



# The Mormons

Who They are, What They Believe

by Rev. Wayne Palmer

## What Should I Say to Mormon Missionaries at My Door?

Your doorbell rings. A peek through your curtains reveals two young Mormon missionaries standing on your porch, eager to share their testimony.

You feel like you ought to talk to them, but what if you say the wrong thing, or don't know all the answers?

*What if they convince you?*

This booklet will help you better understand the Mormons at your door and give you tips for sharing the testimony of Jesus' free salvation with them.

## What are Mormons?

Mormons are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Their church was founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. in Fayette Township, New York, in 1830, when it was first named "Church of Christ."

## A Brief Mormon History

Joseph Smith, Jr. was born in Sharon, Vermont, in 1805. In his early years, his family moved three times, finally settling in Manchester, New York. In 1820 Smith claimed he was visited by God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Three years later he reported a visit from Moroni (the figure represented by the golden figure at the top of Mormon temples) who told Smith about golden plates buried in a hill near Manchester. Mormons call this site Hill Cumorah. The plates had been written by Mormon, an ancient prophet and commander-in-chief of the Nephites (reportedly, a pre-Columbian people in America). Mormon had recorded the history of the Nephites on the plates and gave them to his son Moroni before the Lamanites (also pre-Columbians) annihilated the Nephites and killed Moroni in A.D. 421, who then became an angel. Smith said he had obtained the plates in 1827; two years later he had transcribed them, calling his work the Book of Mormon (BoM), published in March, 1830, one month before he had founded his church.

Soon after Smith founded his church, things did not go well for him and his followers in western New York. The BoM's unconventional teachings and Smith's methods of gaining new converts did not endear him and his followers to the residents of Palmyra and Manchester. He also realized, given the limited population in that part of the state, he would not gain many more converts. Thus, by December 1830 and January 1831, he and his Mormon followers migrated to Kirtland, Ohio.

Hardly had Smith's followers settled in Kirtland, when he received a revelation telling him to go the "land of Missouri, unto the

borders of the Lamanites (American Indians).” By the end of July 1831, he and some associates began to establish a Mormon presence in Independence, Missouri. The Mormons tried to heed one of Smith’s revelations. It said go to “consecrate (confiscate) the riches of the Gentiles (non-Mormons) unto my people.” This resulted in severe conflict, and by mid-1833 the Missourians had expelled all Mormons from Jackson County, forcing them to move to several counties north. They again re-established themselves, and by 1838 the town of Far West (the site of their new headquarters) in Caldwell County had 5,000 Mormons. In size, neighboring counties equaled the town of Far West.

On August 6, 1838, the Mormon-Missouri War broke out. Smith used his semi-military Danites to fight the Missourians. After many fatalities, Smith surrendered on October 31, leading to his imprisonment for six months. While in prison, the state of Missouri expelled all Mormons, prompting them to move to Illinois to a place Smith named Nauvoo. Five years later (1844), Nauvoo had about 15,000 Mormons. Smith, always suspicious of non-Mormons, had organized the Nauvoo Legion, a semi-military unit designed to protect him. By 1844, the unit had nearly 5,000 men.

In June 1844 the *Nauvoo Expositor* reported Smith had received a revelation that said God had approved men to have more than one wife. Furious at this news, Smith had the press destroyed. This led to his arrest and imprisonment in Carthage, Illinois, where a mob stormed the prison and assassinated him and his brother Hyrum on June 27, 1844.

With no designated successor to Smith, Brigham Young soon made himself leader of the LDS. In February 1847, seeking to escape from the federal government and non-Mormon opposition to plural marriages, he left Nauvoo with most Mormons, settling a thousand miles west in the Mexican territory of Utah. They arrived in Utah’s Salt Lake Valley in July 1847. However, one year later, the Mormons were again in the United States when Utah, after the Mexican War, became a territory of the United States. Here the LDS church grew and prospered. Today, it has about seven million members in the United States and another eight million internationally.

