LEARN-DISCERN-LEAD Kenya 2019

Five Dangers of the Mormon Religion

By Joel B Groat, Exec. Dir

Introduction

The religion known as Mormon or Mormonism is officially called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Because the name is so long we use shorter names for this group – like Mormons or Mormonism or the Mormon Church. The word 'Mormon' comes from a book created by the leader Joseph Smith. He called it the Book of Mormon and said it was a new scripture. We will talk more about the Book of Mormon later in this presentation.

The founder and first prophet of the Mormon Church was Joseph Smith. He taught his followers during the 1830s that they were the last generation of believers. Joseph Smith said the true Christian church was totally lost from the earth and that he had a special mission from God. His mission was to restore the true church of Jesus Christ to the earth. His followers would be the only true Christians or "saints" in these latter days. Therefore, Joseph Smith said God told him to call the church – The Church of Latter-day Saints. He later changed the name to the Church of Christ, and then changed the name again to the name used today: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In 1835 Joseph Smith shared a revelation that he claimed came from God. Part of the revelation said that the coming of the Lord was near, and that within 56 years the end would come. The 56 years were completed in 1891. Jesus did not return and still has not returned. Joseph was wrong. This was a false prophecy and not from God.

Now, already we have seen two things that clearly show that Joseph Smith was a false teacher, a false prophet.

First, he claimed that the true church that Jesus Christ started on the earth had been lost. What did Jesus say about His church? In Matthew 16:18 Jesus declared: "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Any person that contradicts the clear teaching of Jesus and claims to be a prophet – is a false prophet.

Second, Joseph Smith made a prediction in the name of God and the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ would return by 1891. This did not happen. This is a false prophecy. This makes Joseph Smith a false teacher and a false prophet. This means that the religious organization he started, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a false church.

So today we are going to look at the five dangers of this false Mormon religion. We need to avoid these dangers and also help others not be trapped or led astray.

Here are the Five Dangers of the Mormon Religion:

- 1. It uses deception and manipulation to attract people
- 2. It was started by a false prophet

- 3. It has false scriptures it has added to the Bible
- 4. It rejects all the main doctrines of the Bible
- 5. It gives people a false gospel that will keep them away from salvation and faith in Jesus Christ.

So let us start with the words of Jesus. In Matthew 7:15-16 Jesus said: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits."

False prophets are outwardly attractive. They appear innocent, harmless even desirable. Like sheep. But that is not the truth. That is not the reality. The reality is they are wolves.

So, we should expect that false prophets will be attractive to people. They will have a good appearance on the surface.

This is very true of the Mormon Church and Mormon people.

Very often Mormon people are:

- Sincere and dedicated to their religion
- Very nice and kind people
- Very organized and hard working
- Willing to provide humanitarian aid

They are not bad people, very often they are good people. But if they do not have the true and great salvation from Jesus they are still dead in their sins. We must always remember that the person who is a member of the Mormon Church is not our enemy; he or she is our neighbor.

We must also remember that doing good things does not make us right with God. Doing good things can never earn us salvation. Doing good things can never change our hearts. People from every religion do good works. Salvation can only come when we humbly trade all our sin for the perfect righteousness of Jesus, and we accept the forgiveness of sins, we accept the righteousness of Jesus and we accept eternal life as gifts that are given us by the grace of God. This is how we enter into salvation and a relationship with God.

Consider the Drosera

There is a beautiful plant in many countries. It is called a Drosera. Its leaves are a beautiful green, its blossoms are pink and full of nectar. But, any insect that comes to eat or drink or rest on this plant is trapped. The nectar is very sticky, and as soon as the bug is stuck, the blossom begins to curl around it and it eats it.

The Mormon Religion is attractive because it offers good things.

- It offers a program it claims will make strong and happy families
- It teaches people to be morally pure and live good lives
- It offers money to people to help them with food and education
- Many of its members want to please God
- Mormon people want to spend eternity in the presence of God.

