

The Mormons

Who They Are, What They Believe



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Have you ever talked with a Mormon? They sound Christian because they say all the right Christian words and phrases: they confess Jesus Christ as their Savior—they even include His Name in their official church name: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They believe in heaven and hell, and they believe you can't get to heaven without Jesus' atonement. But is using Christian terms enough to make any of us Christians? Does it mean we have saving faith?

This **Men's NetWork** Bible study will acquaint you with the Mormons—who they are, what they believe, and the meaning behind the Christian phrases they use. It will also equip you to more clearly share the truth of Jesus Christ the next time they knock on your door.

For the Study Leader:

Group Discussion:

- Please feel free to move at your own pace through this study and take as much time as you need for each lesson.
- You are welcome to dig in as deep as you want for your personal study, or you might use just the Bible passages and questions included in the discussion guide.
- If you have a limited time for this session, have the guys take a few minutes to look through the session questions and choose as a group which ones they would most like to discuss.
- We have designed our questions to be open-ended, thus allowing the men in your group to share their experiences and unique perspectives.

How to find the Discussion Guide on the DVD: When you load the DVD into your computer (*not* your DVD player), you can *right click* the menu. If you push "Open" instead of "Play," you will be able to pull up a list of files. These files include both the discussion guide and our file with the Digging Deeper boxes described.

Using our Digging Deeper Boxes

This is an interactive study guide. We designed it to be flexible, so it will fit both group and personal use. It includes boxes (like the highlighted one below), which provide extra information and links to Internet sites, where you can browse and explore a subject more thoroughly.

We encourage you to look through the Digging Deeper boxes to see which ones your group might want to discuss. On the DVD we have included a Portable Document File (PDF), which has the contents of each Digging Deeper box ready to be printed out. This PDF is also on the **Men's NetWork** website. You might want to download a copy of this PDF and send it by e-mail to each of the members of your study. While you may use the paper discussion guide during your group study, you may want to assign homework for those in the study to check out the various Internet resource sites on their own time. It makes the study much more interactive.

Digging Deeper Link

Please don't try to look for this [fake link](#). It's here for example only.

Our Digging Deeper boxes link you to websites that provide more information of interest.

Having difficulty making the web links work?

At the end of this study a full list of web addresses is given. If you don't want to have to type them in, you can download the electronic copy of the discussion guide and then click on the blue hyperlink. Here is a step-by-step guide to find the electronic copy with the working links:

- 1) Log on to www.lhmmen.com/studies.asp.
- 2) Choose this study from the page by clicking the underlined title (located to the right of the study's graphic).
- 3) On the bottom of this page, click "download videos & materials."
- 4) Enter your e-mail address and password (and register, if necessary).
- 5) Find this study guide, then click the "download now" button.
- 6) In the File Download box, click the "save" button.
- 7) Save it to your desktop.
- 8) Click on the file to open it.

Now you can click the hyperlinks (underlined words or phrases) that interest you and start digging.

To This Discussion Guide User: Because of the changing nature of the Internet, occasionally a web link included in a **Men's NetWork** Bible study may change or be deleted altogether by the agency or individual posting it. When you notice an Internet link has been modified or has become inoperable, please report this to the **Men's NetWork**, so we can adjust future editions of this discussion guide. Thank you.

Please send changes to mensnetwork@lhm.org.

Opening Prayer: Lord God, Your Word clearly reveals our sin and your salvation through Jesus Christ. Yet human history is filled with religious leaders who have distorted Your revelation to their own ends. As we begin this study of Mormonism, guide us into Your truth that we may deeply treasure the life You give us in Jesus Christ. As we learn, equip us to more confidently share Your salvation with souls who are lost in a maze of error. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 1

The Second Great Awakening

This set the religious stage for the birth of Mormonism. This religious movement was characterized by large revivals and the preference for emotional experience over Creeds and doctrine. Living without the framework of the universal Creeds (Apostles, Nicene and Athanasian) that so clearly expose theological errors, the Second Great Awakening left many Christians in America like sheep without a shepherd—easy pickings for a charismatic leader.

- What similarity do you see today in people that are exploring different religions to find one that “feels right” to them?
- What is the danger of using your heart instead of your head to discern religious truth?
- How important do you find it to experience an emotional reaction in worship?
- Why do we need God’s objective truth to cling to when we go through difficult struggles in our lives?

Mormon missionaries ask their prospects to read *The Book of Mormon* then search for a “burning in the bosom” when they pray about it. This is the same emotional reaction two disciples experienced when they shared their walk with a Stranger the day Jesus rose from the dead. After Jesus disappeared into thin air at the supper table, they shared those experiences.

Read Luke 24:30-32.

³⁰ When (Jesus) was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. And He vanished from their sight.

³² They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?”

- How did the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion, death and resurrection intensify the emotional response of these two disciples?

Human emotions can be fickle and flighty. In the upper room Peter confidently promised to lay down his life at Jesus' side; a few hours later he stood before a servant girl vehemently denying any knowledge of Jesus. When we go through difficult times in life, God uses solid, historical facts to anchor our faith outside of our emotions. Simple, often uneducated, eyewitnesses testify to a blood-stained cross, an empty tomb, nail-marked hands, and a wound in His side from the spear. Each of these is given as evidence to assure us Jesus has turned away God's wrath. He has overcome death, and He has opened for us the door to heaven and eternal life in God's glorious presence.

- List some situations in life that can severely shake and challenge a person's faith.
- Describe a situation in your life God used to make His presence alive to you.

The Sacred Grove

Mormons rest their faith squarely on the teachings of Joseph Smith, Jr. Their central moment is Smith's account of his visit from the Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ in the Sacred Grove. This event established Smith's authority as their prophet, the one person God chose to restore His Christian church, which had vanished from the earth. To Mormons it is as significant as God's appearance to Moses in the burning bush.

In 1998, church president Gordon B. Hinckley declared,

“Our entire case as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests on the validity of this glorious First Vision. It was the parting of the curtain to open this, the dispensation of the fullness of times. Nothing on which we base our doctrine, nothing we teach, nothing we live by is of greater importance than this initial declaration. I submit that if Joseph Smith talked with God the Father and His Beloved Son, then all else of which he spoke is true. This is the hinge on which turns the gate that leads to the path of salvation and eternal life.”

Read Exodus 3:1-7, 10.

- ¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
- ² And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.
- ³ And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”
- ⁴ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”
- ⁵ Then He said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

⁶ And He said, “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings

¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

- Describe the similarities Mormons see between this account and Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove.

Preconditioned by the Great Awakening, Mormons blindly believed Smith’s account. For his part Moses knew the Israelites living as slaves in Egypt would need firm evidence before they would be convinced.

Read Exodus 4:1-9.

¹ Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you.’”

² The Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.”

³ And He said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it.

⁴ But the Lord said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—

⁵ “that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

⁶ Again, the Lord said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow.

⁷ Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh.

⁸ “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign.

⁹ If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

- Why was it important for God to give Moses miraculous signs to authenticate him as a true prophet?
- What is the significance that Joseph Smith never gave such authenticating signs—instead requiring blind faith that he had been visited by God and by angels?

In the absence of miracles, a prophet proved his authentic call by either accurately predicting future events, or by being consistent with the teachings of other prophets in the Old Testament or apostles in the New. Joseph Smith did neither.

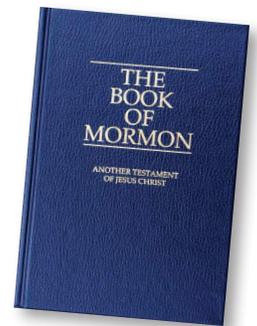
Jesus never wanted His apostles to cling to Him in blind faith. He showed them countless great and powerful miracles throughout His ministry, and presented “Himself alive to them after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3) Our faith is not based on blind trust; instead, it’s based on the eyewitness account of these men and women, who ate, drank, walked and talked with Jesus.

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, we praise You for becoming human and stepping into human history. We thank You for revealing Your deity to Your disciples through many convincing miracles, none greater than Your sacrifice on the cross to remove the punishment for our sins. We thank the Heavenly Father for Your glorious resurrection that guarantees our eternal life with You in glory. Ground our faith firmly through these eyewitness accounts so that our trust in You may never be shaken, and that we may boldly share the reason for the hope You have given us. Amen.

Speaking to Mormons about *The Book of Mormon*

This book was pivotal in the founding of the Mormon Church. It teaches the American Indians were actually descendents of the lost tribes of Israel, and that Jesus came and preached to them here after His resurrection.

Being the first of the Mormon scriptures Joseph Smith wrote, it is the most like the Bible. In later sessions we will compare it to other Mormon scriptures based on later revelations Joseph Smith claimed to receive. We’ll note how strikingly different their theology is than the more conservative theology of *The Book of Mormon*.



In 1982 Mormons added a subtitle—*Another Testament of Jesus Christ* to *The Book of Mormon*. They claim this book is the third testament after the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, maintaining it is the world’s most perfect book. Today you’ll often find it in your hotel room alongside the Gideon Bible. And if Mormon missionaries come to your door as they did to Michael and Lynn Wilder, they will be carrying *The Book of Mormon*.

