

# LDS Church Is a Cult — Cheat Sheet

## THEIR BEST ARGUMENTS (KNOW THESE)

- **Centralized authority** — Prophet as God's mouthpiece; "follow the prophet"; dissent is punished
- **Financial control** — 10% tithing tied to temple worthiness = coercion
- **Information control** — Suppressed history, correlated curriculum, "don't read anti-Mormon material"
- **Social isolation** — Leaving brings social consequences, strained family ties
- **Thought control** — Temple recommend interviews probe belief and behavior
- **Exclusive truth claims** — D&C 1:30: "only true and living church"
- **BITE model** — Steven Hassan's framework applied by critics and ex-members

## CORE RESPONSE: BIBLICAL RELIGION HAD ALL THESE "CULT" FEATURES

### Authority Is Biblical

- **Numbers 12:1-9** — Miriam and Aaron challenge Moses; God strikes Miriam with leprosy
- **Numbers 16:1-35** — Korah rebels against Moses; earth swallows him alive
- **Matthew 16:18-19** — Jesus gives Peter the **keys** of the kingdom — centralized authority
- **Acts 15:1-29** — Jerusalem Council issues **binding doctrinal decisions** for all churches
- **Hebrews 13:17** — "**Obey** them that have the rule over you, and **submit** yourselves"

### Tithing Is Biblical

- **Malachi 3:8-10** — Withholding tithes = **robbing God**
- **Acts 5:1-11** — Ananias and Sapphira **struck dead** for financial dishonesty in the early Church
- **Luke 14:33** — "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"

### Exclusive Truth Claims Are Biblical

- **John 14:6** — "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" — Christianity is the most exclusive claim in history
- **Acts 4:12** — "None other name under heaven... whereby we must be saved"
- **Galatians 1:8-9** — Paul pronounces **anathema** on anyone preaching a different gospel

### Church Discipline Is Biblical

- **Matthew 18:15-17** — Jesus's own discipline process ending in exclusion
- **1 Corinthians 5:1-5** — Paul commands excommunication: "deliver such an one unto Satan"
- **Titus 3:10** — "A man that is an heretick... reject"

If these features make a group a cult, then ancient Israel and the apostolic Church were cults.

## THE LDS CHURCH FAILS EVERY DESTRUCTIVE CULT CRITERION

Destructive Cult Feature	LDS Church Reality
Physical isolation / compound	Members live in normal communities, hold secular jobs, attend public schools
Cannot leave	Members leave freely; Church processes resignations
Sexual exploitation by leader	No such practice
Violence or threats	No such practice
Total financial exploitation	10% tithing (common in many faiths); Church provides welfare, education (BYU), humanitarian aid
Destruction of family ties	Central theology is <b>eternal families</b> ; Family Home Evening, temple sealings, genealogy

## ONE-LINE OBJECTION RESPONSES

Objection	Response
"The prophet is treated as infallible"	LDS doctrine does not teach infallibility. Brigham Young: "I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves" (JD 9:150)
"Tithing is coercion"	Malachi 3:8-10 ties tithing to covenant standing. Jesus said discipleship requires giving up everything (Luke 14:33). Financial sacrifice = biblical pattern
"Members who leave are shunned"	No formal shunning doctrine exists (unlike Jehovah's Witnesses). Individual social dynamics vary; Church teaches love for all
"BITE model proves it"	BITE model captures every organized religion, military, and many workplaces. It's too broad to be diagnostic
"Exclusive truth claims = cult"	Then Christianity itself is a cult (John 14:6, Acts 4:12). Every religion that claims truth claims some exclusivity
"Temple secrecy = cult"	Holy of Holies was restricted to the high priest (Heb 9:7). Jesus taught disciples privately (Mark 4:34). Sacred space is biblical
"Correlated curriculum = thought control"	D&C 88:118: "Seek out of the best books words of wisdom." D&C 9:8: "Study it out in your mind." Church encourages personal study and revelation

## LDS DOCTRINAL ANCHORS

- **D&C 9:8** — "Study it out in your mind; then ask if it be right" — individual reasoning commanded
- **D&C 88:118** — "Seek learning, even by study and also by faith"
- **Moroni 10:3-5** — Conversion based on personal prayer and revelation, not coercion
- **Articles of Faith 1:11** — "We claim the privilege of worshipping... according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege"
- **Articles of Faith 1:13** — "Honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, doing good to all men"

## THE HISTORICAL PATTERN

- **Early Christians** were called a dangerous cult (*superstitio*) by Romans (Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius)
- **Acts 24:5** — Christianity called "the sect [*haireisis*] of the Nazarenes"
- **Protestants** were labeled heretical sects by Catholics
- **Baptists, Quakers, Methodists** — all called cults in their early years
- Sociologist Rodney Stark: the difference between "cult" and "religion" is social power and time

## THE REAL QUESTION

Not "Does this group have authority, structure, and truth claims?" (every religion does), but "Does this group use coercion, violence, or deception to trap members?" The LDS Church encourages study, personal revelation, family, education, service, and allows free exit. The "cult" label is rhetoric, not argument.

### Resources:

- [FAIR: Is the Church a Cult?](#)
- [Gospel Topics Essays](#)