and Jesuses Atoning There Too?

Joseph Smith and later LDS leaders taught that **God the Father created not only this earth but innumerable worlds.**

- *Moses 1:33* (Pearl of Great Price): “And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.”
- *Moses 1:35*: “But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. *For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man...*”

**Joseph Fielding Smith (10th LDS President)**: taught that Jesus Christ’s atonement here on earth covers all worlds created by God, not just ours. He said: *“The Savior is not only the Redeemer of this world, but of all the worlds which the Father has created.”* (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 74).

**Brigham Young** speculated in an 1855 sermon, that each world may have its own savior figure: “Every world has had an Adam, and an Eve, and every earth has had its redeemer...” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 14, p. 71).

Modern LDS Teaching affirms the creation of other worlds: (source:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2013/08/worlds-without-number?lang=eng&>

## Misleading Mormon Vocabulary

**“We believe in God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.”**

**Mormons actual belief:** Three *separate beings*, not one essence. Jesus and the Holy Spirit have been procreated by the Father and the Heavenly Mother.

**Source:** *LDS Bible Dictionary*, “Godhead”: “The word Trinity is not found in the scriptures, and is a word not found in the Latter-day Saint doctrine. The Godhead consists of God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. We believe them to be three separate and distinct beings, physically distinct, but perfectly united in purpose and doctrine.” (*LDS Bible Dictionary Godhead*)

**Matthew 28:19** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”*

**1 Peter 1:2** *“...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood.”*

Excellent YouTube Videos on the theological differences: ***Protestant and Mormon Discuss the Trinity (Jacob Hansen and Gavin Orthund)***

[https://youtu.be/7Y9\\_unCe\\_M?si=8DNTRbkHvVAfEBj0](https://youtu.be/7Y9_unCe_M?si=8DNTRbkHvVAfEBj0) a

***ntense Debate with a Mormon (James White - Alpha Omega Ministries)(2 hrs. 28 min.)***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XbJ3954HW8&t=303s>

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## “We believe that men are saved by grace.”

Seems like they are quoting Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Mormons actual belief:** That grace makes up the difference “after all we can do.”

**Source:** *Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 25:23 “For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.” **Also:** *LDS Bible Dictionary*, “Grace”:

“This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts.”

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

## “We believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, our Savior.”

**Mormons actual belief:** Jesus is the literal spirit-brother of Lucifer. They believe Jesus to be a created being who is no different in substance than any human. Christ’s difference is that he has progressed to a point of exaltation.

**Source:** *Gospel Principles* (2011 ed.), Ch. 2: “Every person who was ever born on earth was our spirit brother or sister in heaven. The firstborn spirit son of our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ... Lucifer, who also was a spirit son of God, rebelled against Him.”

**Colossians 1:16-17:** “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

## “We believe the Bible to be the word of God.”

**Mormons actual belief:** The Bible is inspired only “as far as it is translated correctly.” They believe the Bible we have is corrupted. Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price are superior and more trustworthy.

**Source:** *Articles of Faith* 8: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.”

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*

**Psalm 19:7-8** “*The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*”

## “We believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

**Mormons actual belief:** The “gospel” includes laws, ordinances, baptism, temple rituals, and covenants necessary for exaltation. Works oriented belief!

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**Source:** *Gospel Principles*, Ch. 3: “The gospel of Jesus Christ is God’s plan for our happiness and salvation. The gospel includes all the doctrines, principles, laws, ordinances, and covenants necessary to be exalted in the celestial kingdom.”

**Romans 4:4-5** “*Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.*” (cf. *Ephesians 2:8&9 and the whole New Testament*)

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4** “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,”

## “We believe in eternal life.”

**Mormon actual belief:** “Eternal life” is obtained by “exaltation” to godhood in the Celestial Kingdom where they procreate spirit children with a spouse.

**Source:** *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:19-20: “...then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore, shall they be from everlasting to everlasting... then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them.”

**Brigham Young (Journal of Discourses 11:122):** “The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself... when they [husband and wife] receive their crowns, their dominions, they then will be prepared to frame earths like unto ours, and to people them in the same manner as we have been brought forth by our parents.”

**Matthew 22:30** “*For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*”

**Deuteronomy 6:4** “*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!*”

**Isaiah 43:10** “*...Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.*”

## “We believe in Heaven.”

(but no Hell as we know it)

**John 8:24** “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

**Matthew 13:41-42** “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

**Celestial Kingdom** “glory of the sun”(highest) - Who gets to go here?

- Faithful Latter-day Saints who accept the “fullness of the gospel.”
- Those who receive temple ordinances (including eternal marriage).
- Children who die before the age of accountability (age 8).

**Terrestrial Kingdom** ”glory of the moon” - Who gets to go here?

- “Honorable” people on earth who never accepted the LDS gospel.
- Those who rejected it here but later accepted it in the spirit world.
- Those who were not valiant in their testimony of Jesus.

**Telestial Kingdom** “glory of the stars” - Who gets to go here?

- The ungodly, unrepentant sinners who rejected Christ and the spirit world.

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- Murderers, sorcerers, liars, adulterers, etc.
- They do *not* go to “outer darkness,” but to this lowest kingdom.

## Outer Darkness (Temporary and Permanent Spirit Prison)

- Where those who have rejected Christ and particularly hated Christ.
- Where Satan and the angels who followed him go.
- The “weeping and gnashing of teeth” from Matthew 13:42?

## Where Do Christians Go?

They go to the Terrestrial level (middle level). However, some Mormons believe if these repent and accept the Mormon doctrine, they might go to the Celestial level.

Doctrine & Covenants 76:71–74 describes the Terrestrial as inhabited by “honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men,” and those who “receive not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.”

“Members of the true Church are the only ones who have eternal life. Those of the world who are honorable men will go to the terrestrial kingdom.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 670).

**Doctrine and Covenants 76:71–74** (on the Terrestrial Kingdom): *“These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men... These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness.”* [referring to Christians/

## Where Do Non-Christians, Those Who Reject Mormonism, or Reject Christ Go?

They go to a “temporary spirit prison” in order to hear the Gospel (Mormon Gospel) and receive baptism for the dead. If they repent, then they will go to the Terrestrial level.

**Gospel Principles (2011, Ch. 41, “The Postmortal Spirit World”)** Official LDS teaching manual: *“Those in spirit prison can be freed through repentance and by accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ. ... They can then benefit from the saving ordinances done for them in temples.”*

**Joseph Fielding Smith (10th LDS President), Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 2, p. 135** *“The great majority of those who are in spirit prison will go to the terrestrial kingdom. ... Those who reject the gospel even when it is preached to them in the spirit world will inherit the telestial kingdom.”*

## Witnessing to Mormons

Use the principles in *Tactics* and *Street Smarts* by Greg Koukl.

Things to keep in mind:

- They will immediately reject any notion they are not Christians.
- When they accuse you of believing they are wrong, point out that they also believe we are wrong. Say to them, “I am not offended by that.”

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- Assure the Mormon you are not trying to offend them.
- Explain that there are many things you agree with them about (same sex marriage, abortion, etc.)
- Ask “Would you want to know if you were worshipping the wrong God?”
- When they act defensive: Use a Brett Kunkle illustration. “Imagine I’m holding two small, round white pills. Are they similar? Sure. But what if one is aspirin and the other is arsenic? The similarities become irrelevant because it’s the difference that is critical!” (source: Stand to Reason’s *Ambassador’s Guide to Mormonism* by Brett Kunkle)