

Out of Mormonism: A Woman's True Story Study Guide

Out of Mormonism: A Woman's True Story by Judy Robertson

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Plot Summary

Out of Mormonism by Judy Robertson provides the account of Judy and Jim Robertson's journey into Mormonism. Judy had been someone disappointed with the Christian church that her family attended in her hometown of Fayetteville, Arkansas. She had a dust-up with the co-director of the church's Vacation Bible School and was at a loss as to how to handle the conflict because, she relates, she had not lived with the strength of the scriptures. Even though she had been a Christian all her life, she had never really studied the Bible and therefore did not have the wisdom necessary to handle crises and live the daily life of a Christian.

Jim took Judy and their two children with him to Mesa, Arizona, on what was part family vacation and part work. He had to oversee the potato harvesting for his client, Campbell's Soup. Jim had boasted about some friends he had made during his many trips to Mesa. Joe Jackson was one of the finest people he had ever met. Judy was a little apprehensive. She knew that Joe and his family were Mormons, a religion which she knew nothing about. Once the Robertsons had settled in, she agreed with her husband that Joe and the other Mormons they met were wonderful people.

There was an emptiness within Judy and felt she was not fulfilled spiritually. The Mormon people were welcoming and invited the Robertsons and their children to join them for Sunday services at the nearby chapel. The Robertson's eagerly accepted their invitation and began attending the church. Soon, the Robertsons were under pressure from all directions to join the church. Partly from a feeling of wanting to belong and make friends, both for themselves and their children, they eventually caved to the pressures and joined the church. They returned to Arkansas and joined a Mormon church in the area, although the congregation size was very small. After a year, the family returned to Arizona where they were accepted as full LDS members after a year of probation. The strange ceremony they endured in the temple was unsettling. They were warned not to tell any outsiders about what went on in the temple.

Seven years passed and Judy struggled to live up to the demands of the Mormon church but was overcome with a growing depression and a nagging that she had lost the God she had loved all her life. A business venture took the family back to Mesa, where they moved permanently. A short time after they returned to Mesa, Judy and Jim began reading the Bible and both realized that the Mormon religion was a false religion—a religion that did not follow the laws of the Lord but were guided by those of man.

The Robertsons left the church and received no support or understanding from any Mormons, even those who they thought were good friends. They banded together with other ex-Mormons and dissatisfied Mormons and created a group called Concerned Christians. The group counseled others through their difficult times and decisions to turn to Christ and away from the Mormon church. The group had an international outreach and helped Christians around the world to resist the lure of Mormonism.

Chapter 1, The Weakness

Chapter 1, The Weakness Summary and Analysis

Judy and Jim Robertson and their kids—Janet six and Steve four—traveled to the Arizona farmlands so that Jim could check on the foods being harvested for his Campbell's Soup account. Jim was boasting about Joe Jackson and his family, who were Mormons. Judy had never heard of Mormons before, but Jim assured her that they were very devoted to their religion; in fact, their lives revolved around it. After spending a large part of the summer with the family, Judy began to see their appeal.

Perhaps Judy was more impressed because of a recent experience she had with her own church in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Judy had a conflict with the co-director of the Bible school who accused Judy of trying to change the traditional Bible school program. Jim told her she should have told the woman off, but that wasn't Judy's nature. She found she wasn't close enough to God or familiar enough with the Bible to understand how she should handle it, so she just stuffed it and looked forward to the family vacation and meeting the wonderful Jackson family.

Joe Jackson met the Robertsons when they arrived. The Jackson family was very accommodating and friendly, taking the family out for dinner and to their church. Judy was surprised by the kindness of the Mormons who seemed more "Christian" than some of the Christians she knew. When Judy and Jim married, they decided to join the First Christian Church. Jim had been raised in the Lutheran Church and Judy in the Disciples of Christ. They both became leaders in their church. Judy played the piano for Sunday School, became co-director of the Vacation Bible School and President of the Christian Youth Fellowship. Jim became vice chairman of the church board.

Judy's faith was weakened from her incident with the co-director of the Bible school. Sensing that weakness, Judy realized later that Satan was lurking when the family traveled to Arizona—a trip that would change their lives forever.



Chapter 2, The Questions

Chapter 2, The Questions Summary and Analysis

Queen Creek, the region where the family was staying, was heavily populated with members of the Jackson family. Joe's sister, Lyn, and her husband, Larry, were very friendly and took Janet and Steve along with their kids to Sunday school. On one occasion, Judy stopped by Sunday school to see what it was like. She was impressed when a little three-year-old stood at the podium and led a prayer for the group. At the chapel, two sixteen-year-old boys led the sacrament ritual, passing around bread and water for communion.

