

Introduction

This series, *From Kolob to Calvary*, is for people who have left or are in the process of leaving the religion of the Latter-day Saints, but still believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

Whatever your reasons for leaving the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—A.K.A. Mormon Church or LDS Church—you've come to the conclusion that it isn't what it claims to be: "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (*Doctrine & Covenants 1:30*). Now what? You might be asking yourself some of the following questions:

- How will my spouse or children react?
- Will my spouse leave me?
- What will my LDS relatives say?
- How should I respond to ward members?
- Should I have my name removed from the records of the Church?
- Will I lose my job with an LDS employer?
- Will I get kicked out of my LDS school?
- Can I trust the Bible?
- What church should I join, if at all?

Leaving the Church is a complex issue with too many variables and dynamics to cover in-depth in an eBook series. Each situation has its own set of special needs; however, there are basic principles that apply regardless of your circumstances. If you need individualized advice or counseling for your specific circumstance, please consider your pastor or get a referral for a Christian counselor or lawyer.

From Kolob to Calvary eBooks are intended to assist readers by pointing them in the right direction and giving them basic tools and guidelines to make their transition out of Mormonism as painless as possible, helping them to once again feel hope and gain a sense of purpose.

At this point you've made or are in process of making the difficult decision to leave the Church. You're exhausted from reading, researching, staying up late, and losing sleep. On the one hand, you're tired of being told what to do. On the other hand, it would be a relief if someone *would* tell you what to do. You're bouncing back and forth like a pinball between an array of emotions; and to top things off—if you haven't experienced it yet—there's going to be fallout; collateral damage associated with your decision to leave Mormonism.

Following is an example of what you might be going through, excerpted from an article I wrote; *The Proper Care and Feeding of Ex-Mormons*; and in my book, *Mormonism, the Matrix, and Me*;

Imagine going home to your parents' house to visit. You go to the attic to look for something, and while poking around you find a small chest with some papers in it. You examine the documents and learn, to your horror, that you were born the opposite sex. So, if you are now a man you learn you were born female, and if you are a woman you learn you were born male. You were born the opposite of what your parents wanted, so they arranged for a sex-change operation when you were still an infant. Everything that you had thought about yourself, others, and the world was built on a lie. All the time you were growing up you felt different and didn't know why. The way you looked at life was based on who you thought you were and what you believed was true.

If something like this happened, your world would crumble around you. You wouldn't know *what* to trust, let alone *who* to trust. You would have to re-learn almost everything; the way you interacted with others, the way you dressed, and so much more, assuming you decided to return to the gender you were born as. Even if you stayed the artificial gender, there would be psychological ramifications. What if you had married? What if every major decision you made was based on what you thought was truth—that you were

a man (or a woman)? There would be so much fallout your head would be spinning. You would most likely experience rage, despair, grief, sorrow, anguish, mistrust, and confusion.

This is the closest analogy I can think of to describe what people coming out of Mormonism go through. The longer they were members of the Church, and the more they genuinely believed it to be true, the more severe their distress coming out. Someone who had been LDS all his or her life experiences greater tumult than someone who was a convert of only a year or two. However, even those who leave the Church after just a couple years experience a great sense of loss.

Obviously, the analogy only goes so far. In the story the parents foisted the deception knowingly upon the child. In real life, members of the Church are not intentionally deceiving people. This analogy is meant only to illustrate the emotional devastation many Mormons experience when they believe they've been played for fools. I, for one, certainly felt several of the emotions described in the story; at first disbelief, followed by anger, then sorrow, loss, and a sense of purposelessness, depression, and finally—after a few years—healing.

The good news is that healing is possible; sometimes partial, sometimes full. It just takes time, patience, and forgiveness of self and others. Some scars might never go away, as in cases where a TBM (True Blue Mormon, True Believing Mormon, or fill in your own acronym) spouse divorces you or tries to keep you from your children. You might feel alone and wonder if anyone else is going through the same heartache as you. The answer is a resounding yes; you are not alone. A great number of people are exiting the Mormon Church every day; enough to cause concern among LDS Church officials. Two (of many) news articles highlight the issue:

[Special Report: Mormonism Besieged by the Modern Age](#) (Reuters, January 31, 2012)

[High-ranking Mormon Leader Goes from Disciple to Doubter](#) (Salt Lake Tribune, July 22, 2013)

Family devastation, broken relationships, and ostracism resulting from leaving the Church, however, is not exclusive to Mormonism. Wherever there are deeply-held beliefs and religious convictions within families or communities—whether Mormon, Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Fundamentalist, Protestant, or what-have-you—personal conflicts are inevitable when individuals leave that circle of faith.

The presumption in this series is that you still have faith in God and embrace a Judeo-Christian worldview. As you go through the process of leaving Mormonism behind, and of preserving or reconciling your relationships, remember to rely on God's strength. Be prayerful. Be careful. And don't beat yourself up when you blow it. We all make mistakes. Countless ex-Mormons have made mistakes. We've said and done things we wish we hadn't. That's part of being human. That's what this book is about: the mistakes I and others have made as we left Mormonism and the things we could have done differently. I hope it will be helpful in your exodus.

That being said, it's time to get started with moving ahead, establishing peace with those you love most, and regaining your sense of purpose and mission.