This long history of opposition with its numerous conflicts has had a profound effect on the Latter-day Saints, an effect which still has a hold on their missionaries who stand at our doors. The more they feel oppressed and ridiculed, the more they’re convinced they have the truth.

## Are Mormons Christians?

In the back of *Pearl of Great Price*, one of the Mormon scriptures, there is an article titled, “Joseph Smith—History.” It was written in 1820. It recalls Smith’s confusion as a 14-year-old hearing the differing claims of the Christians around him.

“... The Presbyterians were most decidedly against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

“In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

“I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

“So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt ...

“... I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“... When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*

“... I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right ... (and which I should join.)

“I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight.”<sup>1</sup>

Smith claimed the true Christian church disappeared from the earth when the last of the original 12 apostles died. In Joseph Smith,

God was restoring the true Christian church.

Smith goes on to record the visit from the angel Moroni three years later:

“He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.”<sup>2</sup>

According to Smith, God commanded an Israelite named Lehi to take his family from Israel and travel to the Americas in 600 BC. According to the BoM, after Christ’s crucifixion, Jesus came to preach to Lehi’s descendants in the Americas. This connection with the BoM is the reason Latter-day Saints are known as “Mormons.”

So, to return to our original question, are Mormons Christian? Actually, with those Mormon missionaries standing at your door a better question to ask them might be this: “Do you consider yourselves Christians?”

The official Latter-day Saints website states,

“Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints unequivocally affirm themselves to be Christians. They worship God the Eternal Father in the name of Jesus Christ. When asked what the Latter-day Saints believe, Joseph Smith put Christ at the center: “The fundamental principle of our religion is the testimony of the apostles and prophets concerning Jesus Christ, “that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended up into heaven.””<sup>3</sup>

Let’s take a closer look at this however.

## What Do Mormons Believe?

Before we can discuss what Latter-day Saints believe, let’s consider where they receive their information about God and Jesus Christ.

### Divine Revelation

Mormons believe God revealed Himself in the Bible, but Joseph Smith taught it had been badly corrupted:

“Many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled” (*History of the Church*, v. 1, p. 245).

But the Mormons also believe God did not confine His revelation to biblical times: “Latter-day Saints believe in an open scriptural canon, which means that there are other books of scripture besides the Bible (such as the Book of Mormon) and that God continues to reveal His word through living prophets.”<sup>4</sup> According to LDS, God restored His church through His prophet Joseph Smith, and adds more revelations through the prophets who succeeded him.

”As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are blessed to be led by living prophets—inspired men called to speak for the Lord, as did Moses, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, Nephi, Mormon, and other prophets of the scripture. We sustain the President of the Church as prophet, seer, and revelator—the only person on the earth who receives revelation to guide the entire Church.”<sup>5</sup>

But is this true? The apostle Paul wrote,

“But even if we (the apostles), or an angel from heaven should preach to you a Gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).

## The Nature of God

The LDS teachings about God are confusing because we find many contradictions between their scriptures. For example, the *Book of Mormon* argues there is only one God (Alma 11:27-39, 44; 2 Nephi 31:21; Mormon 7:7; 3 Nephi 11:27; *Testimony of Three Witnesses*). But *Doctrine and Covenants* teaches God is only one among many Gods. It asserts the God who is the father of Jesus Christ and each of us began his life as a human spirit child of another God, lived a human life and death like all of us, and attained godhood as he was raised and entered celestial glory. (Section 121:32; Section 132:18-20, 37). In fact, the Mormons have a saying, “As man now is God once was. As God now is, man may be” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow*, LDS Church, 2012, p. 83).<sup>6</sup>

The Bible, on the other hand, clearly teaches God is not human and does not change:

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

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

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17).

