

# Mormonism - Its Beginnings

by Stephen Hamilton

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*Mormonism is a cult that originated in the 19th century and is based on the teachings of Joseph Smith, who claimed to have received revelations from God.*

**Duration:** 35:03

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 37:15

**Topics:** "Mormonism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of people believing lies instead of the truth. He refers to 2 Thessalonians 2:11, where it is mentioned that God will send strong delusion to those who choose to believe lies. The speaker then talks about a story involving an angel named Moroni who supposedly appeared to Joseph Smith and gave him a revelation about a book written on golden plates. The speaker questions the authenticity of this story and compares it to the warning in Galatians 1 about even an angel bringing a different gospel. The sermon concludes with a discussion about Ezekiel 37 and the significance of the sticks representing Judah and Joseph in the Bible.

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## Transcript

2 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, we're going to read two verses, verses 11 and 12. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, and it's my firm conviction that this scripture will bear the interpretation or the translation, that they should believe the lie. It's not just a lie of many different lies, but it's the great deception, the lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Now if we take that scripture, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and verse 11, and just think about the words strong delusion. I think it's right to say that many people who follow after false religions and false cults are in that position. They are taken by, they are overcome by a strong delusion, a blindness if you like, that is even stronger in many cases than what we find in the general population.

There are people who are so taken up with the doctrines and teachings of false religions, that it's almost as if they're under the influence of chloroform or some kind of a trance. I don't know if you've had much dealings with cultists, but any that I've had dealings with, there are some who are worse than others, there are some who seem to be more delusional, if I could put it that way, than others. But there's no doubt about it, many, many people are completely suckered, completely hook, line and sinker, taken in by the doctrines of false religionists.

And of course that would be true of many cults, but it's certainly true of a cult that I want to start a study upon today, and that is the cult known as Mormonism, or as they like to give themselves the name, and again it's a misnomer, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Whenever I've had these finely dressed guys come to my door, it used to be that they wore suits. They've sort of changed their image a little bit, they now go around on bicycles many times, and have backpacks, I don't know whether they carry their lunch or what's in there, but they usually will still have at least a collar and tie, and they look presentable.

But it used to be that years ago, when they came to your door, they always wore dark suits. And my mum used to say, buy their suits, you shall know them. Whereas the Bible says, buy their fruits, you shall know them.

But anyway, the Mormons, they call themselves the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Well of course, they're neither the Church of Jesus Christ, nor are they saints in any sense of the word. But that is their claim, and that is their name.

I always like to say that I'm part of the Church of Jesus Christ of Every Day Saints. There's only one Church of Jesus Christ that there has been throughout the history of redemption, until the end of time, and indeed right on out into eternity. And that is the Church for which Christ died, and it's not the Mormons.

That much is clear when you start to study their beliefs and their doctrines. Mormonism is a cult with millions of members today. I did a study one time many years ago of the Mormons, probably better than twenty years ago, and at that time their membership was claimed to be some four and a half million worldwide.

I have a notion that it's more than that today, far more. But anyway, we want to begin at the beginning, and that is at the commencement of Mormonism. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, as they now call themselves, began in a very curious way.

I think I already mentioned when we started this series on cults, that a number of the leading cults, the Watchtower Society, or falsely called Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism, and various other cults had their beginnings in the 19th century. Some of them in around the very same time frame. Mormonism began because of the excesses and the delusions of a man called Joseph Smith.

If a Mormon missionary, of which there are many, was to tell the story of the beginning of his church, how it was founded, he might start something like this. In the third or fourth century after the Lord Jesus Christ, the world rejected the message of the Apostles, the Church went into apostasy and spiritual decay, and there was not a shadow of the Church's presence to be seen upon earth. The teachings of Christ were perverted, ordinances were changed, there was no inspired prophet, and therefore God's ordinances could not be administered acceptably to God, and mankind was left to wander in spiritual darkness.

But, there was a man called Joseph. Not the Joseph of Scripture, but Joseph Smith. And the claim is that this Joseph Smith was chosen by God to restore his church once again to the earth.

And so in the year 1820, God revealed himself to this Joseph Smith in answer to his prayer. According to Smith, God the Father and His Son appeared to him and told him to join none of the churches, because all of those churches and their creeds were abomination in the sight of God. They belonged to that apostate body of people known as Christendom.

Now, this feature of Mormonism we noted was a feature of the falsely so-called Jehovah's Witnesses, the Watchtower Society. Now the story goes, and as far as I'm concerned that's all it is, it's a story. It belongs in something like Aesop's Fables.