Here are some questions you can ask them about this book:

- The Old Testament of the Bible was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, and the New Testament was written in Greek. According to Joseph Smith the golden tablets were written in “reformed Egyptian.” Why are there plenty of samples of ancient Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek writing, but not a single sample of reformed Egyptian in Egypt or any other part of the world?
- *The Book of Mormon* claims the American Indians were descendants of the Lamanites, part of the lost tribes of Israel. Why didn’t DNA tests of the American Indians show any genetic links between them and the Jewish people?
- Archaeologists have found artifacts, maps, writings and other evidence of biblical people and events in the lands of Israel, Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. Why is there no evidence of the massive battles, the weapons, the animals, and the armor recorded in *The Book of Mormon*?

Digging Deeper Links - Session 1

[**The Book of Mormon according to the Latter-day Saints**](#) This Latter-day Saints article discusses the origins and purpose of *The Book of Mormon*. It is included here to give you an acquaintance with this Mormon scripture.

[**Introduction to The Book of Mormon**](#) The fourth-last paragraph includes Joseph Smith's claim that *The Book of Mormon* is the world's most perfect book.

[**Jesus Preaches in the Americas**](#) This link takes you to 3 Nephi 8-30 in *The Book of Mormon* which relates Jesus' supposed visit to the Americas.

[**Moroni's Visitation**](#) This article lists Joseph Smith's description of the visits of the angel Moroni and unanswered questions critics have raised about it.

[**A Seer Stone and a Hat: Translating The Book of Mormon**](#) This article sites early testimony for how Joseph Smith translated *The Book of Mormon* from the golden plates. Leaders of the LDS seem to be shrinking back from what Joseph Smith and his first scribes stated.

[**Seer Stones - The Occult in Joseph Smith's Day**](#) This article points out that seer stones and hats were commonly used in Joseph Smith's time.

[**Where Are the Ten Lost Tribes?**](#) This PBS article describes the background for the lost tribes of Israelites and traces worldwide claims for their location, including the identification of American Indians with the lost tribes, centuries before Joseph Smith.

[**Setting the Record Straight about Native Peoples: Lost Tribes of Israel**](#) This article answers linguistic claims that Native American languages match Egyptian and other hieroglyphics.

[**Native Americans and Jews: The Lost Tribes Episode**](#) This article from a Jewish-American perspective shows the broad appeal of the claim that Native Americans descended from the lost tribes of Israel. It helps explain why people responded to Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon*.

[**The DNA Challenge to The Book of Mormon**](#) This article discusses DNA testing that indicates Native Americans came from Asia and not from the lost tribes of Israel.

[**What about Reformed Egyptian?**](#) After "translating" *The Book of Mormon*, Joseph Smith looked to a wealthy farmer named Martin Harris to fund its publication. Martin Harris asked Smith to jot down some of the reformed Egyptian script; he then secretly took it to a Columbia University professor for his opinion. This website includes the entire text of the 1834 book, *Mormonism Unveiled*. This link takes you to Chapter XVIII, which includes the letter from that professor—Dr. Charles Anthon, Egyptologist and professor at Columbia University.

Opening Prayer: Holy Father, Your Son Jesus commanded us to turn the other cheek, knowing the severe persecution and tribulation which the church would face in this unbelieving world. As we study Joseph Smith's reaction to pressures and persecution, give us discernment along with Your love and concern to move us to joyfully share the victorious love of Christ with the Mormons You bring to us. We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 2

Church of Persecution

Latter-day Saints (LDS) missionaries are well-acquainted with persecution. They have been repeatedly taught that persecution is the proof their Mormon faith is genuine and true. So whenever they are attacked or ridiculed their confidence and faith only grow stronger.

Wherever Joseph Smith and his followers went—New York, Ohio, Missouri, and later, Illinois—the Mormon Church continued to grow. Similarly, so did the distrust and opposition from its non-Mormon neighbors. It is interesting to note the Mormon response to this opposition:

- While in the city of Far West, Missouri, a number of Latter-day Saints dissented, including Oliver Cowdery (Joseph Smith's chief scribe while translating the golden plates). Fearing these influential people would turn away other Mormons, the LDS leadership organized an armed group bound by a secret oath called the Danites. Cowdery and other dissenters were warned to “depart or a more fatal calamity shall befall you.”
- On July 4, 1838, Sidney Rigdon preached a sermon calling for battle against both dissenters and non-Mormon opponents. “And that mob that comes on us to disturb us, it shall be between us and them a war of extermination; for we will follow them until the last drop of their blood is spilled; or else they will have to exterminate us, for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses and their own families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed.” This escalated to the Missouri Mormon War of 1838.
- On October 25, 1838, a group of Mormon militia clashed with a unit of the Missouri State Guard in the northern part of Ray County, Missouri. On October 27, Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs issued Missouri Executive Order 44 (known to the Mormons as the “Extermination Order”).
- Boggs claimed the Mormons were guilty of “open and avowed defiance of the laws,” having “made war upon the people of this State,” Boggs continued, “the Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace—their outrages are beyond all description.” This resulted in the expulsion of Mormons from the state.
- Fleeing northeast to Illinois in 1839, Joseph Smith established the town of Nauvoo and organized a large militia group called the Nauvoo Legion. At its peak, the Nauvoo Legion was nearly a third the size of the standing army of the U.S.

Smith's answer to opposition and persecution was taking up arms to fight. Now compare the way Jesus taught His followers to deal with opposition and persecution:

Read Matthew 5:38-48.

³⁸ (Jesus said) "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

⁴³ You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of Your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as Your Heavenly Father is perfect."

- How did Smith's actions escalate hostilities with unbelieving neighbors?
- How does a peaceful reaction to opposition often defuse tensions?
- Is Jesus commanding us to never defend ourselves, our families, or our country?
- Explain how our threats and retaliation fail to reflect Jesus' example and His desire to save all people.

Joseph Smith's Death

Section 135 of the Mormon scripture *Doctrine and Covenants* describes Joseph Smith's death in these words:

"When Joseph went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said, 'I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I SHALL DIE INNOCENT, AND IT SHALL YET BE SAID OF ME—HE WAS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD.'" (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 135, verse 4)

This Mormon scripture carries a line from Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus' suffering and death,

“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away” (Isaiah 53:7-8a).

But Smith's death and Jesus' death could hardly have been any different. Smith's attitude was more like Peter who drew a sword to prevent Jesus' arrest. Unlike Smith, the Lord Jesus stopped the threatened escalation in violence,

“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword’” (Matthew 26:52).

In His arrest, trial and crucifixion, Jesus gave no resistance, perfectly demonstrating how to turn the other cheek and pray for those who seek our life.

Smith was completely different. He surrendered himself to arrest because he was confident his Nauvoo Legion would come to his rescue. In jail he armed himself with a pistol when offered the opportunity. (See “Final Moments at Carthage Jail and the Death of Joseph Smith” in the Digging Deeper Link below). When the mob stormed the jail before the Legion could arrive he fired down the staircase at his attackers. Now as we return to Jesus' words to Peter, notice the stunning parallel with Joseph Smith's Nauvoo Legion:

“Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” (Matthew 26:53-54).

- While Smith's self-defense is certainly understandable, why do you think Mormon teachers and tour guides leave out the part about Smith's resistance and his gunfight?
- How did Jesus' meekness in His arrest and suffering show God's universal love and salvation, even for those who were killing Him?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, we marvel at the depth of Your love and concern for us, even for those who nailed You to the cross. Forgive us our sins and empower us to love those who oppose and threaten us. Amen.

More about the Mormons: Are Latter-day Saints still Polygamists?

In the beginning, Joseph Smith practiced plural marriage secretly. Even though he claimed to have received a revelation from God calling for polygamy (more properly called “polygyny,” the marriage of more than one woman to the same man), he only revealed it to a small group of Mormon leaders at first, knowing most Mormons would be shocked.

When he finally began publicly preaching it among the Latter-day Saints, he implemented Freemason rituals to keep the practice of polygamy secret from non-Mormons, since it was illegal in most states. Historians debate the number of wives Joseph Smith had, but it was in the neighborhood of 39—including girls as young as fourteen years of age, and more than ten women who were married to living men at the time.

Joseph Smith died at the age of 38, never having named a successor. Several Mormon leaders sought to take his place after his death, but Brigham Young stepped up to fill that role. Young himself would end up having 54 wives.

Because of non-Mormon sentiments against plural marriage, Brigham Young organized the Mormon trek west. His intention was to take the Latter-days Saints out of the United States and establish a new home in Utah, which at the time was part of Mexico. There they would be free to practice plural marriage.