So we must remember again, the Mormon is not our enemy, they are our neighbor and we share many of the same spiritual goals. The Mormon leaders are the false prophets and the members have been deceived and led astray. We should feel compassion for them and want to help rescue them from danger.

So why are we concerned about the Mormon religion?

Because like the plant that offers good things to draw in bugs, the Mormon religion is spiritually dangerous so we must be careful and warn others so they are not drawn in.

- It is a growing spiritual force in Africa
- It is a false religion that uses many of the same Christian terms to deceive people
- It denies all the main Christian doctrines of the Bible
- It tries to get people away from true Christian churches
- It uses deception and manipulation to gain members
- It puts people in spiritual risk and danger

Mormons are growing rapidly in Africa.

In the last ten years the Mormons have grown by 15% in the United States. In the last ten years in Africa the Mormons have grown by 133% In the last ten years in Kenya Mormons have grown by 68% In 2009-8,416 In 2019-14,143

So why are they so successful and why is this dangerous to the people of Kenya?

Let us now look at the Five Dangers of the Mormon Religion:

Danger One: The Mormon Church Has a Culture of Deception. It uses lies and manipulation to gain converts.

- This is common among false religions
- It is a key to understanding the Mormon system
- It is used in the Mormon Missionary lessons
- It has been documented by Mormons themselves

When the Mormon missionaries visit people they bring a very attractive message. They say Joseph Smith is a modern day prophet who was visited by the Father and Jesus Christ when he was a boy. The claim to have a church with true prophets and apostles. They offer people the chance to have an eternal family, where the whole family is also together as a family in heaven. They also offer a special temple, the only place on earth you can do the ceremonies that are necessary to be an eternal family in Heaven with God as your heavenly father.

However – none of this is true. But it is very common with false religions. Because the leaders believe they have the only true religion, they will do and say whatever they need to so people will join and stay with the religion.

Deceptive Proselytizing

- Mormon missionaries start by agreeing with people and saying yes to their questions.
- They will deny or not mention important facts about their history and doctrine
- They also use psychological manipulation to get people to accept the Book of Mormon as Scripture.

Using False Agreement

Mormon missionaries will often say these things:

- We are Christians
- We believe in only one God
- We believe in the Trinity
- We believe that God is the same—yesterday, today and forever
- We believe in salvation by grace alone

But there are serious problems with all those affirmations.

How Mormons Win Converts with the Book of Mormon - 1

- They teach people that you know truth by how it makes you feel.
- They use a subjective or feelings truth test for the Book of Mormon
- They encourage people to read and pray about the Book of Mormon and then get a feeling that proves it is true and from God.
- They use Moroni 10:4-5 as the test

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would $\frac{a}{ask}$ God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not $\frac{b}{true}$; and if ye shall ask with a $\frac{c}{sincere\ heart}$, with $\frac{d}{dreal\ intent}$, having $\frac{e}{faith}$ in Christ, he will $\frac{d}{dreal\ intent}$ of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may $\frac{a}{know}$ the $\frac{b}{truth}$ of all things.

How Mormons Win Converts with the Book of Mormon - 2

- They also use James 1:5 as a supporting verse from the Bible If anyone lacks wisdom lack him ask of God. But this is a wrong interpretation and application of this verse.
- They teach that truth is affirmed with good feelings
- They teach that any bad feelings like doubt, or uneasiness or feeling disturbed inside is a signal the Devil is trying to take away truth.

But all these things are false. What does the Bible say? God, through the Bible says:

- Your word is Truth (John 17:17)
- Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6)
- We must test all things and hold on to the good. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
- Feelings of doubt or uneasiness may be the Holy Spirit. (John 16:8)

Danger Two: The Mormon Church was started by a False Prophet

Why Do People Reject Joseph Smith's Claim to be a Prophet of God? **Joseph Smith passes the tests ...of a false prophet**:

- Leads people to follow false gods (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)
- Prophesies falsely in the name of the Lord (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

Shows the fruit of a false prophet (Matthew 7:15-20)

- His teachings
- His lifestyle
- "By their fruit you will know them"

Joseph's Life

- His ever-changing story of Mormon origins
- Occult involvement
- Multiple, secretive, sexual relationships
- Fraudulent claims to divine revelation
- False Prophecies
- His Pride and Arrogance

Danger Three: It Has False Scriptures

- 1. Book of Mormon
 - What Is the Book of Mormon?
 - Claims to be a scriptural record of a civilization of Hebrews who came to the Americas in 600 B.C.
 - Written on gold plates in "reformed Egyptian"
 - "Another Testament of Jesus Christ"

How Do We Know the Book of Mormon is a False Scripture?