Judy was impressed with the Bishop's Storehouse, which was a church-run cannery where grapefruits and oranges from church-owned farms were canned. Church members on welfare manned the cannery's production lines. The women's Relief Society made clothing for needy church members. Judy learned that every Mormon church in the world used the same material each Sunday. The Mormon church seemed to present a wonderful way to live. But there were questions—why did the Mormon's fast every Sunday? Lyn explained that they donate the money they would have spent for food to the needy. The more Judy heard, the more appealing the religion seemed. Judy and Jim didn't have much time to discuss their thoughts on the Mormon religion simply because he worked from dawn until dusk in the fields each day. The couple had no idea how vulnerable they were to the "slick package of Mormonism" (p. 22).



Chapter 3, Tempter's Snare

Chapter 3, Tempter's Snare Summary and Analysis

One evening after dinner at Larry's, two men in white shirts and black pants and tie joined them. They referred to themselves as Elder Wilson and Elder White. Judy thought the "Elder" title was a little unsettling, but the men were very knowledgeable about the history of the Mormon church and religion. The two men suggested that they get together again the next week with Judy and Jim.

At their next encounter with the two elders, they were presented with a presentation which explained the vision of Joseph Smith and his rise in the church. In 1820, the fourteen-year-old Joseph Smith, they were told, saw the vision of angel-like beings. One being referred to the other as "This is My Beloved Son." Present-day prophets interpreted that Smith had encountered the separate entities of Father and Son. Smith was told not to join any of the current religious sects because they were all abominations.

Judy and Jim thought the story about Smith's encounter was weird but the people were nice and they admired the impeccable lifestyle. Since Judy and Jim would be leaving to return home soon, the elders wanted to meet every night because time was running out. They were pressured to join the church—people were praying for them to make the right decision. They received calls at home pressuring them to join. The pressure worked.

Chapter 4, Strong Delusion

Chapter 4, Strong Delusion Summary and Analysis

Before Jim and Judy returned to Arkansas, they accompanied the Jacksons to their family home in Salt Lake, where they toured various religious historical sites and learned more about the church. They learned how the "saints" struggled in their journey and how Brigham Young had discovered the valley where Salt Lake City would eventually be established. The word "saints" is contained in the other name the Mormon church is known by, the Church of the Latter-Day Saints. Judy immediately felt uncomfortable when they were referred to as "Brother and Sister Robertson." Larry took the couple to the Beehive House, where Young lived with his many wives. The logo of the state is the beehive, which represents the work and spiritual ethic of the people. A visit to the famous Mormon Tabernacle was awe-inspiring, making Judy think its majesty surely was appropriate for the house of God. The Robertsons were not allowed in the temple itself. They would have to prove their worthiness over the next year to become Mormons. Judy came to think of the Mormon Church as the one true church—after all, it was handed down by Jesus Christ himself.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary and Analysis

In chapter five, one requirement the Robertsons had to meet was giving up all vices including drinking coffee, tea or alcohol and smoking—this according to the Doctrine and Covenants, one of the four books of Mormon scripture. Back in Arkansas, they abandoned friends from their former church—even family gatherings became strained. Eventually, their wedding vows would have to be performed again in the Mormon temple. They found a local Mormon church which was housed in a dreary store-front building. The Mormon hymns they sang made Judy uncomfortable. They referred to a "prophet" and a "heavenly mother." After years of Christian beliefs, Judy was suddenly singing "to a god with flesh and bones who had a wife and spawned millions of spirit babies" (p. 36)

In chapter six, Judy played the piano for the dozen children who attended LDS Sunday school. The children learned to have allegiance to Joseph Smith and referred to him as a prophet of God and to the Mormon church as the only true church. The children ended their testimonies by invoking the name of Jesus Christ. The children, including the Robertson kids, learned about the pioneering saints who found their way to Utah where they were free to establish the Mormon religion. The children learned lessons prepared by the church hierarchy in Salt Lake City—not traditional Bible scripture.

Judy partnered with another woman and became a "visiting teacher." They had a list of Mormon women they had to call on every month to find out why they hadn't been attending church. Judy dreaded these visits, but since the Bishop asked her to take on this assignment, she couldn't say no. She was "called" to perform this function. Jim advanced quickly to become second counselor to the branch president. He discreetly told Judy he didn't like being called President Robertson. Judy had to pick up some kids after school for primary lessons and bring them back home afterward—the round trip would sometime take hours. She was exhausted by the work that was required of her by the Primary school and Women's Relief Society. Judy started to feel depressed.