Not all Mormons followed Brigham Young out to Utah. A small number remained behind in Illinois. In 1860 they formed themselves into the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and appointed Joseph Smith, Jr.'s son Joseph Smith III as their prophet and leader. They rejected plural marriage, and took over the original Mormon temple in Kirtland, Ohio. Today they maintain it is a historical site. In 1994 they dedicated their temple in Independence, Missouri. In April 2001 they changed their name to "Community of Christ." Currently, they have about 250,000 members.

In 1846 Brigham Young and his Latter-day Saints set out for Utah. In that same year the Mexican-American War began. By the time the Mormons reached Utah in 1848, Mexico had ceded that region, along with vast areas of land to the United States as a result of the war. In this new, distant part of the United States, the Mormons were able to continue practicing plural marriage undisturbed.

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States. Brigham Young met that news with great concern. He already considered Lincoln a scoundrel because as state senator in Illinois, Lincoln had done nothing to protect the Mormons in the aftermath of Joseph Smith's murder at the Carthage Jail. In addition, Lincoln had run for president on a platform of eliminating two great evils from America: slavery and polygamy.

In 1862, Lincoln signed a federal anti-polygamy bill clearly aimed at the Mormons. But under the strain of holding the country together through the Civil War, Lincoln chose not to enforce the law. Lincoln reportedly told an emissary he sent to Utah, "Tell Brigham Young that if he will let me alone I will let him alone."

The Latter-day Saints' practice of plural marriage continued through the Civil War and Reconstruction until 1887. It was then the U.S. Congress passed the Edmunds-Tucker Act. This prohibited the practice of polygamy and threatened to disincorporate the Latter-day Saints Church if it did not uphold the new anti-polygamy law. The law also threatened the confiscation of its sacred temples, its treasury, and the loss of basic civil rights for all Mormons.

Three years later, on May 19, 1890, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the provisions for seizing church property under the Edmunds-Tucker Act. On September 25 of that same year, the fourth president of the Latter-day Saints, Wilford Woodruff, announced that God had withdrawn the command to practice plural marriage. Beginning in 1904, the Latter-day Saints began excommunicating any Mormon man married to more than one woman simultaneously to demonstrate publicly they were upholding federal law.

The only Mormons currently practicing plural marriage are Fundamentalist Mormons. They number somewhere around 40,000 and believe Joseph Smith's teaching is an eternal doctrine of God that man does not have the authority to change or set aside.

Digging Deeper Links - Session 2

[Review of Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess](#) In the early years when Joseph Smith was organizing his new church he fell under the influence of Sidney Rigdon.

[Sidney Rigdon and *The Book of Mormon*](#) This article explores the possible role Sidney Rigdon played in the authorship of *The Book of Mormon*.

[Smith and Rigdon Are Tarred and Feathered](#) This is Joseph Smith's account of being tarred and feathered by an angry, drunken mob on March 24, 1832.

[What Was behind Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon Being Tarred and Feathered?](#) This website discusses allegations of adultery raised against Joseph Smith between 1829 and 1835, including one that led to his being tarred and feathered in Hiram, Ohio.

[Joseph Smith's Kirtland Bank Failure](#) This article examines the failure of Smith's anti-banking institution.

[Missouri State Archives - The Missouri Mormon War](#) This link takes you to the Missouri State archives' article, which includes many state documents exploring the clashes between Mormons and non-Mormons in Missouri.

[The Battle of Crooked River](#) This is the account of the battle between Missouri and Mormon militias as given by Charles C. Rich, one of the Mormons who led the attack.

[Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs' Extermination Order](#) This link takes you to the "Extermination Order" as it has been saved in the state archives.

[Did Joseph Smith Order Missouri Governor Boggs' Assassination?](#) This article includes several newspaper articles and affidavits about O. P. Rockwell, a Mormon who was accused in the attempted assassination.

[Mormon Quotes by and about the Danites](#) This page includes the Danite pledges, comments from Joseph Smith, and those from primary sources and members of the Danites themselves.

[The Nauvoo Legion - Civil and Religious Rights](#) This speech by Mr. George A. Smith, a private in the Nauvoo Legion, speaks of the sacrifices of the Mormons who made the trek to Utah in search of civil and religious freedom.

[Occultic and Masonic Influences on Early Mormonism](#) This article summarizes the evidence for Joseph Smith's personal involvement in both Freemasonry and occultism, and their influence on the Mormon religion.

[Freemasonry in Nauvoo](#) This article describes the friction the Nauvoo Lodge created with other Illinois' Freemason lodges.

[Joseph Smith - Prophet of the Restoration](#) In this speech Tad R. Callister calls Joseph Smith's sins "minor weaknesses."

[Nauvoo Expositor](#) This is the text of the original edition of the *Nauvoo Expositor*.

[The Order to Destroy the Nauvoo Expositor](#) This is the text of the order, including links detailing the arrest of Joseph Smith for ordering the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*.

[Final Moments at Carthage Jail and the Death of Joseph Smith](#) Bill McKeever discusses the events at the Carthage jail, including how Smith got his gun, how he broke his own rules against consuming alcohol, and compares the way Smith died with Jesus' death.

[Six Days in August: Brigham Young and the Succession Crisis of 1844](#) This article thoroughly describes the succession crisis that occurred after the death of Joseph Smith.

[Mormon Power Grab?](#) Within a month of the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Joseph's selected successor—his brother Samuel—died under mysterious circumstances. This article quotes a fourth brother, William Smith, who suspected Brigham Young of having Samuel poisoned.

[Brigham Young's Rise to Power](#) Choosing Joseph Smith's successor was not as clear cut or straightforward as many Mormons believe.

[Abraham Lincoln's Connections to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young](#) Latter-day Saints' views have warmed toward President Abraham Lincoln over the years.

[Brigham's Destroying Angel](#) This link takes you to a photomechanical reprint of a manuscript that was claimed to have been written by Bill Hickman, loyal Danite under Brigham Young.

[Latter-day Saints World Statistics](#) This chart lists countries that have Mormon temples, missions, stakes, and or districts.

Opening Prayer: Holy Father, You desire to save all people through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Open our minds to more accurately grasp Your plan of salvation that we may more confidently believe it, and faithfully share it. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 3

Are Mormons Christian?

Latter-day Saints (LDS) are convinced they are Christians for many reasons:

- They are taught the LDS is the only true Christian church on earth.
- Unlike many Christian denominations the Name “Jesus Christ” is in the official LDS name: “The Church of **Jesus Christ** of Latter-day Saints.”
- They are baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
- They believe in Jesus’ atonement.
- They believe they are saved by grace.

This often makes it confusing and frustrating to talk with Mormons about faith: they say all the right words and phrases.

The first thing to keep in mind is that using Christian words and phrases doesn’t mean anything if they are not used the way the prophets taught in the Old Testament and the way Jesus Christ and His apostles taught in the New Testament. When Mormons use those words and phrases, they mean something completely different from what the Bible means. Paul once warned the Galatians about a counterfeit gospel that was deceiving them,

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the Gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

Over time, Joseph Smith progressively distorted the faith handed down to us in the Bible. The following are some examples of the teachings he twisted.

God the Father

In his reported visit of the Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ in the Sacred Grove, Smith presents God the Father being a flesh and blood human alongside the God-man Jesus Christ. According to Smith, God the Father began life just like each of us, a spirit child born of another heavenly Father and heavenly Mother. In fact, Smith claims our God is only one among many gods who all followed the same path (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 121:32). Like us he was given a body and lived on another planet. He married multiple wives, chose between good and evil, died and rose again, and progressed on his way to godhood.

But the Old Testament in the Bible makes clear that God is not human, nor did He ever change and progress:

“God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind” (Numbers 23:19a).

“The Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for He is not a man, that He should have regret” (1 Samuel 15:29).

“I will not execute My burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath” (Hosea 11:9).

“For I am the Lord; I do not change” (Malachi 3:6a).

- Why is the notion of becoming like God—or becoming gods ourselves—so appealing to humans?
- What are the consequences of setting limits on our God whom Scripture describes as being without limits: eternal (1 Timothy 1:17), unchangeable (Malachi 3:6), almighty (Matthew 19:26), all-knowing (John 21:17), and present everywhere (Jeremiah 23:24)?

Jesus Christ

Joseph Smith claimed that Jesus was also a spirit child—the first of many spirit children born of heavenly Father and Mother. He taught that Jesus became human by being conceived of the virgin Mary, then after His death and resurrection attained godhood.

Again, the Bible disagrees:

Read John 1:1-3, 9-14.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him.

¹¹ He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.

¹² But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God,

¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

With the words “In the beginning,” John takes us back to the first moment of creation and shows us the pre-incarnate Son of God existing from all eternity.

- How does the phrase “the Word was God” contradict Joseph Smith’s teaching that Jesus began as a spirit child, became incarnate (received His human body), and only attained godhood after His life, death and resurrection?
- How do the words “only Son of the Father” in verse 14 show Jesus was uniquely the Son of God—not one (albeit the first) among billions of spirit children of God the Father?