- Book of Mormon Attacks the Authority of the Bible "Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are <u>many plain and precious things taken away from the book</u>, which is the book of the Lamb of God." Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:28
- Book of Mormon Mocks the Christian Belief that the Bible is Unique and Final "Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible ... Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible <u>ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written</u>." Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 29:6,10
- Book of Mormon Contradicts the Bible
 - o Bible Teaches Salvation by Grace Alone "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is

the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3:5

- The Book of Mormon Teaches Salvation by Grace PLUS Works "For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 25:23
- The Book of Mormon came through occultism

Danger Four: Mormonism Rejects the Main Doctrines of the Bible

The Christian Doctrine of God compared with The Mormon Doctrine of God

All citations are from the Bible or official Mormon sources.

The Bible Declares Emphatically That There Is Only One True God "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel … I am the first and I am the last: and beside me there is no other God … Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any." Isaiah 44:6, 8

See also: Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 2 Samuel 7:22; Isaiah 43:10-11; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19

God Has Always Existed As God

"Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God." Psalm 90:2

God is Spirit, He Does Not Have a Body

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24

Mormon Doctrine of God

- There are many Gods
- God the Father is an "exalted man" born to an earlier God
- God the Father has a body of flesh and bones
- God the Father has a heavenly wife/wives with whom he procreates "spirit children"

There Are Many Gods

"And they (the Gods) said: Let there be light; and there was light. And they (the Gods) comprehended the light, for it was bright; and they

divided the light, or caused it to be divided, from the darkness. And the Gods called the light Day, and the darkness they called night ..."

Pearl of Great Price – Book of Abraham, 4:3-5

God the Father Was Once a Man

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!"

"It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us ..."

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 345-346

God the Father Has a Wife

- "God is a married being, has a wife.... We are the offspring of Him and His wife." (George Q. Cannon, "Mr. Canon's [sic] Lecture," Salt Lake Daily Herald, April 15, 1884, 8)
- God "made women in the image of his wife-partner." (Spencer W. Kimball, The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, Twelfth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 25)
- The Church of <u>Jesus Christ</u> of Latter-day Saints teaches that all human beings, male and female, are beloved spirit children of heavenly parents, a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother. ... The doctrine of a Heavenly Mother is a cherished and distinctive belief among Latter-day Saints.² ... Just as we have a Father in Heaven, we have a Mother in Heaven. Our theology begins with heavenly parents. Our highest aspiration is to be like them."

Source: https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/manual/gospel-topics-essays/mother-in-heaven?lang=eng

What Does All This Mean?

The God of Mormonism is not the same God of the Bible and therefore is a false God who cannot forgive sins or grant eternal life.

Mormon Concept of the Trinity

Mormon Definition of "Trinity" Claim they teach God is a Trinity However, they define "Trinity" in a non-Christian manner Teach Father, Son and Holy Spirit are 3 separate Gods who are "one in purpose"

Christian Definition of Trinity

What the Trinity is NOT: God is not 1 Person, but also 3 Persons God is not 1 being, but also 3 beings What the Trinity IS: God is 1 BEING. Who has existed from all eternity as 3 co-equal PERSONS

What Joseph Smith Taught About the Triune God - "He would be a monster"

"Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God! I say that is a strange God anyhow—three in one, and one in three! It is a curious organization. All are to be crammed into one God, according to sectarianism. It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God —he would be a giant or a monster" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 372.).

The Christian Doctrine of Jesus compared with The Mormon Doctrine of Jesus

All citations are from the Bible or official Mormon sources.