Making Judy's demeanor more gloomy, the church needed more room for its growing number and moved to rented rooms in a funeral home. Judy's Primary class was held in a dark room in the basement of the funeral home. Judy felt more than uncomfortable teaching not the doctrine of Jesus Christ who lived and died for man's sin but rather the Mormon doctrine that taught that by good works, Mormons would have a place in one of three heavens. Deep down inside, Judy knew that she was teaching a false gospel that would doom her own and other children.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary and Analysis

In chapter seven, Nell, the Primary president, confided in Judy that she had no friend she could talk to and that she wouldn't dare share her real thoughts with anyone at church. Nell confided that her son, Chuck, was in trouble with the law. Her husband, Mike, was a branch president. They would be shamed if the church found out about their family problems because if Mormon gospel is followed properly, life would go smoothly. Judy didn't know how to respond but promised they'd talk again. But that never happened. Nell died of a heart attack soon after, making Judy feel guilty that she hadn't allowed Nell to open up to her.

Nell could only have two children, a failure for a Mormon woman who was expected to "bring down as many spirit babies" (p. 42) as possible so that they could have bodies and one day return to the Heavenly Father. Judy was pursuing her nursing degree at the University of Arkansas. She learned that there were anti-Mormonism books in the library. She told a Mormon friend that she wanted to check some out but her friend told her it was against church doctrine. Mormons were supposed to be persecuted—it was a sign that theirs was the true church. Judy didn't read the books but remained curious.

In chapter eight, after one year of "proving" themselves, Judy and Jim were to be interviewed for final acceptance. After passing their final test, they entered the LDS temple grounds in June 1967, along with their children. Inside the temple, a woman led the children away and Jim and Judy were separated. Judy had to undress and don a white robe referred to as a "shield." The ritual that she would be undergoing would result in a cleansing of her body and blood.

Judy was led to a sink where she was told to wash every part of her body. A temple worker then poured oil onto her head and into her own hand. The woman anointed each part of Judy's body in preparation for her to become a Queen and High Priestess of the church. Judy was feeling less and less comfortable as the ceremony progressed. The temple worker then pulled under garments onto Judy. These garments represent the garments given to Adam when he was found naked in the Garden of Eden. The garment stretched from her neck to just above her knees. She was told she would have to wear it under all her clothing the rest of her life. It was not a comfortable garment. Next, Judy was re-named. Her new name was Augusta.

After the cleansing story, Judy was given her temple frock—all white and to the floor, and white moccasins and hose. She was led to the Creation room to receive the endowment. In this room men in their white frocks were seated on one side and women, all in white, were on the other. She was told to not talk to anyone. Judy wanted to run away but didn't know to where.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary and Analysis

In chapter nine, a man addressed the group in the Creation room. The men were called "Brethren" and told they were being anointed as kings and priest of the church. The women, the "Sisters," were becoming queens and priestesses to their husbands. They were warned if they failed in their devotion, they would come before God for judgment. Two men performed a drama depicting how the world was created from "matter unorganized." The group heard that Michael had helped form the earth and later Elohim and Jehovah caused him to fall into a deep sleep, after which he awoke and became Adam.

The drama continued with the Mormon version of the temptation of Adam and Eve. Lucifer tempted them with fruit and told them to wear fig leaves so they wouldn't upset God. The narrator of the play instructed the new Mormons to tie bright green aprons, decorated with fig leaves, around their waists. Lucifer challenged Elohim's power and waged war on Him. The man playing Elohim had the women vow to abide by the laws of their husbands. The men had to vow to keep the word of God. The new recruits had to swear to obey each of the "tokens" of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. Judy accepted each law and rule and agreed to cut her throat if she did not follow them. The officiator showed them how to make the sign of the priesthood and made them swear to never reveal the first token of the Aaronic priesthood.

Next, in chapter ten, a witness couple demonstrated to the others the second token of the priesthood. The new members were told to use their given name if it was their first time in the temple and a dead person's name if not. By this time, Judy felt she was in a nightmare from which she could not escape. After this ceremony, they were told they would hear a lecture. Judy wasn't sure she could withstand it. She wondered where her mind had gone and why she couldn't stand up to something she didn't believe in.