Humans Becoming Gods

Mormonism offers us the tantalizing notion that we are like God. Like Him, we too can progress to become gods (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 132:18-20, 37). But once again, in the Bible God makes very clear that there is a vast difference between God the Creator and all of us as His creatures.

“Before Me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after Me ... Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last; besides Me there is no god ... Is there a God besides Me? There is no Rock; I know not any’” (Isaiah 43:10b; 44:6, 8b).

- In what way does God’s statement, “Besides Me there is no god,” totally undercut Joseph Smith’s idea of a council of gods?
- How do God’s words, “I am the first,” undercut the Mormon claim that He was once a spirit child of another heavenly Father and Mother?
- How do His words, “I am the last,” crush the notion that we can become gods if we work hard enough?

Faithfully interpreting God’s final phrase, “There is no Rock; I know not any,” can be difficult unless we remember God is all-knowing. Since God knows all things, we can be confident if He has no knowledge of another Rock or god, none other exists.

The Serpent's Echo

This very attractive Mormon teaching echoes the serpent's lying words in the Garden of Eden, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). Without realizing it, the Latter-day Saints take Satan's side and continue his vile deception when they teach that Adam's fall was beneficial for humanity. They teach the fall allowed all of us as spirit children to receive our human bodies, and set us on the path to godhood.

The Bible clearly teaches Adam's fall was damning and catastrophic to Adam and Eve and all their human descendants. It is only through Jesus' atonement that God the Father forgives our sins and counts us as righteous—apart from any of our works or ceremonial acts. Look at Paul's words in the book of Romans:

"The free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one Man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one Man Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one Man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:15-19).

- How does Paul's constant repetition of the phrase "free gift" remind us that our works have absolutely nothing to do with our eternal life with God after this life?
- How does Paul's description of God's abundant grace through Jesus Christ contradict the way Joseph Smith limits the effectiveness of Jesus' righteousness, by demanding human works and ceremonies to be done for us to make progress on our path toward godhood?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are unique among all humans. You are the only-begotten Son of God, taking on human flesh to become one of us. Thank You for Your perfect life of obedience, which earns eternal life in Your Father's glorious presence for all believers. It was Your all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross that turned away the Father's wrath against our sins. Give us wisdom and grace to share Your great salvation with Mormons and everyone we meet. Amen.

Digging Deeper Links - Session 3

[Who are Mormon Missionaries?](#) This webpage from the Latter-day Saints explains the two-year period in which young Mormons go out as missionaries.

[Why We Need Creeds](#) According to Joseph Smith's divine vision, God called the Christian Creeds an abomination. In this interview, Jaroslav Pelikan explains how the Creeds arose and why they are important to the church.

[Is God an Exalted Man?](#) This website includes quotes from general Mormon authorities, and what the Bible teaches on this subject.

[The Heavenly Mother](#) Latter-day Saints rarely talk about God's wife, but their writings speak of their beliefs that God has one or more heavenly wives.

[Did Adam Become the Heavenly Father?](#) This article explores Brigham Young's sermon of 1852 where he declared that Adam became our Heavenly Father.

[Our Pre-Mortal Life](#) According to the Latter-day Saints each of us has lived as spiritual children with Heavenly Father and Mother before our conception and birth.

[Do Latter-day Saints Think Jesus and Lucifer were Spirit Brothers?](#) Scroll down to the second question in this "I Have a Question" section of the June 1986 edition of *Ensign*.

[War in Heaven](#) This page describes the battle between Jesus and Lucifer over God's plan of salvation.

[The Choice that Began Mortality](#) Latter-day Saints describe Adam and Eve's fall as a good thing for humanity.

[Jesus Christ, Our Savior](#) This LDS webpage explains Jesus' atonement. It is a good example of an article that almost sounds right in some ways. Look for clues to the false theology lying underneath ("the only way we can *return* to live with our Heavenly Father", "Jesus suffered *and* was crucified," "Baptism is a promise or covenant *we make*," "It takes effort to *exercise enough faith* in Christ to repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost, but we have to strive")

[The Unpardonable Sin](#) In his "King Follet Sermon," Joseph Smith explains the one unpardonable sin, when a Latter-day Saint turns from his Mormon faith. (Scroll down to the sections "The Unpardonable Sin" and "The Forgiveness of Sins.")

[Blood Atonement and Utah's Method of Execution](#) Though many Latter-day Saints leaders deny it today, blood atonement is still in the psyche of Mormons in the state of Utah.

[What Happens in Temples?](#) This article from the official Latter-day Saints webpage explains the rituals that take place in a Mormon temple and why they are necessary for living with God in the highest heaven.

[The Three Kingdoms of Glory](#) This webpage describes the three kingdoms of glory and perdition as taught by the Latter-day Saints.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, You so loved the world that You gave Your only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Make us aware of the burden of trying to please You—an impossible load that Mormons needlessly bear. Send us Your Holy Spirit to guide us as we share Your complete and free forgiveness—that the same Spirit may give our Mormon friends a right faith in Jesus. We pray this in Your Son’s Holy Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 4

The Mormons you meet are similar to the Jewish crowds Jesus came across in His public ministry. They carried the overwhelming burden of works and obligations placed on them by their Jewish elders and teachers.

“And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:35-36)

- Which of the Mormon obligations described in the video sound the most burdensome to you? Why?
- How does it add to their burden to look back and always know they could have tried harder, could have done better?

You don’t have to be a Mormon to feel the weight of guilt and shame from failing to do the best you could. God’s Law demands perfect obedience from each of us every moment of every day of our life. It threatens eternal death and torment to each of us unless we live perfectly. Of course, no matter how hard we try, our sinful nature makes it impossible for us to satisfy God’s perfect demands.

“As it is written, ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one’ ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:10-12, 23).

But don’t our good deeds count for anything in God’s eyes? Isaiah says, “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment ...” (Isaiah 64:6a). Jesus explains that it is impossible to do any good deeds in God’s eyes unless we are connected to Him by faith: “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

- How does Jesus’ image of a branch separated from its vine make clear the impossibility of pleasing God by our works apart from faith in Christ?

- Discuss the selfish motives that would taint any good deed performed to please God apart from Jesus Christ.

Our situation before God is even worse than the most conscientious Mormon thinks:

“Now we know that whatever the Law says it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the Law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the Law comes knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:19-20).

But where our ability runs out, God’s grace comes pouring in. His only-begotten Son Jesus became human and lived among us to fulfill all the obligations of God’s Law in our place. He lived a spotless life and earned God the Father’s highest commendation: “... This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him” (Matthew 17:5b). By faith, God the Father credits Jesus’ righteousness to you. Again, Paul puts it plainly in his letter to the Romans:

“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the Law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

“Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the Law” (Romans 3:21-28).

- How do Paul’s words, “apart from works of the Law,” make it clear that our standing with God in eternity has nothing to do with our works, and everything to do with Jesus’ life, death and resurrection?

Jesus’ perfect life, His innocent suffering and death in our place, and His victorious resurrection have secured our eternal life in the glorious presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Forgiven and free, now we can carry Jesus’ invitation to Mormons and all those living under the crushing load of guilt, shame, fear and despair.

(Jesus said) “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, thank You for coming to earth to win eternal life and my place with You in heaven’s full glory. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit that I may share this glorious truth with those who are burdened by empty traditions and meaningless ceremonies. Amen.

Digging Deeper Links - Session 4

[Why do Latter-day Saints Abstain from Alcohol, Coffee, and Tea?](#) This prohibition is found in Section 89 of *Doctrine and Covenants*. This teaching is called the [Word of Wisdom](#).

[A Temple Recommend: Being Worthy to Enter the Temple](#) This Latter-day Saints page explains what is involved in getting a temple recommend.

[My Temple Recommend Expired](#) A young Mormon woman describes her shame in arriving at the temple only to learn she had let her temple recommend expire.

[The Sealing Ordinance](#) This temple ritual seals Mormon marriages and families.

[Preparing for the Temple Endowment](#) This article discusses the need for the temple endowment to live with God in the highest heaven.

[Aaronic Priesthood](#) This page describes the Aaronic priesthood.

[Melchizedek Priesthood](#) This priesthood is explained on this site.

Opening Prayer: Holy Father, Adam and Eve’s disobedience brought sin, death and condemnation to each of us. We thank and praise You for sending Your Son Jesus to suffer and die in our place. Teach us how to speak to Mormons about baptism and life after death. We pray in Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 5

Baptizing for the Dead

Joseph Smith based his proxy baptisms for the dead on a confusing passage from 1 Corinthians 15, Paul’s great resurrection chapter,

“Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?” (1 Corinthians 15:29).

Joseph Smith interpreted this to mean that the power of baptism was effective past death if a living person was baptized on behalf of the dead. This explains why the Latter-day Saints gather lists of deceased people and baptize living Mormons in their behalf.

Paul wrote this 15th chapter to address the contention among some Corinthians that there is no life after death. Not all theologians agree on exactly what Paul is speaking about here. Some think churches were performing baptisms in cemeteries as a reminder of the resurrection; others think pastors were calling to mind the example of faithful martyrs as they were baptizing living persons. Whatever this “being baptized on behalf of the dead” actually involved, Paul is using it as another argument for the resurrection of all people on the Last Day.

