



Mormonism

# Review

- ▶ Last week, we focused on what goes on in Mormon temples
- ▶ On a regular Sunday, Mormons will go to ward buildings for their normal worship, meetings, and study classes, but the temple holds special significance
- ▶ The temple is a central place in Mormonism, where many of the most important ceremonies and activities happen
- ▶ Only in the temple can you receive instructions for how to be saved to the highest heaven (the endowment)
- ▶ Only in the temple can your family be marked and bound together for eternity (sealing)

# Review

- ▶ Additionally, those who go to the temple perform a number of rites for other people, by proxy, including baptisms, priesthood ordinations, and family sealings
- ▶ By performing these rites, Mormons believe that deceased people receive a second chance at receiving the Mormon Gospel and can be released from Spirit prison
- ▶ This is why Mormons keep extensive records of people and lineages, so that they may perform these rites, even for those who are dead
- ▶ In the grand scheme of Mormonism, these are simply more good works for Mormons to do in order to gain salvation, but what happens when a Mormon wants to leave?
- ▶ Let's watch Part 6: The Journey Out: Leaving the Mormon Faith

# Shattered Expectations

- ▶ Many times, ex-Mormons leave religion altogether, choosing to become atheists or agnostics
- ▶ This happens often, because they were so invested in the Mormon Church and when they find out it is a lie, they are devastated, hurt, and embarrassed
  - ▶ I find it strange that so much of our human intellect and emotion is wasted dwelling on the myths upon which all religions are founded. The conclusion that all religions are manmade was one of the greatest discoveries of my life. All religions are specifically designed by their originators to be self serving and designed to maintain social and political control of the adherents ....
    - ▶ Richard Williamson, former Mormon High Priest
- ▶ Discuss a time you learned you were badly mistaken about something you thought you knew

# Shattered Expectations

- ▶ Jesus' own followers faced similar disillusionment and shattered expectations. When Jesus entered Jerusalem the week before the Passover, His disciples felt the electricity in the crowds as they welcomed Him into the city, shouting and singing His praises. They watched His popularity grow through the week as He taught in the temple courts and thwarted the attacks of His enemies.
- ▶ What do you think Jesus' disciples expected would happen at that Passover?
- ▶ Read Luke 24:13-27. Why did Jesus' brutal, unexpected death strike them so hard?
- ▶ How big a part does embarrassment play in disillusionment?
- ▶ Why were these two followers so quick to dismiss the message of Jesus' resurrection from the women?

# Opportunity

- ▶ Perhaps our Lord will bless us with the privilege of sharing the Gospel to bring a Mormon out of the darkness. If so, we shouldn't be surprised if God calls us to walk with them through a dark time of doubt, disillusionment and anger as they recognize how they have been deceived. Nor should we be shocked if they want to shun all religion, and refuse to immediately accept our Christian witness.
- ▶ Or perhaps Jesus may bring us to walk alongside an ex-Mormon who is angrily living as a deist, atheist or agnostic because Satan has poisoned him or her to Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith's distortion. In either case, we shouldn't be surprised if their journey to Jesus Christ is a slow and painful process.
- ▶ We can learn several lessons from the way Jesus walked alongside the two Emmaus disciples and opened their eyes to the light:
- ▶ How did Jesus encourage His two disciples to include Him in the conversation?
- ▶ What are some ways you can imagine starting a spiritual conversation with a hurting ex-Mormon?

# Get it out

- ▶ Jesus was keenly aware of His disciples' pain and disillusionment. But instead of immediately rebuking them, correcting them, or revealing Himself to them, He encouraged them to express their sorrow and pain.
  - ▶ Why is it important to permit people to whom we witness to express their negative feelings, their hurts and disappointments, even their anger or unbelief?
- ▶ Jesus waited until they got it all out, and only then did He begin witnessing to them. For these two He used some almost shockingly strong words, calling them "foolish ones" and "slow of heart." But He only did this because they should have known better. He had frequently predicted His betrayal, arrest, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection to His followers.
  - ▶ Why would using such strong, corrective terms be inappropriate in the case of a Mormon who had been misled for so long?
  - ▶ Why do you think Jesus guided His followers through the Scriptures to explain His mission of salvation before revealing Himself alive to them?

# Life of faith

- ▶ It may take more than a single afternoon to help guide a Mormon or ex-Mormon to faith in Jesus Christ. But that's not our responsibility anyway. We are simply to be witnesses to what we know about Jesus. The Holy Spirit will be working mightily through our witness to bring them to saving faith in Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Coming out of Mormonism, they will be leaving behind a close, loyal, support system. Just as important as sharing the truth in love with them is being a genuine friend. Over time, you can prove your true Christian love and concern for them, and your words of witness will carry more weight with them.
  - ▶ What benefit would ex-Mormons find in Christian congregations that have a close family bond?
  - ▶ What can you do to help foster that close family bond in your congregation?