Latter-day Saints reject the Trinity (one God in three Persons) as a creation of Christians. Where Latter-day Saints differ from other Christian religions is their belief that God and Jesus Christ are glorified, physical beings and that each member of the Godhead is a separate being (god).<sup>7</sup>

Joseph Smith wrote,

“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” (*Doctrine and Covenants* 130:22).

But the Bible very clearly teaches that God is one:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4).

“... There is no God but one” (1 Corinthians 8:4b).

But just as clearly, the Bible teaches that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three “Persons” who share one divine essence:

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

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

## Human Pre-existence

The Bible clearly teaches that our lives begin at conception with a body and a spirit:

“Thus declares the Lord, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him” (Zechariah 12:1).

“It is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual” (1 Corinthians 15:46).

But according to LDS our lives began long before:

“The (LDS) gospel teaches us that we are the spirit children of heavenly parents. Before our mortal birth we had “a pre-existent, spiritual personality, as the sons and daughters of the Eternal Father.”<sup>8</sup>

“Building upon the foundation laid by Joseph Smith, subsequent prophets taught that God was not single, but married; that there is a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother; and that we were made in their image: male and female children.”<sup>9</sup>

This is the reason LDS couples go to the Mormon temple to seal their marriage for eternity. That brings us to another contradiction.

## Do Latter-day Saints believe that they will “get their own planet”?

No. This idea is not taught in Latter-day Saint scripture(s), nor is it a doctrine of the (LDS) Church. This misunderstanding stems from speculative comments unreflective of (LDS) scriptural doctrine. Mormons believe we are all sons and daughters of God and all of us have the potential to grow during and after this life to become like our Heavenly Father.<sup>10</sup>

However, this statement contradicts several of their current teaching manuals. Latter-day Saints president Spencer W. Kimball stated, “Each one of you has it within the realm of his possibility to develop a kingdom over which you will preside as its king and god” (*Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, p. 29).<sup>11</sup>

Mormons teach that our life began in heaven:

“Our (LDS) understanding of life begins with a council in heaven. There the spirit children of God were taught his eternal plan for their destiny. We had progressed as far as we could without a physical body and an experience in mortality. To realize a fullness of joy, we had to prove our willingness to keep the commandments of God in a circumstance where we had no memory of what preceded our mortal birth.

“In the course of mortality, we would become subject to death, and we would be soiled by sin. To reclaim us from death and sin, our Heavenly Father’s plan provided us a Savior, whose atonement would redeem all from death and pay the price necessary for all to be cleansed from sin on the conditions he prescribed.”<sup>12</sup>

The missionaries standing at your door may or may not be aware of some of these deeper teachings in their faith, or the contradictions within their own sacred writings. But even if they are they will likely try to steer the conversation in another direction. As you build relationships with these missionaries and seek to go deeper into these topics, please consult the extra resources at the end of this booklet.

## Satan and Sin

In the Bible, God the Creator is clearly distinct from all His creatures. Then another distinction is drawn between angels and humans. But the LDS teaches that all men, angels, devils and gods are the same species, just in different stages of development. They teach that originally Satan (whose name was Lucifer) was a spirit son of God the same as all of us. But his rebellion against Heavenly Father prevented him from ever receiving a physical body and living on earth.

“In the pre-mortal Council in Heaven, Lucifer, as Satan was then called, rebelled against God. Since that time, he has sought to destroy the children of God on earth and to make them miserable.

“Satan persuaded ‘a third part of the hosts of heaven’ to turn away from the Father (*Doctrine and Covenants* 29:36). As a result of this rebellion, Satan and his followers were cut off from God’s presence and denied the blessing of receiving a physical body (see Revelation 12:9).

“Heavenly Father allows Satan and Satan’s followers to tempt us as part of our experience in mortality.”<sup>13</sup>

Mormons agree with the Bible that Satan tempted the first humans, Adam and Eve, to disobey God. The Bible describes the devastating consequences of the Fall: Adam and Eve and their descendents lost our holiness and righteousness, we inherited their sinful nature, and fell under God’s everlasting wrath and judgment.