- What are some other unclear passages of Scripture you can think of?
- What is the danger of basing a church teaching or ceremony on an unclear passage of Scripture that could have many different interpretations?

In a case like Mormon proxy baptisms, it is always best to consider other passages that set clear boundaries on how we are to interpret the unclear passages. In this case we look to the book of Hebrews.

“It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

This passage makes it clear that proxy baptisms are unbiblical. They can’t have a saving effect upon the soul of a deceased person who has already been judged. Jesus makes this even clearer in His account of the rich man and Lazarus when Abraham describes the chasm that separates the saved and the damned:

“Between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us” (Luke 16:26).

- How can clear Scripture passages help set a boundary around confusing passages and prevent false interpretations like Joseph Smith’s?
- How does Mormonism’s distorted use of Christian words and phrases drive home the necessity to continually study and grow in our understanding of the Bible?

In Romans 6:3-11, Paul discusses the proper way to look at the connection between Baptism and death.

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

⁴ We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.

⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.

¹⁰ For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God.

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Paul discloses the great exchange that takes place when we are united with Christ in Baptism. Jesus Christ takes our sin upon Himself and suffers in our place; at the same time this credits us with His holy and righteous life.

- Discuss the freedom Christ gives us when He puts our sin to death in Baptism.
- When you think about standing before God dressed in the righteousness of Christ that is credited to us by faith, how does that help put our good works in their proper perspective?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for loving us so much that You came to earth, lived in perfect obedience for us, and died in our place on the cross. Since You united us to Your death and resurrection by our Baptism, empower us to do good works for the benefit of our neighbors, and embolden us to share Your gracious salvation with them always. Amen.

Digging Deeper Links - Session 5

[What is a Ward/Stake/Branch?](#) This website describes the local Mormon gathering place. Note that the bishop or branch president is a member who volunteers.

[Baptisms for the Dead](#) Using an obscure passage from 1 Corinthians 15, the Latter-day Saints perform proxy baptisms for the dead.

[A Closer Look at Proxy Baptism](#) This article by Sandra Tanner looks at the Mormon practice of proxy baptism, and the 1 Corinthians 15 passage Mormons use to justify proxy baptisms.

The Mason/Mormon Connection

[Masonic Parallels](#) This site by an endowed Latter-day Saint explores the Mormon temple ceremonies, describing similarities and differences between the Mormon endowment and Freemasonry.

[Masonic Symbols and the LDS Temple](#) Sandra Tanner explores Joseph Smith's involvement with Freemasonry.

[The Sacred Temple Garments](#) This LDS essay on the temple garments helps explain their significance to Mormons today.

[Passing through the Temple Veil](#) This website presents the ceremony for an initiate to pass through the temple veil.

[The Sentinel Angels](#) This article describes the purpose of the sentinel angels in Mormon teaching.

[Passing the Sentinel Angels](#) This article discusses the tokens and signs necessary to pass the sentinel angels into the celestial heaven.

Opening Prayer: Holy Father, You have sent Your children in Jesus Christ to go out to the highways and byways to share Your great invitation to heaven. Give us love and wisdom as we reach out with the Good News of Jesus' salvation to the many people hurting around us. We pray this in Jesus' victorious Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 6

Shattered Expectations

Christ's goal for each man, woman and child is to open their eyes to the illusions and lies Satan has built around their life, and bring them out of that darkness into the light of the truth. But that process can be devastating for anyone, and no less for a Mormon who learns that all he or she has been working so hard to accomplish is a big lie. It can be enough to shatter and destroy faith.

- Discuss a time you learned you were badly mistaken about something you thought you knew.

One of the men interviewed in our video is Richard Williamson. After leaving the Latter-day Saints he wrote a blog. Note the hurt, pain and embarrassment that jump out in his first sentences:

“I find it strange that so much of our human intellect and emotion is wasted dwelling on the myths upon which all religions are founded. The conclusion that all religions are manmade was one of the greatest discoveries of my life. All religions are specifically designed by their originators to be self serving and designed to maintain social and political control of the adherents” (The link to the full blog is included in the Digging Deeper section below.)

Disillusioned by the truth he learned, Williamson initially lumped Christianity in with all the other “manmade religions” and embraced deism, the idea that God created the universe, set the laws of physics in place to govern it, then sat back like a clockmaker, and let it run itself. Most ex-Mormons reject religion altogether and become atheists or agnostics. In time, the Lord led Williamson into a strong Christian faith.

Jesus' own followers faced similar disillusionment and shattered expectations. When Jesus entered Jerusalem the week before the Passover, His disciples felt the electricity in the crowds as they welcomed Him into the city, shouting and singing His praises. They watched His popularity grow through the week as He taught in the temple courts and thwarted the attacks of His enemies.

- What do you think Jesus' disciples expected would happen at that Passover?

But five days later their dreams of a glorious Messianic kingdom were crucified, killed and buried along with Jesus. Their disillusionment came not from Jesus lying to them or misleading them, but from their false expectations about the coming Messiah, which had blinded them to His true mission. Luke tells us about two followers returning home from Jerusalem on Easter Sunday, wondering how to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives.

Read Luke 24:13-27.

- ¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,
¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.
¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him.
¹⁷ And He said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad.
¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered Him, “Are You the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”
¹⁹ And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,
²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.
²¹ But we had hoped that He was the One to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.
²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,
²³ and when they did not find His body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive.
²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but Him they did not see.”
²⁵ And He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!
²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?”
²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

- Why did Jesus’ brutal, unexpected death strike them so hard?
- How big a part does embarrassment play in disillusionment?
- Why were these two followers so quick to dismiss the message of Jesus’ resurrection from the women?

Perhaps our Lord will bless us with the privilege of sharing the Gospel to bring a Mormon out of the darkness. If so, we shouldn’t be surprised if God calls us to walk with them through a dark time of doubt, disillusionment and anger as they recognize how they have been deceived. Nor should we be shocked if they want to shun all religion, and refuse to immediately accept our Christian witness.

Or perhaps Jesus may bring us to walk alongside an ex-Mormon who is angrily living as a deist, atheist or agnostic because Satan has poisoned him or her to Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith's distortion. In either case, we shouldn't be surprised if their journey to Jesus Christ is a slow and painful process.

We can learn several lessons from the way Jesus walked alongside the two Emmaus disciples and opened their eyes to the light.

- How did Jesus encourage His two disciples to include Him in the conversation?
- What are some ways you can imagine starting a spiritual conversation with a hurting ex-Mormon?

Jesus was keenly aware of His disciples' pain and disillusionment. But instead of immediately rebuking them, correcting them, or revealing Himself to them, He encouraged them to express their sorrow and pain.

- Why is it important to permit people to whom we witness to express their negative feelings, their hurts and disappointments, even their anger or unbelief?

Jesus waited until they got it all out, only then did He begin witnessing to them. For these two He used some almost shockingly strong words, calling them "foolish ones" and "slow of heart." But He only did this because they should have known better. He had frequently predicted His betrayal, arrest, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection to His followers.

- Why would using such strong, corrective terms be inappropriate in the case of a Mormon who had been misled for so long?
- Why do you think Jesus guided His followers through the Scriptures to explain His mission of salvation before revealing Himself alive to them?

It may take more than a single afternoon to help guide a Mormon or ex-Mormon to faith in Jesus Christ. But that's not our responsibility anyway. We are simply to be witnesses to what we know about Jesus. The Holy Spirit will be mightily working through our witness to bring them to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Coming out of Mormonism, they will be leaving behind a close, loyal, support system. Just as important as sharing the truth in love with them is being a genuine friend. Over time, you can prove your true Christian love and concern for them, and your words of witness will carry more weight with them.

- What benefit would ex-Mormons find in Christian congregations that have a close family bond?
- What can you do to help foster that close family bond in your congregation?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, through Your brothers and sisters in faith You walk alongside the lost, calling them out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Give us loving, understanding hearts, and guide our interactions with those who do not know You so they may see the genuineness of Your love in us, and be empowered by Your Holy Spirit to believe in You as their only Lord and Savior. Amen.

Digging Deeper Links - Session 6

[Micah Wilder's Testimony](#) In this YouTube video Micah Wilder from our video shares his moving story of God rescuing him from Mormonism.

[Sandra Tanner's Journey out of Mormonism](#) In this 53-minute video, Sandra Tanner, a descendant of Brigham Young, describes growing up as a Mormon in Southern California, and how she came out of Mormonism, including tips on sharing our faith with a Mormon.

[Richard Williamson's Journey Out](#) This mp3 audio recording is from an interview on radio station KFUE in St. Louis, Missouri, on February 24, 2010. Williamson discusses how God guided him to the truth about Jesus Christ.