The Jesus of the Bible

- Eternally existed as part of the Triune Godhead
- Is God "made flesh" (John 1:1,14)
- Is the "only begotten" (KJV) Son
- Monogenes (Greek) means, "unique", one-of-a-kind"
- Should not be interpreted as created or procreated
- His human body was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35)
- Believers are "sons of God" by adoption
- Is the Creator of all things (John 1:3; Col. 1:16-18), including Satan

Mormon Doctrine of Christ

- Jesus is a spirit child of Heavenly Parents
- Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers
- Jesus' earthly body was conceived through relations between God the Father and the virgin Mary

Mormon Jesus is a spirit child of Heavenly Parents

"Man as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents ... The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ (see D&C 93:21) so he is literally our elder brother" (Gospel Principles, 1997 ed., p. 11).

Mormon Church Teaching About Jesus

Jesus and Satan are Spirit Brothers

"We needed a Savior to pay for our sins and teach us how to return to our Heavenly Father ... Two of our brothers offered to help. Our oldest brother, Jesus Christ, who was then called Jehovah, said, 'Here am I, send me (Book of Abraham 3:27) Satan, who was called Lucifer, also came, saying, 'Behold, here am I, send me ... After hearing both sons speak, Heavenly Father said, 'I will send the first' (Abraham 3:27)." Gospel Principles, 1997 ed., pp. 17-18

Jesus Earthly Body Conceived Through Relations between God the Father and Mary

"Thus God the Father became the literal father of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal father." Gospel Principles, 1997 ed., p. 64

There is nothing figurative about his paternity; he was begotten, conceived and born in the normal and natural course of events, for he is the Son of God, and that designation means what it says."

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed., p. 742

Mormon Doctrine of Man

- Pre-existence we lived in heaven as God's spirit children ("First Estate") before our earthly birth ("Second Estate")
- Jeremiah 1:5 is given as Biblical support: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."
- "All men and women are ... literally the sons and daughters of Deity ... Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents ..." (Gospel Principles, 1997 ed., p. 11)
- Through Mormon temple ordinances, including "eternal marriage," humans can achieve "exaltation" to godhood

Humans Can Become Gods

• "As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be." ... It is clear that the teaching of President Lorenzo Snow is both acceptable and accepted doctrine in the Church today.

Source: https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1982/02/i-have-a-question/is-president-snows-statement-as-man-now-is-god-once-was-as-god-now-is-man-may-be-accepted-as-official-doctrine?lang=eng

- "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that all resurrected and perfected mortals become gods (see Genesis 3:22; Matthew 5:48) Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus attained godhood and that he marked the path and led the way for others likewise to become exalted divine beings by following him (see John 14:3)." Encyclopedia of Mormonism, vol. 2, p. 553
- "who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise" would receive the fulness of God's glory and be "gods, even the sons of God." Doctrine and Covenants 76:53.58

Humans Can Become Gods

Mormon founder Joseph Smith declared:

"Here, then, is eternal life – to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you ..."

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 346

Biblical Doctrine of Man

- No Biblical support for Mormon doctrine of pre-existence of the human soul/spirit
- Jeremiah 1:5 refers to God's foreknowledge, not human pre-existence
- "The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:46, NIV)
- The glorified resurrection body of the believer is not to be confused with God's infinite nature

Danger Five: Mormonism has a False Salvation that keeps people from trusting Jesus

Mormon Doctrine of Salvation, Part 1

All non-Mormons & nominal Mormons will be resurrected and live in one of two lower kingdoms, regardless of faith in Christ (universalism). This is termed "general salvation".

Mormon Doctrine of Salvation, Part 2

Faithful Mormons who receive the secret temple rituals will achieve "exaltation" to godhood in the highest Mormon heaven ("Celestial Kingdom"). Requires faith in Christ, Mormon baptism, temple ordinances, works of righteousness, ncluding paying a full tithe. Faith PLUS WORKS

The Three Heavens of Mormonism

- 1. CELESTIAL KINGDOM for faithful Mormons
- 2. TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM for lukewarm Mormons, and "good and honorable" non-Mormons
- 3. TELESTIAL KINGDOM wicked people

OUTER DARKNESS – is for the devil and his angels, and apostate Mormons!

