

Spiritual Truths

**Bible Studies you can do with the
Latter-day Saints (Mormons)**

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Preface

The following Bible studies are designed to help minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Latter-day Saints (Mormons), yet are applicable to anyone who has the desire to study and know what the Bible has to say for itself. These in-person studies use quotes from the King James Version of the Bible, which Latter-day Saints are most familiar with. The studies themselves begin with the foundation of the Scriptures, followed by the five distinctive pillars of Seventh-day Adventism, and last but not least, the Christian capstone of salvation in Jesus alone. To help personalize the studies, you may want to give a personal testimony or share a story at the end of each study.

At the conclusion of the study series, it is recommended that Ellen G. White's book *Steps to Christ* and/or *The Desire of Ages* be given with the open invitation for the person(s) you've been studying with to continue to grow in their understanding of God's Word and relationship with Jesus.

Whenever studying with the Mormon missionaries, it is strongly encouraged that you allow them equal time to share with you their Church's beliefs; in doing so, they will be more willing and open to listen to what you have to share with them from the living Word of life—The Holy Bible.

The Study Series:

Study 1: **The Scriptures**—Can the Bible be trusted?

Study 2: **The Spirit of Prophecy**—Past and Present.

Study 3: **The Sanctuary Service**—Fulfilled in Jesus!

Study 4: **The Sabbath Day**—Did God change it?

Study 5: **The State of the Dead**—Satan's big lie!

Study 6: **The Second Coming**—How not to be deceived.

Study 7: **The Savior**—Our all-in-all in Jesus!

Studies Introduction

The following teacher guides provide insight as to what Latter-day Saints (Mormons) believe. The guides are not and end all tool but will help better prepare the teacher or study leader when presenting and answering questions about the study topics.

Study 1: The Scriptures—Can the Bible be trusted?

When studying the Bible with Latter-day Saints (LDS) there are several things to keep in mind. First and foremost, LDS believe the Bible to be the Word of God, but they also believe that the Bible over time has been corrupted with translation errors; therefore, they don't place as much emphasis on reading or studying the Bible as they do on the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith, who supposedly translated what is today the Book of Mormon, had this to say, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than any other book." (*History of the Church*, 4:461)

Second, LDS believe in the open canon of Scripture; therefore, they don't believe the Bible to be the final word. The

LDS scriptures or what is often referred to as “the standard works” includes the Bible (KJV), The Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price writings. In addition, the inspired words of the LDS prophets and apostles are viewed on an equal plane with scripture, thus contributing to their overall understanding and filtration of what they hold to be true from the Bible itself.

As noted, these two stumbling blocks can make effectively studying the Word of God with Latter-day Saints both difficult and oftentimes frustrating, but not impossible.

Generally speaking, when it comes to accepting or rejecting what the Bible has to say, Latter-day Saints will often rest their understanding upon the premise laid out for them in The Book of Mormon (Moroni 10:3-5), which gives three steps for testing the scriptures, including The Book of Mormon:

1. READ AND PONDER IT IN YOUR HEART.
2. ASK GOD IF THESE THINGS ARE ‘NOT’ TRUE.
3. BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT TO MAKE KNOWN TO YOU THE TRUTH.

The outcome of this Book of Mormon test is usually based on a feeling and not faith alone.

In countermeasure to the way Latter-day Saints think and test what they believe, there are three Biblical steps of faith which can be applied, emphasized, and even prayed for when studying the Bible with them. These steps of faith are found in **Matthew 7:7-8** which states:

Ask— In faith ask for the Holy Spirit of Truth to lead the Bible study;

Seek—In faith seek to find God’s treasured truths within His Word;

Knock—In faith knock on heaven’s storehouse door, believing that God’s blessings will be given.

Study 2: The Spirit of Prophecy—Past and Present

Latter-day Saints (LDS) see the spirit of prophecy as an identifying mark of God’s true church and believe that the spiritual gift remains with their Church alone. Furthermore, any member living a righteous life can, by way of the Holy Spirit, receive personal revelation for themselves and their family. Yet only the president/prophet of the LDS Church can receive revelations from God on behalf of the whole Church body. The prophet’s revelations are seen as having the same authority as the Holy Scriptures themselves.

“And whatsoever they [my prophets] shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 68:4).