There was an angel called Moroni. You might want to take the I off the end and get it more straight. That's the claim that his name was Moroni, spelt moron with an I on the end.

He appeared to Joseph Smith, called him by name, stating that God had a work for him to do. This Moroni said that there was a, quote, deposited book written upon golden plates, giving an account of the inhabitants of this earth and containing the fullness of the everlasting gospel as delivered by the Saviour to the ancient inhabitants, unquote. The words of Paul come to mind in Galatians chapter 1, familiar words I'm sure to many of us.

But though we o'er an angel from heaven. It's interesting that isn't it that Paul would, by inspiration, put that in there because that's the very claim of Joseph Smith, that there was an angel from heaven called Moroni that came to give this great revelation. Here's what Paul said, though we o'er an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

And Paul repeats that curse in verse 9, as we said before. So say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed. And if you study the teachings of Mormonism, as we will do, at least in some degree, and compare them to the gospel that the Apostle Paul preached, you will find that Mormonism is under the curse and under the anathema of Almighty God.

But to continue, this so-called deposited book that the angel was supposed to have talked about, written on golden plates, became known and is known to this day as the Book of Mormon. Now I have a Book of Mormon, I don't have it with me today, but the reason that I took it from one of the Mormon missionaries that came to my home one time in Scotland was to keep it out of the hands of some other poor soul who might have it to read it. So I accepted it, it's good to have so that you can compare a lot of things in it.

And we'll come to more about the Book of Mormon in due course. But let me just give you this anecdote, this is a true story. Turn in your Bible to Ezekiel chapter 37.

And the reason I'm turning to this portion is this is a portion that I was directed to by a so-called Mormon missionary. One of two young men that came to my home, of which I've had many to do that throughout the years, but I never bring them into the house. I never bring them into my home.

The Bible says you're not to bring them into your house. At least my Bible says that in 2 John, if I could just refer to it there for a moment, in the 2nd epistle of John, verse 10 and verse 11, If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed. For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Now it may well be that what is being talked about here is bringing them into your home to stay for hospitality and so on. But I just take it at face value and I just don't bring them into my house. But that aside, this young man pointed me to Ezekiel 37.

And when he said what he said, I stood with my mouth open in disbelief. But he was very, very serious. He said, Ezekiel chapter 37, if you read from verse 15, here's what the Bible says, and we were reading, of course, from the Authorized Version.

The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions. Then take another stick, and write upon it for Joseph the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions. And join them one to another into one stick, and they shall become one in thine hand.

And what the young Mormon missionary said to me was this, one stick represents the Bible. The other stick, which is called here the stick which is for Joseph, he said, that's Joseph Smith. And the stick of Ephraim, that's the Book of Mormon.

This one stick that was for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, that's the Book of Mormon. And he says, if you notice verse 17, they were joined together to become one stick, so that the Bible and the Book of Mormon are both God's revelation to mankind. And I stood with my mouth open, and I thought to myself, if you look at the context of this, which they don't want to do, of course, it's obvious what God is saying in this portion.

It's nothing to do, first of all, with the Bible, in the sense that the stick represents the Bible. It doesn't represent anything of the sort. What this portion is talking about is the joining together of the kingdom of Ephraim, which is Joseph, and the kingdom of Judah.

And those would become one. This is talking about revival, and it's quite obvious as you read on in this chapter what it's talking about. Verse 22, And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel.

It's nothing to do with Bibles or books, or the Bible and the Book of Mormon becoming one book. And by the way, the Joseph that's mentioned in verse 16 is not Joseph Smith. It's Joseph, as in one of the sons of Jacob.

But this is the kind of thing that people do, even with the Word of God, and make the Bible teach anything that they want it to teach. And you know, just as a general point, we've got to be very careful how we handle the Word of God. You can't just lift something out of context and say, it teaches this and it teaches that.

Such as a very famous radio preacher does. He just lifts something out of the Scripture and says, that represents that. There's no biblical evidence for it.

There's no evidence for it anywhere but between his own ears. Because it's him, we're to believe it. I would say to you, don't you believe anything just because I say it, or because some other Bible preacher says it.

You better believe what you believe because it's taught in the Word of God. Don't just believe something because somebody lifts something out of context and throws it out there and says, this represents this. I could say that the frogs that are mentioned in the plagues in Egypt represent some nation today that's come to invade our country.