The lecturer began by cautioning the new members to never reveal to outsiders what goes on inside the temple. They were led in another room where she saw Jim for the first time since they arrived. He looked odd in the chef's-like hat the men were forced to wear. If it hadn't been such a nightmare, she would have laughed at him. The new Mormons formed a circle and were taught secret code words and handshakes that they would need to know. The officiator held a large white sheet in front of each person and made them repeat what they had learned in the endowment ceremony. As the sheet was held before her, the officiator embraced Judy on five parts of her body. He placed his right foot inside her right foot, his knee to her knee, his breast to her breast, his hand at her back and his mouth to her ear.

After the awkward embrace, Judy was allowed in the Celestial Room, waiting for Jim to get through the ritual. When he entered the room, a ceremony was held to seal their marriage forever. Next Janet and Steven, also dressed in white, were returned to them



and were included in the rest of the "sealing" ceremony. When they were alone, they only remarked that it was a weird experience—they were not to discuss the details of what they had undergone even with each other. Later they told Lyn and Larry they thought it was a strange ritual. Lyn and Larry told them they'd understand it better after they'd gone through it a couple more times. Judy thought, more times! From now on they'd be performing the ceremony for the dead. Judy and Jim and the kids returned to Fayetteville as temple Mormons. Judy felt as though she had lost her freedom and had just eaten the forbidden fruit herself.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary and Analysis

In chapter eleven, Judy struggled with her body garment—it was difficult to get on and crumpled up, making life very uncomfortable. The garment was to be next to their skin at all times. Judy became very depressed and fatigued. After being checked out by her physician, he recommended she see a psychiatrist. She was reluctant to do so because she knew she couldn't tell anyone what was bothering her, but she was so depressed that she made an appointment. However, when she got there she froze and could not continue the sessions. Judy went through the motions of being a Mormon woman, wearing a mask-like smile on her face, repressing her real feelings.

Jim secured property for the church on Zion Road, which the elders thought was by divine providence. The church office in Salt Lake City provided the precise architectural plans for the church, which would pay for ninety percent of the costs and the families would share the other ten percent. The priesthood leaders in the branch had authority over the church members and when they asked for the money they needed to finish the church, everyone had to obey, poor members of the church included. Judy wondered where the God she knew from childhood was.

In chapter twelve, Jim was asked to go into the potato business with Joe and Larry. They were going to build a potato chip factory in Mesa. The family would be in a larger Mormon community. Judy didn't want to go—they'd be leaving their family and the home they designed and built. Their kids—now numbering three with the addition of son, Kirk, —would miss growing up with grandparents and cousins. But Jim wanted to go and, after all, he was the head of the family and a member of the priesthood, so Judy didn't argue. It had been seven years since the temple ceremony but it still haunted Judy. She tried to be positive and thought that perhaps she'd feel better there surrounded by a larger Mormon community.

Before they left for Arizona, John Maguire and his son, Dale, stopped by. John had just accepted Christ and wanted to know how Jim's relationship with Christ was. Jim said it was solid and that he still read the scriptures and now had more scriptures to read—those of the Book of Mormon. After they prayed together, the Maguires left. Jim commented that it was a shame that John didn't know the "truth."

The Robertsons bought a four-bedroom house just outside Mesa. It was barren and dusty—the kids missed the grass and woods back of Arkansas. As it turned out, the potato chip factory wasn't a feasible venture. Jim evaluated the cost and found that it was three times as expensive as Joe and Larry had figured. Jim, an experienced businessman, had no trouble finding a job. He was hired at the largest financial institution in Arizona. The family attended the Mormon chapel near their home and Judy soon was recruited to serve as Primary president for the summer.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary and Analysis

In chapter thirteen, as den mother for the chapel's Cub Scout troop, two young boys told Judy they saw one of the older boys smoking and that he was a bad person. Judy told the boys that the boy wasn't bad. But, they asked, if he wasn't bad, why wouldn't he be allowed in the temple? That question lingered with Judy.

Another requirement of the church was for each family to have enough food to last a year. Judy wasn't living up to that rule and a friend warned her that she needed to comply. The church wanted its families to be prepared in case of an emergency or natural disaster. A class of genealogy and family exaltation was offered at Sunday School. Genealogy was important because dead relatives were waiting to be baptized by proxy. Judy looked up the subject of genealogy in the Bible. Scripture in the Book of Timothy was in conflict with the teaching of the Mormon Church. In Timothy, it specifically stated to disregard "endless genealogies." Judy was stunned and prayed to God for an answer.