According to the Bible, our only rescue is the sacrificial suffering and death of God’s only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Latter-day Saints have a different point of view. For them, the Fall was actually beneficial for us:

“As God’s first children on earth, Adam and Eve were living in their garden paradise. They didn’t feel any sorrow or pain, which might seem nice, except that without it, they also couldn’t feel joy. They didn’t remember their pre-earth life. If they hadn’t eaten the forbidden fruit, they would have lived like that forever and never had children. Mankind would have never been born or the world populated.

“... Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan’s temptations to eat the fruit and disobeyed God who had commanded them not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. As a consequence, they were separated from God’s presence physically and spiritually—an

event we refer to as the Fall. They became mortal—just as we are—subject to sin, disease, all types of suffering, and ultimately death. But it wasn't all bad because they could now feel great joy. 'Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy' (2 Nephi 2:25).

"Once out of the garden, they were able to progress and learn to become more like our Heavenly Father."<sup>14</sup>

The webpage "Becoming Like God?" adds,

"After Adam and Eve partook of the fruit of 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' God said they had 'become as one of us,' suggesting that a process of approaching godliness was already underway."<sup>15</sup>

## Jesus' Work

When Mormons speak about Jesus' work of atonement, it sounds a lot like what the Bible says.

"We wonder if we can ever overcome our mistakes and feel the peace of being forgiven.

We unequivocally can, because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the process of repentance. We can confess our sins to God and ask His forgiveness. And He's promised that He'll 'remember them no more' (*Doctrine and Covenants* 58:42). It works because Heavenly Father sent his son, Jesus Christ, to voluntarily suffer and pay for our sins and sorrows by atoning for them Himself.<sup>16</sup>

But for the LDS, Jesus' atonement only promises us a resurrection to one of three levels of heaven. Our place in those heavens depends entirely upon us.

"Obedience to God's commandments helps us qualify for all the blessings of eternal life. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all people may 'progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny.'"<sup>17</sup>

The LDS also teaches that the atonement was accomplished by Jesus' sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane, not on the cross.

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 19:18-19).

The Bible, however, teaches that the atonement occurred by Jesus shedding His blood on the cross.

"For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross" (Colossians 1:19-20).

## Heaven and Hell

The Bible clearly teaches the only way to inherit eternal life is by faith in the salvation won by Jesus Christ through His life, death and resurrection. And all those who reject this faith will suffer in hell eternally. The Latter-day Saints also teach the existence of heaven and hell. Again, hell is for those who deny Jesus Christ and His truth:

"Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power—they are they who are the sons of perdition ... they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come ... These are ... the only ones to whom the second death shall have any power; yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath" (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 76, vs. 31-34, 36-38).

But according to the LDS, it is only intentional rejection of Jesus' salvation that condemns a person to hell. They teach the vast majority of humans will escape this judgment.

"For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made" (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 76; vs. 39).

*Doctrine and Covenants* describes three levels of heaven opened up to mankind through Jesus' atonement. The highest level is the celestial glory; it is likened to the glory of the sun. The middle level is the terrestrial glory, which is likened to the lesser glory of the moon. The lowest level, the telestial glory, is like the lesser glory of the stars. Where a person ends up depends on the quality of their earthly life.

"There is a relationship between obedience and blessings. The Lord has said that we will be blessed and will live in a degree of glory in the next life according to the eternal laws we obey in mortality. 'For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory' (*Doctrine and Covenants* 88:22). The same holds true for the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms (see *Doctrine and Covenants* 88:23-24).<sup>18</sup>

According to the Latter-day Saints, the atonement of Jesus Christ just gets us into the lowest of these kingdoms. Rising to higher glory is up to each of us.