And who's to say that that's not what it means if that's how you're going to handle the Bible. You don't handle the Word of God in such a cavalier fashion as that. But the Mormons do.

You know why? Because it suits their purpose. It will cause the unwary to say, I see that. Yeah, that's what that means.

And they gullibly just swallow it, hook, line and sinker. The stick of Joseph is joined to this other stick. That's the Book of Mormon and the Bible and they become one stick and there you have it.

Well, that's the kind of view that the Mormons take of the Book of Mormon. This book that we've talked about, which I don't believe, by the way, ever existed other than in the form of a novel by a man called Solomon Spaulding, which Joseph Smith plagiarized and added to it portions taken from the Old Testament and just inserted into the Scripture and put it all together, jumbled it all up and made what has become known as the Book of Mormon. The story goes that this angel Moroni had told Smith that there were stones in silver bows which, when fastened to a breastplate, would constitute the Urim and Thummim and that possessing these stones, Joseph Smith would be able to translate the book.

Because, you see, the book was not written in English, even though he found it supposedly in a hill in New York State. It was written in ancient Egyptian. So it would have to be translated.

And the angel was going to give him these stones to enable him to do that. Now, this angel Moroni, and I kid you not, he supposedly appeared three times that night to Smith and on other occasions and warned that these plates, these golden plates, must only be shown to those to whom the Lord would command that they be revealed. And that's very convenient because if you wanted any evidence that they ever existed and you said, well, would you show them to me? Oh, no, no, we're not going to show them to you because you're not one of the ones chosen by the Lord to see them.

Now, in a vision, Smith claimed to see where these plates were hidden and subsequently he found them near his home. Again, very conveniently, near his home in Ontario County, New York on the west side of the hill under a large stone and there were also with those what he called the seer stones S-E-E-R because he claimed to be a prophet or a seer. Now, later to the Book of Mormon there were other, quote, sacred revelations added.

These were known as the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. I always thought the Pearl of Great Price was the Lord or His Church depending on your point of view of that parable, but apparently not so. Now, upon these writings and other revelations to the latter day saints are founded the doctrines of Mormonism.

Now, it is a fact that to be a Mormon, you must believe without question that Joseph Smith was God's prophet. You can't doubt that, you can't deny that or you can't be in the Mormons. So you have to believe that he was the prophet, the seer and the revelator.

That is, the means through which the true gospel was restored to the earth that had been missing for all those centuries. And so they called their religion, quote, the restored gospel. Well, I never ever knew that the gospel had been lost but obviously they feel that the gospel had to be restored.

Three years after these plates were supposedly found, Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which as I said at the beginning has grown to a huge membership of millions in our day. Something of Joseph Smith himself. He was born in a place called Sharon, Vermont on the 23rd of December 1805 being the fourth child of Lucy and Joseph Smith Sr. Joseph Smith Sr. was known to spend most of his time digging for imaginary treasures.

So, young Joseph Smith came by it honestly when he claimed to find these golden plates. At one time Joseph Smith Sr. was involved in litigation after trying to mint his own currency. Basically he was a nut.

That's just putting it plainly. Young Joseph Smith, like his father was a visionary. Documents show that he too was brought before the New York State Court in 1826 as a quote glass looker.

I don't know exactly what was involved in this glass looking, but he claimed that though this had been his habit for three years, he had pretty much given it up on account of his health and that he didn't now solicit such business. Apparently he could tell what was going to happen to people and that sort of thing by this means. Smith's mother testified that he both supervised and partook in treasure digging expeditions.

I told you he took after his father. After he came to fame his mother denied this. Now here's what he used to do.

This is all documented. Smith would place a stone in his hat and then he would put his face into the hat and claim to see into the stone to determine by its quote deep mysteries where certain treasures lay. Now if you did something like that today, these guys with white coats would come along and take you away in an ambulance.

But this is what Joseph Smith used to do. On one occasion he eloped with Miss Emma Hale whose father didn't like what Joseph Smith stood for. I wonder why.

And he would not agree to the marriage. Now the report is that seven months after the elopement a confrontation took place between Joseph Smith and this girl's father in Harmony, Pennsylvania. What is it about Pennsylvania that attracts these cult leaders? Nathan Homer Knorr of the Watchtower Society lived in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania here.

Third leader of the JWs. Now this guy thankfully didn't stay in PA to corrupt it any longer. He moved away to the Midwest.

Anyway, at that time whenever there was a confrontation between Smith and Emma Hale's father, Smith admitted that he couldn't see inside a stone. Now, nor could he ever. And his former pretensions in that respect were false.