Bible passages Mormons use to support this teaching:

- 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 mentions "third heaven"
- 1 Corinthians 15:40-41 mentions bodies of "celestial" glory and "terrestrial" glory

The Bible Teaches Salvation Is by Grace Alone

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." Romans 11:6

Some False Doctrines of Mormonism

Salvation for the Dead

Gospel will be preached to the dead in "spirit prison". Based on this interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6.

Refutation of this erroneous Mormon doctrine online at: www.irr.org/mit/sdead.html

Baptism for the Dead

Those who accept the gospel in the spirit world need water baptism done on their behalf back on earth. Proxy baptisms performed for them in Mormon temples Based on misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:29
Refutation online at: www.irr.org/mit/baptdead.html

Biblical Doctrine of Salvation

- Contra Mormon doctrine of "Unconditional Salvation": Salvation requires a response of faith in Christ. Acts 16:31; Romans 10:13
- Contra Mormon doctrine "Exaltation": Salvation is by grace alone, apart from the works of the law Romans 3:28; Galatians 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6
- Contra Salvation for the Dead: Our eternal destiny is fixed at death Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:25-26

Significance of Mormon Temples

Used only for special Mormon temple ordinances (Not used for Sunday worship services)

- Only tithe-paying Mormons may enter
- Temple ordinances are necessary to achieve eternal life in the "celestial kingdom"
- Endowment ceremony
- Eternal marriage
- Baptism for the dead

Mormon Temples and the Biblical Temple

Mormon Temples

- Multiple all over the world
- Any worthy Mormon enters (and their children)
- Rituals kept secret, but deemed 'sacred'
- No adherence to biblical lineage requirements

How Do Mormons Gain Converts to Their Strange Beliefs?

- Truth-test based on personal experience instead of Biblical authority. They challenge people to read the Book of Mormon and ask God to confirm its truth by direct revelation. Book of Mormon, Moroni 10:4
- "Burning in the bosom" or any positive emotion/experience
- Claim biblical support from James 1:5 "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God."

What Is Meant by "Wisdom" in James 1:5? Context always important. It is "wisdom" for how to interpret trials, not "knowledge" about whether something is true or false, or whether or not it is

from God. Should James 1:5 be interpreted to mean we should ask God if Joseph is a true prophet, or the Book of Mormon genuine scripture?

- Doubt and bad feelings that arise from criticism of the Mormon Church are said to come from the Devil.
- Book of Mormon Challenge
 "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would
 ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not
 true; and if you shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having
 faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of
 the Holy Ghost." Book of Mormon, Moroni 10:4

The Bible Is More Important than Our Subjective Experiences

1 John 4:1 – "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Acts 17:11 – "These were more noble ... in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Conclusion: Mormonism Is a Dangerous Counterfeit Gospel

- A spiritual counterfeit dressed in Christian vocabulary
- Denies the unique & final authority of Bible
- Denies the Trinity and Jesus' place as the unique Son of God
- Denies salvation by grace alone
- Denies eternal punishment of those who die outside of Christ

We Must Defend the Gospel Against Error

Jude 3 – "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Our Attitude is as Important as Our Theology

"Speak the truth in love ..." - Ephesians 4:15

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." 2 Timothy 2:24-26

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" 1 Peter 3:15

How Should We View Mormons?

- People first, Mormons second
- Fellow image bearers of God
- Part of a culture of deception and therefore capable of deceit and dishonesty
- Deceived and in need of truth
- Lost and in need of compassionate boldness

How To Witness to Mormon People

- Be kind, respectful and compassionate
- Do not argue or debate Mormon doctrine with them
- Encourage them to research the Mormon religion at IRR.org
- Encourage them to read the Bible with the eyes of a child start with John, Ephesians, Romans and Galatians

For more information on Mormonism visit: MIT.IRR.org