**Telestial** – This is the lowest level. It will be inherited by those who did not reject Jesus Christ and His power, but rejected the Gospel and were liars, sorcerers, adulterers and whoremongers. After the day of their death and before they enter heaven they will suffer God's wrath on earth and not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection when they will be raised into this telestial kingdom. They will be denied the Savior's fullness and never be able to come where God and Christ dwell.

**Terrestrial** – The middle level of heaven will be inherited by Christians who are not Mormon, as well as those souls in spirit prison who received a proxy baptism in a Mormon temple for their dead soul. They receive the presence of the Son and the Father's glory, but not the Father's fullness.

**Celestial** – Only Mormons will attain this highest level where they will live in the glorious presence of the Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. They will also be able to continue having offspring and become eternal parents.

Mormons teach that marriage is not just for this life.

"The central purpose of our more than 130 holy (LDS) temples is to unite families for eternity. When a man and woman are married in a temple their marriage will not end at death but can last forever."<sup>19</sup>

To enter this level a man must, among other things, have his marriage sealed in the Mormon temple.

"In order to obtain the highest level, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage); and if he does not, he cannot obtain it."<sup>20</sup>

Jesus' teaching on this matter was drastically different. In Matthew 22:30, He said,

"In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."

## "They are such nice people"

We often hear these words said about Mormons, and you may have experienced that yourself. That is good and fitting for all Christians. Jesus commanded,

"If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:46-48).

Jesus teaches us that good works cannot save us; they are only our thankful response to the free, complete forgiveness and eternal life He already won for us by His life, death and resurrection. Mormons have a very different reason for practicing these kindnesses. They are working to perfect themselves, to reach a higher level in heaven, and to become ever more like God as they progress on the road toward immortality.

But this obedience becomes an extremely heavy burden for Mormons, including the missionaries at your door. They give Jesus credit for winning their way to the lowest level of heaven, but then think the burden is on them for working their way closer to God—with the uncertainty that comes from knowing they always could have done better.

Paul wrote about this erroneous focus on works to the Galatians, a community of believers who thought they had to do more than simply believe and trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:1-4).

“For all who rely on works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.’ . . . Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’” (Galatians 3:10,13).

Now it’s time to discuss what you can say to those missionaries standing at your door.

## How Should I Talk to Mormon Missionaries?

You don’t have to have all the answers, or know all the right Bible passages. Simply lay some ground rules from the start:

“I will let you share your faith testimony with me if you will then let me share my faith testimony with you.” Insist to be given an opportunity to share your faith.

Listen attentively and politely. Don’t interrupt, but ask questions to learn their understanding of the Mormon faith.

Share your faith in Christ respectfully. Be confident and humble.

Invite them to come back and talk some more. Spend your time getting to know them as individuals. Strive to build a sincere friendship. Usually people who come out of LDS had a close friend who talked to them about the Lord.

## What Should I Be Careful NOT to Say to a Mormon?

1. **“You are not Christian.”** Latter-day Saints consider themselves members of the restored Christian church and believe they have the most complete revelation of God’s Word in their four Scriptures (*The Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.*) They even have a living prophet by which God guides them. While they attach entirely different meanings to the words than Christians do, they would say they believe in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that Jesus Christ is the only Savior, who suffered and died on the cross, rose again on the third day, and will judge the living and the dead. While it is clear to us they are not Christians, they will remind you they have “Jesus Christ” in their church’s official name.

Instead of arguing over their theology, stay focused on the most important Gospel teachings: Jesus Christ and His atonement.

2. **“Mormonism is a cult.”** Mormons are repeatedly told by their leaders if someone calls Mormonism a “cult,” that is proof that Mormonism is true. To them it is another example of the persecution one must suffer for following the one true church.

A better approach is to compliment them and their church for being so dedicated to getting their message out: “If only all churches were so diligent, wouldn’t the world be a better place?” Then you can mention you have trouble with what their church teaches and preaches and ask them to explain it to you.