By the way, this alleged admission of his was never denied. So he was proved to be a liar. The promise to the father of Emma to give up his old habit was soon broken.

Old habits die hard. Looking into stones is such an absorbing practice that he couldn't stop it. He was addicted to it.

So on the 21st of September 1827 Smith made what he later claimed was his 4th annual ascent of the Hill Cumorah in New York. And here he declared that he received the plates which became the Book of Mormon. Now those plates, as we said, were supposedly written in Reformed Egyptian.

At least it was Reformed. That's one thing that we can say for it. Reformed Egyptian by Mormon.

Now you might ask, well who was Mormon as opposed to Moroni? Well, Mormon was the father of the angel Moroni. You didn't know that angels had fathers. Well, this one did.

And this book, these plates rather that became the basis of the Book of Mormon, apparently contained an extensive history of how Jesus Christ, after the crucifixion and resurrection appeared on the American continent. I think they're getting it mixed up with Christopher Columbus. However, that's what they claim.

That the Lord came to America. When the Book of Mormon was published, the revelations covered the whole range of religious and political concepts. Now, there is a debate, even to this day, as to whether the Book of Mormon was plagiarized from some manuscripts found by a man called Solomon Spaulding.

That debate will rage on and the reason why there is such a debate is due to the similarity of the Book of Mormon with the novel of Solomon Spaulding. The only difference is that there is some religious matter interjected into this Book of Mormon from the King James Version wording of the Scriptures. In the year 1831, one year after his so-called church organized, Joseph Smith and a few followers moved to Kirkland, Ohio.

And in a very short time, some 2,000 converts were evidenced. That's quite amazing that you could go to a place like that, you try to establish a gospel preaching church and see what happens, but you could get 2,000 people believing that a man could look inside stones and could find golden plates under a hill somewhere and an angel talked to him and gave him a new revelation. It never ceases to amaze me what people will believe.

They'll believe the lie rather than the truth. Back to our text, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 11. God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.

Don't you be amazed as a Christian with the things that people will believe? And when you bring the truth to them, the simple truth of Scripture, they look at you as if you have two heads. It's amazing. That's the kind of blindness that men are under.

And if God in his mercy does not deliver them from that blindness, they'll go on down to the pit. Apparently for the next 13 years, Smith received 135 direct revelations from God. One of which revealed that Christ at his return would establish the land of Zion in America.

There you have it. The Lord's not coming back as Acts chapter 1, verse 11 says in the same manner that he left, but he's going to come to America. Particularly to Missouri.

I think if you're going to anybody who has roots in Missouri, please forgive me, but if you're going to establish the exact location of the promised land, I don't think you would pick Missouri. I don't think you would. Any more than you might pick Vermont, for instance, where he came from.

But that's where he said this land of Zion was. The exact location of the promised land was discovered on the 3rd of August, 1831 in Jackson County, Missouri. 63 acres of holy ground, to be exact.

And they were chosen for the Temple of Zion to be Christ's earthly headquarters. But unfortunately, they didn't tell the locals because a short time after their arrival here, Smith and his friends were driven out at gunpoint. So they had to leave the promised land and go back to the drawing board.

They moved to Illinois. Now, if you think I'm being facetious here and poking fun at this movement, then you're absolutely right. Because I learned something from my own pastor and I've used it many times since myself.

And that is any religion that people learn to laugh at, they will never worship. Now that's a very serious point. Any religion that people laugh at and think is really stupid beyond description, they will never worship it.

And we learned that from the ministry of Elijah. What happened whenever the prophets of Baal were going to call down fire from heaven? I'll tell you what happened. The Bible says it.

1 Kings chapter 18, verse 27. It came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them. He mocked them and said, cry aloud, for he is a god, mocking their Baal worship.

Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, he's away hunting, or he is on a journey, or per adventure he sleepeth and must be awaked. I can just imagine people standing snickering at this, at what Elijah was saying. And that was exactly what he wanted them to do.

Because friends, anything that people laugh at, they will not worship. And there are so many laughable things, if it weren't so sad, about Mormonism, and we're just referring to some of these right now. Smith and his friends moved from this holy ground, where they were driven out at gunpoint, to Illinois.

So they moved not too far away, Missouri up to Illinois, where they built the Mormon town of Nauvoo, which became the largest city in the state of Illinois. And there the Mormons saw a very large increase in their followers. Now, in due course we'll be coming to the creed of Mormonism, we're just dealing with the commencement of it today.