Study 3: The Sanctuary Service—Fulfilled in Jesus!

Latter-day Saints (LDS) do not have a strong grasp of the Old Testament sanctuary service and how it all prefigures

and points to Jesus' mission, including his high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary today. The LDS Church places great importance on the building of earthly temples and encourages its membership to participate in the Church's sacred temple ordinances whenever possible. The LDS Church's authority rests with its priesthood, which according to them includes both the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. These two priesthood orders are a vital part of the LDS Church's identity and worldwide mission.

“There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood... The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things... The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments.” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 107:1,8,20).

Study 4: The Sabbath Day—Did God change it?

Latter-day saints (LDS) refer to Sunday as the “Sabbath day” and keep the day holy much as Seventh-day Adventists keep Saturday holy. Unlike Seventh-day Adventists, LDS keep the sabbath from midnight to midnight. The main difference between LDS and other Sunday-keeping Christians is that they believe Sunday (Sabbath) observance was affirmed to Joseph Smith in a vision he received on Sunday, August 7, 1831. This vision is recorded in their *Doctrine and*

Covenants, Section 59:9-14, which refers to Sunday as “my holy day” and the “Lord’s day.” LDS don’t have a good *historical* understanding of how the day of worship changed within early Christendom other than it honors the Savior’s resurrection day on Sunday.

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; for verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High.” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 59:9-10).

Study 5: The State of the Dead—Satan’s big lie!

Like most Christians today, Latter-day Saints (LDS) believe in immortality of the soul. Yet unlike most Christians, they believe that we were all once living in the presence of our Heavenly Father as spirit children. Furthermore, in order for us to become like our Heavenly Father, who has an immortal *physical* body, we must first come to earth to receive a body of flesh and blood. At the point of death, we supposedly all enter into a postmortal spirit world. This spirit world itself is divided into two realms: paradise and spirit prison. At Jesus’ second coming, the just on earth and the righteous in the spirit world will receive on earth a *physical* body that knows no decay.

As for LDS understanding on the state of the dead (our postmortal life in the spirit world), it is not based primarily on the Bible, but on the teachings and revelations received

by their prophet Joseph Smith, or what is known today as the LDS Church's Doctrine and Covenants.

“The spirits of the just are exalted to a greater and more glorious work; hence they are blessed in their departure to the world of spirits. Enveloped in flaming fire, they are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts, feelings, and motions, and are often pained therewith.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 326).

Study 6: The Second Coming—How not to be deceived.

Latter-day Saints (LDS) look forward with much anticipation to the second coming of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, upon Jesus' return, they believe that He will not only usher in His kingdom on earth, but that they will co-reign with Him as priests and kings for the next 1000 years. After this shall come the time of final judgment for the living, the dead in spirit prison, and all the evil angels fallen from heaven.

“For I [the Lord] will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory... and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand.” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 29:11).

Study 7: The Savior—Our all-in-all in Jesus!

Latter-day Saints (LDS) have a false understanding of who Jesus was before coming to earth, and see his mission and message for our salvation in a peculiar and distorted light to what the Bible clearly reveals and teaches.

Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus, as our spirit brother, came to earth not only to save us from Adam's transgression, but to make a way for us to have an immortal *physical* body like Heavenly Father.

“Adam fell [sinned] that men might be [mortal]; and men are [mortal], that they might have joy [potential to become like Heavenly Father]. And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall.” (*The Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 2:25-26).

Latter-day Saints differ from most Christians, in that they believe that everyone will be physically saved through the atonement of Jesus Christ, but in order to be fully saved (both physically & spiritually), we must by faith accept Jesus' atoning sacrifice for ourselves. After this, we may enter into a spiritual life that earns for us our eternal rewards and exalted place in heaven. The spiritual life of Mormonism here on earth includes: obeying the gospel (Mormon gospel) and all its covenants, as well as Church ordinances, obligations, and living a life of charitable works; thus preparing the way for exaltation into the highest of glories—third heaven (*see Doctrine & Covenants 76*).

Furthermore, Latter-day Saints believe that we must be sanctified before being justified. This LDS process of sanctification includes both our good works and the grace of Jesus—essentially salvation by works over faith, which then, justifies us for being exalted like our Heavenly Father and becoming God-like ourselves.

“For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.” (*The Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 25:23).