3. **“Mormons are polygamists.”** After July 12, 1843, the BoM taught that God had revealed to Smith men could have plural wives (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 132). Thus, the LDS condoned and practiced plural marriage from 1843 to 1890. Polygamy is still practiced by Fundamentalist Mormons who base their teachings and lives on the practices of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.

But the missionaries at your door are Latter-day Saints who reject polygamy. In 1890 their fourth president and prophet, Wilford Woodruff, said he received a divine revelation in which God withdrew the command to practice plural marriage. Since 1904 the LDS has excommunicated any Mormon man married simultaneously to more than one woman.

## What SHOULD I Say to Them?

Keep in mind that Mormons are very sensitive to persecution. If you get emotional or upset, they will become more convinced their faith is the truth. Remind yourself—and them—that discussing various belief systems is not persecution.

Ask how one receives eternal life.

Ask what Jesus Christ's atonement accomplished and what is left for us to do.

Ask if they are certain they will have eternal life if they died today.

Now answer these same questions for them:

**How do I attain eternal life?** I believe my sins disqualify me from God's presence. So God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for my sins. Though I'm washed and forgiven I still cannot live a perfect, holy life. Eternal Life with God depends completely on God's forgiveness for Jesus' sake from first to last.

This is a point you can never overstress to a Mormon. Jesus did everything for us; there is nothing we have to do to be right with God. That undeserved love takes away the fear that comes from knowing we can never do enough for our salvation or we will never be "good enough" for God—a fear that plagues every Mormon.

**What did Jesus Christ do for us?** God the Father had every right to abandon me to death and eternal punishment in hell because of my sin. But He sent His only Son Jesus Christ to become one of us, yet without sin. Jesus took our guilt and God's punishment on Himself and suffered in our place on the cross. By His death and resurrection Jesus has satisfied God's wrath at our sins and opened for us the door of heaven and eternal life.

**How can I be certain God will give me eternal life with Him?** My salvation rests completely in God's hands. The Father loved me and sent His Son to save me; Jesus Christ took my place and won my salvation by His perfect life, death and resurrection; the Holy Spirit creates my faith in Jesus Christ and keeps me in that faith all my life. Since it all rests in the almighty hands of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I can be completely certain of my heavenly home.

**What role do my works fill?** Jesus commands us to do good works, not to progress toward eternal life, but to assist our neighbors and to fill our places in God's creation. St. Paul tells us,

"For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works ...." (Ephesians 2:10a).

## A Last Reminder

As a witness for Jesus Christ you don't have to convince the Mormon missionaries of the truth; that is the Holy Spirit's task. Simply share your faith and trust the Holy Spirit to do the rest.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing Yourself through Your Son Jesus. By Your Spirit give me the words to share with Mormons who come to my door so they may know the freedom of your forgiveness. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

## Additional Resources for Witnessing to Mormons:

**Mormons: Who They Are, What They Believe** - This **Men's NetWork** video Bible study from Lutheran Hour Ministries gives an in-depth look at Mormonism. It features interviews from former Mormons who are now Christians and expert commentary on the Mormon Church and its practices.

**Utah Lighthouse Ministry** - This ministry is conducted by former Mormons Jerald and Sandra Tanner.

**Sharing Your Faith with Latter-day Saints** - This ex-Mormon webpage gives some good advice for witnessing to Mormons.

**Spalding Research Associates** - This site includes information about the search for who really wrote the Book of Mormon. It includes two interviews with an ex-Mormon.

## In-Text Citations

1. <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.3?lang=eng>  
**Joseph Smith—History**

2. <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.3?lang=eng>  
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3. [www.lds.org/topics/christians?lang=eng](http://www.lds.org/topics/christians?lang=eng)  
**Are Mormons Christian?**

4. <https://www.lds.org/topics/bible?lang=eng&query=open+canon>  
**Bible**

5. <https://www.lds.org/topics/prophets?lang=eng>  
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