[A Spiritual and Intellectual Journey from Mormonism to Deism](#) Richard Williamson wrote this blog to describe the first steps of his path out of Mormonism. At that time he believed in God, but only like a watchmaker who created this world, and then sat back and lets it run by the laws of physics He put in place, not stepping in or becoming active in His creation. Since becoming Christian he has repeatedly asked deism.com to remove this post since it no longer reflects his viewpoint, but its site managers will not.

Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:

Joseph Smith's First Vision:

[New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra Revival](#) The Latter-day Saints contend that Joseph Smith had his vision in the sacred grove in 1820. But early versions from Joseph Smith don't mention the grove. This article provides evidence that the religious revival didn't occur in Palmyra, New York, until 1824.

[Joseph Smith's Changing First Vision Accounts](#) This page gives links to ten accounts of Joseph Smith's first vision that he shared with friends and associates. Note how these accounts change over time, before a later account is canonized in Mormon scripture.

Joseph Smith's Multiple Wives:

[Joseph Smith's Contradictions](#) This article explores Smith's early public condemnation of polygamy, while he practiced it secretly. It goes on to talk about women he took as wives who were already married to living men. It also discusses Mormon teachings that polygamy was essential to becoming gods; a man who understood this command but refused to marry more than one woman would be damned.

[Marrying a Child](#) This article discusses the pain and shame of Joseph Smith's many plural wives. It also describes the threats and schemes Smith used to convince a devoted father to permit him to take his 14-year-old daughter—his only daughter—as a plural wife.

[The Mountain Meadows Massacre](#) In 1857 nearly 120 men, women and children were murdered by Mormons and Indians in southern Utah.

[Brigham Young's Teachings on Blood Atonement](#) This webpage includes excerpts from sermons of Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders. They explain that some sins cannot be atoned for by Jesus' blood, but only by the blood of the sinner poured out in death.

[Latter-day Saints and Biblical Christianity](#) Though the Latter-day Saints have softened their speech against traditional Christian denominations, they still believe and teach that Mormons are the only true Christian church on earth.

Additional Resources:

The Mormons: Who They Are, What They Believe - This **Project Connect** booklet from Lutheran Hour Ministries helps you understand the Mormon missionaries who come to your door. It gives specific advice about what to say and what NOT to say when you share your faith with them. (<http://www.lhm.org/projectconnect/booklets.asp>)

Utah Lighthouse Ministry - This website by ex-Mormons Jerald and Sandra Tanner has a tremendous amount of helpful information about all facets of the Mormons. (www.utlm.org)

Sharing Your Faith with Latter-day Saints - This ex-Mormon webpage gives some helpful advice for witnessing to Mormons. (www.utlm.org/onlineresources/sharingyourfaithwithlds.htm)

Spalding Research Associates - This website includes research about possible sources Joseph Smith used for *The Book of Mormon*. It includes two interviews with an ex-Mormon. (www.solmonspalding.info)

Mormonism Research Ministry - This website provides detailed information that critically evaluates the differences between Mormonism and biblical Christianity to help Christians better understand and witness to Mormons and ex-Mormons. (<http://www.mrm.org/>)

Care to Share Your Comments about our study?

Men's NetWork Leader survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q2YGKG6>

Men's NetWork Participant survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SDMD9VW>

Full List of Digging Deeper Links

Session One: The Mormons—Genesis

The Book of Mormon according to the Latter-day Saints. <http://beta.mormon.org/lessons/07-book-of-mormon.html>

Introduction to *The Book of Mormon*. <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/introduction?lang=eng>

Jesus Preaches in the Americas. <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/3-ne/8?lang=eng>

Moroni's Visitation. <http://mormonthink.com/moroniweb.htm>

A Seer Stone and a Hat: Translating *The Book of Mormon*. <http://www.mrm.org/translation>

Seer Stones - the Occult in Joseph Smith's Day. <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/panmankey/2013/07/josephsmith/>

Where Are the Ten Lost Tribes? <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/israel/losttribes.html>

Setting the Record Straight about Native Peoples: Lost Tribes of Israel. <http://www.native-languages.org/iaq9.htm>

Native Americans and Jews: The Lost Tribes Episode. http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Modern_History/1700-1914/America_at_the_Turn_of_the_Century/Regional_Judaism/Peddlers_and_Frontier_Judaism/Native_Americans_and_Jews.shtml?p=0

The DNA Challenge to *The Book of Mormon*. <http://www.msbc.org/dnachal.htm>

What about Reformed Egyptian? <http://archive.org/stream/mormonismunvaile00howe#page/268/mode/2up>

Session Two: The Mormons—The Exodus

Review of Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess. <http://www.lds-mormon.com/sr.shtml>

Sidney Rigdon and *The Book of Mormon*. <http://sidneyrigdon.com/criddle/rigdon1.htm>

Smith and Rigdon are Tarred and Feathered. <http://historyofmormonism.com/mormon-history/two-church-centers/tcc-1832/joseph-and-sidney-tarred/>

What Was behind Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon Being Tarred and Feathered? <http://mormonthink.com/grant6.htm>

Joseph Smith's Kirtland Bank Failure. <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/josephsmithsbank.htm>

Missouri State Archives—The Missouri-Mormon War. <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/mormon.asp>

The Battle of Crooked River. <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~raymondfamily/BattleCrookedRiver.html>

Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs' Extermination Order. http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/findingaids/miscMormRecs/co/18381027_ExtermOrder.pdf

Did Joseph Smith Order Missouri Governor Boggs' Assassination? <http://www.truthandgrace.com/1842MOgovernor.htm>

Mormon Quotes by and about the Danites. <http://mormonthink.com/QUOTES/danites.htm>

The Nauvoo Legion—Civil and Religious Rights. <http://jod.mrm.org/1/79>

Digging Deeper Links

Occultic and Masonic Influences on Early Mormonism. <http://mit.irr.org/occultic-and-masonic-influence-in-early-mormonism>

Freemasonry in Nauvoo. http://com.byu.edu/index.php/Freemasonry_in_Nauvoo

Joseph Smith—Prophet of the Restoration. <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2009/10/joseph-smith-prophet-of-the-restoration?lang=eng>

Nauvoo Expositor. http://www.mormonismi.net/pdf/nauvoo_expositor.pdf

The Order to Destroy the Nauvoo Expositor. <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/carthage/expositororder.html>

Final Moments at Carthage Jail and the Death of Joseph Smith. <http://www.mrm.org/death-of-joseph-smith>

Six Days in August: Brigham Young and the Succession Crisis of 1844. <http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/firm-foundation/8-six-days-august-brigham-young-and-succession-crisis-1844>

Mormon Power Grab? <http://xmormon.org/d6/drupal/Poisoning-in-Mormon-Power-Grab-Samuel-H-Smith>

Brigham Young's Rise to Power. <http://www.mrm.org/topics/historical-issues/brigham-youngs-rise-power>

Abraham Lincoln's Connections to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700259675/Lincoln-frequently-worked-with-LDS-faithful.html?pg=all>

Brigham's Destroying Angel. http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/brighamsdestroyingangel_intro.htm

Latter-day Saints World Statistics. <http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/statistics/units/world/>

Session Three: Are Mormons Christian?

Who are Mormon Missionaries? <http://www.mormon.org/missionaries>

Why We Need Creeds. <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2003/09/Why-We-Need-Creeds.aspx>

Is God an Exalted Man? <http://www.mormonhandbook.com/home/god-is-an-exalted-man.html>

The Heavenly Mother. <http://www.mrm.org/heavenly-mother>

Did Adam Become the Heavenly Father? <http://www.mrm.org/adam-god>

Our Pre-Mortal Life. <https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrines-of-the-gospel-student-manual/chapter-6-our-premortal-life?lang=eng>

Do Latter-day Saints Think Jesus and Lucifer were Spirit Brothers? <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1986/06/i-have-a-question?lang=eng>

War in Heaven. http://com.byu.edu/index.php/War_in_Heaven

The Choice that Began Mortality. <https://www.lds.org/liahona/2002/08/the-choice-that-began-mortality?lang=eng>

Jesus Christ, Our Savior. http://beta.mormon.org/lessons/01-jesus-christ-our-savior.html?gclid=CPi7p5uuxb8CFTJn7AodMUUAgg&cid=99113312&skwcid=AL1373713!46796094255!p!g!l!lds%20church&ef_id=UgUNzQAAAZKKPjWd:20140714180109:s

The Unpardonable Sin. <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/05/the-king-follett-sermon?lang=eng>

Digging Deeper Links

Blood Atonement and Utah's Method of Execution. http://www.sltrib.com/faith/ci_15126927

What Happens in Temples? <https://www.lds.org/church/temples/why-we-build-temples/what-happens-in-temples?lang=eng>

The Three Kingdoms of Glory. <https://www.lds.org/topics/kingdoms-of-glory?lang=eng>

Session Four: The Burden of Belief

Why do Latter-day Saints Abstain from Alcohol, Coffee, and Tea? <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89.1-21?lang=eng#0>. This teaching is called the Word of Wisdom. <https://www.lds.org/topics/word-of-wisdom?lang=eng&query=coffee>