But one of those 135 direct revelations from God that Smith was supposed to have received, as well as the one about Jesus coming back to Missouri, was the polygamy revelation. And that is that you're allowed to have quite a number of wives, and of course that's been a problem in the state of Utah. I remember not too many years ago seeing a documentary about that very thing.

It's still practiced unofficially in Mormonism, and if you push Mormon missionaries on that point, they will defend polygamy. But Smith abandoned the doctrine of polygamy because it was outlawed by the federal laws of America. So it became something that was a problem for him.

Anyway, just to continue on with what happened with this move to Nauvoo, whenever they moved to that particular place, Smith had his own Mormon armed guard, his own militia, if you like. They were known as the Legion of Nauvoo. Whenever they found out that someone was speaking against Smith because of his doctrine of polygamy, there was a man called William Law, a disenchanted follower, who revealed what was really happening in the Mormon movement in his newspaper, the Nauvoo Expositor.

And as a result, this Mormon militia, this Legion of Nauvoo, on the orders of Smith, went to the office of the Nauvoo Expositor and destroyed the type and burned every issue of their paper. But when the state governor of Illinois heard about that, he wrote to Joseph Smith demanding that he and everybody implicated in this unlawful act submit immediately and come for trial. Smith called a meeting of Mormon leaders at the Mansion House, and that night Smith and his brother Hiram, with a few close associates, escaped.

Escaped from custody, that is. But they returned later, only to find orders from the governor requiring the Legion of Nauvoo to surrender all their weapons. Smith and his brother and their friends all went to surrender to the authorities.

But tensions apparently were very high in that community. Many people were demanding to see the prophet, as he called himself. Finally, in the jail where they were being kept, a mob broke in, shooting Hiram, the brother, first and wounding another Mormon called John Taylor, and at the last, shooting Joseph Smith dead as he attempted to escape through a window.

Of course, this was very convenient for Mormons, because the followers of Joseph Smith have mourned him as a martyr to this very day. A martyr. But, of course, he was nothing of the sort, because he and his conspirators were jailed for breaking the law.

And that's a fact that's conveniently missing from Mormon writings. I once had a Mormon in Scotland, by the way, at an open air meeting curse me. Maybe that's why the Lord has blessed me all these years, because God said to Abraham that he would turn the curse into a blessing.

This guy put his hand up in the air and cursed me in the name of Jesus Christ. You know why? I said to him that it was an awful shame that Joseph Smith had been shot dead by the mob that broke into the jail. He said, oh really? I said, yes, he should have been brought out by the authorities and drawn and quartered first.

But Mormon writers have compared Smith's death and this I want you to think about. They have compared his death with that of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are in print as saying, quote, Christ sealed his testimony with his blood on Calvary.

Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood at Carthage, Illinois. That's blasphemy of the worst kind. There is nobody whose death is like the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Quite recently there, whenever John Paul went to his eternal reward, which is not in heaven, he was spoken of in this way, that his death was like the death of Christ. It was nothing of the sort. There's no man's death like the death of Christ.

The death of our Savior was unique and it is completely and utterly blasphemous to compare anyone's death to the death of Christ. Listen to 2 Timothy 3 and with this we must finish today. We will continue with the further development of Mormonism, how it came into further prominence.

But 2 Timothy 3, verses 1 and 2, here's what the Bible says. This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, etc.

Verse 5 says, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof from such turn away. Blasphemers. By the way, an epitaph to Smith was written which said, since power was sweet to him, he gave to every convert the promise of dominion over a star.

But after the killing of Smith, Brigham Young became the president of the organization. You will probably know his name because there's a university, very famous university, called after him. Mormonism is a colossal fraud.

I have a leaflet here just before I finish which is from the Mormon organization itself. If you don't believe anything that I say about it, which I hope you do, but there are folks who might listen to it or hear it and say, well, I'm not too sure about that. I have here Joseph Smith's testimony.

It's a heap of nonsense. But it contains the story that I've given to you about Smith. This is an evil organization.

Let us be in no doubt about that. It's wicked. It's blasphemous in the extreme.

And again, as we've said throughout the studies on cults, it's good to have the truth of God. Thank God for the light and liberty of the gospel and for the fact that our minds have not been poisoned by the errors of sinful men. I trust the Lord will help us as we go through this study, as we look into the creed of Mormonism and continue to look at the development of it.

I trust that the Lord will cause us to learn that which will help us in dealing with cults such as that in the day in which we live.

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