

ISLAM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Part 1 of THEY BELIEVE WHAT?

The Cornerstone Youth Group. July 8, 2026.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

We believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day, he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

the one, holy, worldwide Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE LATTER DAY SAINTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Part 1: The Religious Context for the LDS

1. The collapse of creedal Christianity led to the rise of revivalism and a quest for emotional experiences over doctrinal substance.
2. The “burned over” district (Western New York) was full of disillusioned people looking for new movements and experiences.
3. There was a free market of religion: anyone could claim prophetic authority, interpret the Bible, and start a church.
4. Sub-Christian movements emerged. For example, the Millerite/Adventists, Spiritualism, Oneida Community, and the LDS.
5. Today there are about 17 million LDS members (Mormons).

Part 2: A Brief History of the LDS

1. In 1820, Joseph Smith claimed God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him in the woods in upstate New York and told him all existing churches were corrupt.
2. In 1823, the angel Moroni directed him to golden plates.
3. In 1830, Smith published the Book of Mormon (a translation of the plates) and founded the church on April 6, 1830.
4. After Smith was killed in 1844, Brigham Young led members to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Part 3: What LDS Believe

1. **The Godhead:** God the Father has a physical body. God was once a man who progressed to become God. God the Son is a spirit child of the Father. Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit. Although the members of the Godhead are **distinct beings** with distinct roles, they are one in purpose.
2. **Salvation:** Jesus atoned for sins on the cross. Jesus Christ overcame physical and spiritual death. Because of His Atonement, everyone will be resurrected. Those who repent, obey the commandments, receive the saving ordinances, and keep their covenants will receive the gift of eternal life.
3. **Eternal Destiny:** There is a distinction between "salvation" (universal resurrection for all) and "exaltation" (eternal life in the highest heaven). True "exaltation" requires temple ordinances. There are three degrees of glory after death: the Celestial Kingdom (highest, for faithful LDS), the Terrestrial Kingdom (good people, non-LDS), and the Telestial Kingdom (wicked). Humans can potentially become gods themselves ("eternal progression" / deification).
4. **Scriptures:** The Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. The President of The Church of Jesus Christ of LDS is God's prophet on earth today.
5. **Exclusivity:** Because the last restoration of true gospel began in 1820 when God the Father and his Son Jesus appeared to Joseph Smith, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth.

Part 5: Comparing LDS And The Christian Faith

Topic	What LDS Says	What the Bible Says
God	Three separate beings. Not co-eternal or co-equal. Father and Son have physical bodies.	One God in three Persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Co-equal and eternal.
Jesus	Firstborn spirit child of the Father, later became a God.	God the Son, truly God and truly man (John 1:1; 1:14)
Scriptures	Bible + Book of Mormon + Doctrine & Covenants + Pearl of Great Price + living prophets.	The Old and New Testaments of the Bible.
Salvation	Through Jesus Christ, plus obeying the commandments, plus LDS ordinances.	By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.
Church	Church was in a period of apostasy before God gave revelations of restoration to Joseph Smith. LDS is the one true church.	Preserved by God, not perfect, but not totally corrupted.
Eternity	Three degrees of glory. Potential to become gods.	Eternal life on the new earth for those who follow Jesus until the end.

Galatians 1:7-8 (CSB) ... there are some who are troubling you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him!