A Temple Recommend: Being Worthy to Enter the Temple. <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2010/08/being-worthy-to-enter-the-temple?lang=eng>

My Temple Recommend Expired. <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2010/06/my-temple-recommend-had-expired?lang=eng>

The Sealing Ordinance. <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2011/09/the-sealing-ordinance-links-families-eternally?lang=eng>

Preparing for the Temple Endowment. <https://www.lds.org/new-era/1987/02/preparing-for-the-temple-endowment?lang=eng>

Aaronic Priesthood. <https://www.lds.org/topics/aaronic-priesthood?lang=eng>

Melchizedek Priesthood. <https://www.lds.org/topics/melchizedek-priesthood?lang=eng&query=melchizedek+priesthood>

Session Five: Temples of the Dead

What is a Ward/Stake/Branch? <http://www.mormon.org/faq/ward-stake-branch>

Baptisms for the Dead. <https://www.lds.org/topics/baptisms-for-the-dead?lang=eng>

A Closer Look at Proxy Baptism. <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/mclaims9.htm#baptism>

The Mason/Mormon Connection

Masonic Parallels. <http://www.ldsendowment.org/masonry.html>

Masonic Symbols and the LDS Temple. <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/masonicsymbolsandtheldstemple.htm>

The Sacred Temple Garments. <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1997/08/the-temple-garment-an-outward-expression-of-an-inward-commitment?lang=eng>

Passing through the Temple Veil. <http://www.ldsendowment.org/veil.html>

The Sentinel Angels. <http://mormonmysticism.blogspot.com/2008/03/angels-who-stand-as-sentinels.html>

Passing the Sentinel Angels. <http://www.ldsmag.com/1-ac-1/article/10771>

Digging Deeper Links

Session Six: The Journey Out—Leaving the Mormon Faith

Micah Wilder's Testimony. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D569x5TqtVk>

Sandra Tanner's Journey out of Mormonism. <https://vimeo.com/28254302>

Richard Williamson's Journey Out. http://www.solomonspalding.info/audio/kfu0_feb242010.mp3

A Spiritual and Intellectual Journey from Mormonism to Deism. <http://www.deism.com/mormontodeism.htm>

Stumbling Blocks to Mormons:

Joseph Smith's First Vision:

New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra Revival. http://www.mormonismi.net/pdf/1stvision_dialogue69.pdf

Joseph Smith's Changing First Vision Accounts. <http://mit.irr.org/joseph-smiths-changing-first-vision-accounts>

Joseph Smith's Multiple Wives

Joseph Smith's Contradictions. http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no66.htm#A_TANGLED_WEB

Marrying a Child. http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no94.htm#MARRYING_A_CHILD

The Mountain Meadows Massacre. <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no98.htm>

Brigham Young's Teachings on Blood Atonement. <http://mormonthink.com/QUOTES/bloodatonement.htm>

Latter-day Saints and Biblical Christianity. <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/ldschurchleadersdeclarechristianitytotalapostasy.htm>



SANDRA TANNER

Sandra Tanner is the great-great-granddaughter of Brigham Young, the second president and prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She was baptized into the LDS Church when she was eight years old. As a teenager she was challenged by different people and events to examine the origins of Mormonism.

On a visit to Salt Lake City in 1959 Sandra met Jerald Tanner; soon they were jointly involved in research and became engaged. They married in June 1959. After listening to a Christian radio program, Sandra accepted Christ in October 1959. The Tanners gave up their belief in *The Book of Mormon* in 1962.

In the years since then, the Tanners became known for their extensive research into Mormon history and doctrine. In September 1982 the Tanners established Utah Lighthouse Ministry, www.utlm.org, a non-profit organization and outreach ministry to the Mormon community.

Jerald Tanner passed away in October 2006, after a long battle with Alzheimer's. Together the Tanners published more than 40 books about the Mormon faith. She has also spoken at numerous churches, seminars and colleges, including Masters College, Trinity, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Alliance Theological Seminary. She has taught classes on LDS history and doctrine at Salt Lake Seminary (formerly Utah Institute for Biblical Studies). The Tanners also contributed to several TV and radio programs such as Nightline, A&E's City Confidential: "Faith and Foul Play in Salt Lake City," The John Ankerberg Show, and James D. Kennedy's radio program. Additionally, Sandra has been interviewed in numerous videos, such as *The God Makers*, *The Mormon Puzzle*, and *Jesus Christ / Joseph Smith*.



DR. LYNN AND MICHAEL WILDER

Dr. Lynn Wilder, author of the book *Unveiling Grace: The Story of How We Found Our Way Out of the Mormon Church*, and co-author with her husband of *7 Reasons We Left Mormonism*, was raised in Indiana as a "nominal Christian." She met Michael Wilder at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, during her junior year. They married in 1974.



While looking for a church in 1977, two Mormon missionaries knocked on the Wilders' door. Michael, at home working on his graduate paper, invited them in for a diversion. After repeated missionary visits, which included Lynn, the couple was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ten weeks later. The Wilder family—both parents and four children—were active in the Mormon Church; this involvement lasted for 30 years for Lynn and Michael.

In 1999 upon completion of her doctorate in education, Lynn accepted a position at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and the family moved to Alpine, Utah. There, as Lynn describes it, “We were living the Mormon dream.” Unsettling this, however, was her discovery of racism within Mormon culture, while Michael realized polygamy was still alive within the church.

Following the missionary direction of his brothers, Josh and Matt, the Wilders’ youngest son Micah was supposed to serve his mission in Mexico in 2004. Health issues, however, saw him go to Orlando, Florida. During his LDS mission, Micah was brought to faith in the biblical Christ through the encouragement of two Christian pastors he tried to convert. One challenged Micah to read the New Testament as a child. He did. Three weeks before the end of his mission stint, Micah bore testimony of his conversion before 60-80 of his fellow Mormon missionaries and his mission president. Because he had given testimony to Jesus alone and not the Mormon Church, he was deemed unworthy as a Mormon missionary. He was sent home from his mission.

Upon returning home, Micah encouraged his parents to read the New Testament, and through the Word of God, they became biblical Christians. While on sabbatical from BYU in 2007, Lynn and Michael didn’t return to Utah; instead, they resigned their membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Lynn took an academic position at Florida Gulf Coast University in Ft. Myers, where she teaches today. Michael runs a mortgage business in Utah from his home in Florida.

In 2011 Lynn and Michael launched the Ex-Mormon Christians United for Jesus ministry; the website is www.unveilingmormonism.com. A documentary called *Unveiling Grace* preceded the book by the same title. Both ministries travel and speak at churches about their journey from a works-based faith to the biblical God of grace.



ART VANICK

Arthur Vanick is a computer graphics expert, multi-media producer, and voice talent, who was employed in the highly classified special projects division of a major U.S. government aerospace contractor until 1992. He is a life-long member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is active in his local congregation. He operates The Digital Voice, a multi-media production company and multi-track recording studio.

Vanick’s interest in Mormonism and *The Book of Mormon* came from two events: a visit to the Salt Lake City Mormon Temple in the summer of 1965, and a discussion about the origin of *The Book of Mormon* with Dr. Howard Davis in 1975. The latter resulted in Vanick joining Davis and two others in the production of a book entitled, *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?*, which was published by Dr. Walter Martin through Vision House in 1977. Dr. Martin is recognized as one of the founders of the modern counter-cult movement. Although not one of the co-authors of the 1977 book, Vanick contributed research and also edited some of the text.

In 1993 Vanick formed *Spalding Research Associates* with Dr. Howard Davis, Wayne L. Cowdrey, and Bill Moore and, along with the others, engaged again in research on the origin of *The Book of Mormon* and Mormonism. This culminated in 2005 with a new book on the Spalding-Rigdon theory for the origin of *The Book of Mormon*. The book, *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon - The Spalding Enigma*, was published by Concordia Publishing House.

As spokesperson for the group, Vanick has done radio interviews and public appearances on behalf of his co-authors and the book, and has spoken at conferences, churches and historical societies in several states. Over the years, he has developed a ministry aimed at educating both Mormons and ex-Mormons about the true origin of what Joseph Smith called “the world’s most perfect book.”



PAUL MAIER

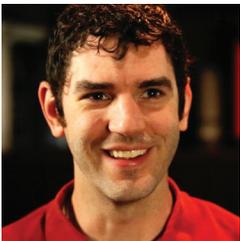
The Rev. Dr. Paul Maier has been a frequent host and guest of **Men's Network** Bible studies. He served 12 years as one of the six vice presidents of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. He served 41 years as campus pastor at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. He retired as the Russell H. Seibert Professor of Ancient History from that institution. He is also the son of Walter A. Maier (1893–1950), founder and longtime speaker of **The Lutheran Hour**.

Maier attended Harvard College, later receiving a master of arts degree in 1954 from Harvard University. After studying at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he graduated with a master of divinity degree in 1955, adding to that a doctorate, graduating summa cum laude from the University of Basel, Switzerland, in 1957.

Maier is a specialist in correlating data from the ancient world with the New Testament. He is the author of some 16 Christian-themed books. His novels include two historical documentaries: *Pontius Pilate* and *The Flames of Rome* as well as *A Skeleton in God's Closet*, which became a theological thriller and number-one nationwide bestseller in religious fiction when it was first released. Two sequels, *More than a Skeleton* and *The Constantine Codex*, followed in 2003 and 2011.

His nonfiction works include *In the Fullness of Time*, a book that correlates sacred with secular evidence from the ancient world, impinging on Jesus and early Christianity; *Josephus: The Essential Works*, a new translation/commentary on writings of the first-century Jewish historian; and *Eusebius: The Church History*, a similar book on the first Christian historian. More than 5,000,000 of Maier's books are now in print in 20 languages, as well as over 250 scholarly articles and reviews in professional journals.

Dr. Maier lectures widely, appears frequently on radio, television, and newspaper interviews, and has received numerous awards. He has also penned seven children's books and hosted six video seminars dealing with Jesus, St. Paul, the early church, and contemporary Christianity. You can learn more about him at www.paulmaier.com.



MICAH WILDER

Micah Wilder was born in Muncie, Indiana, the third of four kids. He was raised in a strong and faithful Mormon home. When he was 14, his family moved to Alpine, Utah. His mother was a professor at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. As a teenager he held leadership positions in the LDS Church, and he felt the Mormon Church was grooming him to become a future leader. In high school he prepared himself for what would become the most significant two years of his life: his LDS mission.

In preparation for his two-year mission, Wilder worked full time in the LDS temple. He felt a true zeal for his religion and desired to please God by living it well. At 19 he was sent to Orlando, Florida, as a full-time missionary. It was then that God reached into his life and opened his eyes to the Gospel of grace.

Just months into his two-year mission, Wilder visited a Baptist minister with the intention of converting him to Mormonism. It was during this experience the minister shared with him the Gospel of grace as found in the New Testament. He witnessed to Wilder that salvation was a free gift to be received by faith, and that the shed blood of Jesus on the cross was enough to cover all our sins. The pastor challenged him to read the Bible as a child in order that his eyes would be opened to the simple and beautiful Good News of Jesus Christ.

That challenge sent Wilder on a quest to read the Bible during his two-year mission. Over time, his eyes were opened to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and he came to know the grace and love of Jesus Christ in a personal way. With less than three weeks left on his two-year mission, Wilder was confronted by his LDS leaders about his change in faith. He confessed how he had come to know that faith in Jesus Christ alone led to salvation. After this he was sent home from his mission for no longer having a testimony in the Mormon Church.

Wilder returned to Florida after his mission was cut short; there he began speaking to friends and family. It was then the Adam's Road Ministry (www.adamsroadband.com) was formed for the purpose of reaching out to LDS people with the true Gospel of Jesus. Wilder's entire family, including his mother and father, have since come to faith in Christ. As a result, they left the LDS Church.



SUSAN ROBERTS

Susan Roberts was director of Christian Outreach (DCO) at St. John's Lutheran Church, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Christ Lutheran Church and School, Murray, Utah, before retiring in 2010. She also served as director of the Sudanese ministry at St. John's Lutheran Church, executive director of Utah Lutheran Mission Outreach, member of the Rocky Mountain District's Evangelism Committee, and board member of God's Word to the Nations Mission Society.

As a child Roberts was adopted by a family who were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; she was raised in Salt Lake City as a Mormon. She married into an LDS family and was deeply involved in Mormonism. She worked hard to attain the "perfection" that is required in the LDS belief system and studied to understand the theology and doctrines of the LDS Church. The deeper she probed the doctrine, however, the more she recognized the fallacy of LDS religion. This realization, combined with the impossibility of being perfect and the intolerable burden and pain of failing to meet the requirements of the LDS Church, drove her from the Mormon Church.

After futilely seeking God for some 14 years, Roberts abandoned the idea of a life with God—or so she thought. For nearly 30 years, she searched for information about her birth family. Then suddenly in 1992, over the period of about one month, one miracle after another occurred until she found, and was reunited with, her birth mother and a brother. Over the next three years, they got to know one another, exchanging their lives, joys and sorrows, until they shared the final weeks of her mother's life in a California hospital.

Over those three years, the Gospel was on the move in Roberts' life. Her newfound brother, it turned out, was a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod pastor, and her mother was a faithful member. They both modeled lives of faith and spoke the truth in love, but it took her mother's faith and inner peace in the face of her own death to soften Roberts' heart enough for the Gospel's call to lead her to faith.

In 1996, Roberts was baptized and confirmed into the LCMS. In 2000 she became lay director of the Sudanese ministry for her congregation. In retrospect, her Lord-directed life transitions from the culture and belief system of Mormonism, through the experience of the unchurched and, finally, to faith in Christ and a biblical worldview, prepared her for work in cross-cultural ministry. The arduous and often painful examination and transformation of her most basic values, beliefs and assumptions about God, life, herself and the world around her, enabled her to step outside her cultural biases to view the world from an unfamiliar perspective. On the other hand, being confronted with the culturally distant worldview of the Sudanese gave her a new perspective of her former LDS worldview, helping her analyze and understand aspects of that worldview she had not previously recognized.

Struck by an overwhelming sense of the lost and hopeless condition of her LDS brothers and sisters, Roberts ached for them. She realized she was bi-cultural and her experiences of Mormonism could be a bridge to help introduce the Gospel into the hearts and lives of people with an LDS background.



RICHARD WILLIAMSON

In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Richard Williamson, Elko, Nevada, was considered “pioneer stock.” He came from early Mormon families that traveled from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Utah with Brigham Young in the first of the migrations. Some came by wagon; others walked pulling handcarts.

His great-grandfather, Peter Maughn, helped settle Cache Valley of Utah under Brigham Young’s direction. Weston, Idaho, is named after his great uncle Peter Weston Maughn who died in route to Utah when he fell out of a wagon and was run over. His story can be read in the book: *I Walked to Zion*. Both Williamson’s maternal and paternal sides of his family were polygamist.

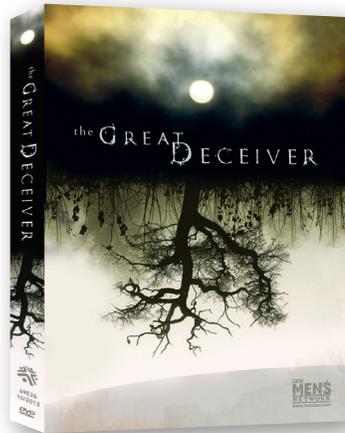
Williamson was baptized into the Mormon Church when he was eight years old in 1967 in Darmstadt, Germany. He went on his two-year mission in February 1979 to the California Ventura Mission. His mission president was Hyrum Wayne Smith, founder of the Franklin Institute, which is now Franklin Covey, based in Salt Lake City, Utah. Smith was a direct descendent of Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith’s older brother who was killed in Carthage, Missouri, with Joseph.

Williamson married his wife Pam on May 12, 1984, in the Ogden Utah Mormon Temple by Elder Keith W. Wilcox, a Mormon general authority, and he was the temple president at Ogden. Williamson was ordained a high priest in his late 30s in Maryland while stationed at Fort Meade. He served as the servicemen’s group leader, having authority over all Mormon chaplains, in his areas of operation in Afghanistan and Iraq.

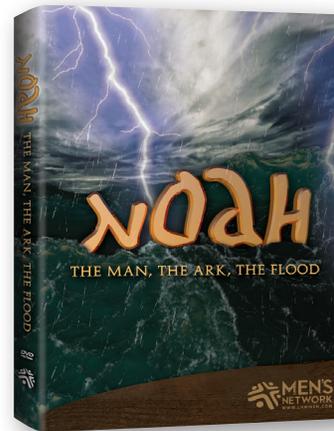
Intellectual curiosity and a deep desire to learn all he could about a church he was convinced was without error, and God’s only “true church,” led Williamson on a road of discovery and enlightenment. The result: he concluded Mormonism is a “sham and those who continue to perpetrate this fraud are evil men who neither know God nor have any semblance of a relationship with Jesus Christ.” He describes Mormonism as “perhaps the greatest, most successful cult religion—aside from Islam.”

Williamson and his wife Pam submitted letters of resignation from the Mormon Church in February 2006. He is a certified registered nurse anesthetist in Elko, Nevada.

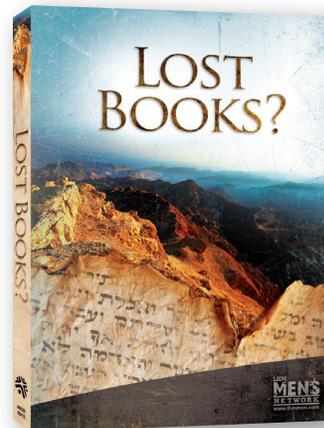
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