That night, Judy couldn't sleep. She wandered into the living room and fell to her knees. It was the first time in many years that she felt His presence. She asked Him if He would allow a person who smoked into His house. The answer came back loud and clear that of course God would allow everyone in. God invites the sinner in. More questions rushed into her mind. She realized that the teachings of the Mormon Church were not the laws of God but were the laws of man. Judy had found Jesus again and knew that Jesus was the truth—not the Mormon Church.

In chapter fourteen, Judy had to find a way to tell Jim about her revelation. Jim had resigned from teaching Sunday school and didn't even want to attend church any longer. Judy's depression and Jim's loss of interest in the church had caused a stress on their marriage. After dinner that evening, Judy told Jim about her experiences and that she was convinced that the Mormon church was not the true church. To her surprise and delight, Jim had been having the same thoughts and feelings. Jim had been reading the Bible for about a year. When he read that the only mediator between God and man was Christ, he knew that the current Mormon prophet who claimed to be the liaison between man and God was a false notion. They talked through the night and knew they could no longer be LDS members but weren't sure how they would go about quitting. Jim said they should start by telling their friends, Greg and Linda. Greg was a second counselor in the bishopric. They would tell them first. He was sure they would understand.

Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary and Analysis

In chapter fifteen, immediately after their decision, Jim and Judy wrestled with the problem of what to do about the children. All their friends were Mormons and all their activities involved the church. Even though the kids were young—Janet was twelve, Steve ten and Kirk four—they decided to hit the issue head on and tell the kids what they had decided and how they came to their conclusions. Janet teared up—she was the president of the Merry Miss club. Steve was worried about having to quit his scout group. Even though the kids were unhappy, Jim and Judy knew they were acting in their best interests.

The next day, Judy and Jim visited Bishop Nelson in his office. Jim wasted no time, immediately telling the Bishop that they were leaving the church and that the church was in conflict with the teachings of Jesus. The Bishop advised them to study the Book of Mormon and pray. The truth would be revealed to them. Jim responded that the Book of Mormon contains references to men becoming gods, which doesn't square with the teachings of Christ. The Bishop ended the meeting confident that the Robertsons would be back.

That evening, Jim and Judy visited their friends, Greg and Linda. Greg had the same reaction as the Bishop. The Robertsons were just struggling with questions that many people have but would soon know the truth and be back in the church. Jim was frustrated—didn't his friend even want to know why they were leaving? Greg reminded Jim that his marriage was sealed in the temple and ask if he enjoyed sex. The reasons for their leaving were irrelevant and that the important thing was that they would return. Linda sat tongue-tied and had nothing to add to the conversation. On the way home, Jim was furious about Greg's not-so-veiled inference that their sex life would be impacted by their decision.

In chapter sixteen, word spread quickly in the ward that the Robertsons were leaving the church. Janet was upset—she was cornered by her friends and even a teacher, demanding to know why they were leaving. Steve's friends weren't allowed to play with him any longer. Donna, a friend and neighbor, was in tears when she reminded Judy what she was giving up. Judy responded by telling her to save her tears for those who don't know the Lord.

Judy visited Bishop Nelson again, this time alone to tell him she was resigning as den mother of the scouts. The Bishop took the opportunity to tell her that Jim was leading her down a very dark path. She assured him that it was a personal decision on her part and that Jim had not coerced her into leaving the church. That evening, Jim and Judy decided to burn all garments and items that were connected to the Mormon church. It would be a symbolic move that would put finality to their decision. They gathered all the LDS books, songbooks, food storage instructions, lessons, garments and other items



into boxes. They loaded the boxes into their truck and set off for the desert. They found an abandoned spot in a dry wash and set their belongings on fire. A heavy burden seemed to lift from their soldiers as they watched the fire take away items that had dominated their lives for seven years.

Judy wrote her parents, telling them about their decision. Her parents were thrilled. A short month later, Judy's father died. She was thankful that he learned they had found Christ again before he died.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary and Analysis

In chapter seventeen, on Sundays, the Robertsons drove to a spot on a foothill where they could overlook a scenic valley. They planned to hold their private church services there until they could find a church. The family would pray together and Judy would read scriptures and psalms from the Bible. They prayed that the Lord would lead them to a new church. Feeling alone and friendless, Jim and Judy called John Maguire that afternoon for some needed support. Lorene and John were glad to hear from them and thankful that they had found Christ. They had been praying for them for the past seven years. Lorene told Judy that they needed to find Christian friends. Judy readily agreed—she and Jim and their kids needed to have Christian friends.

Judy looked in the yellow pages and found a church called Central, which was listed as a Christian church. They decided to try it out. They were apprehensive when they ventured into the small church the next Sunday. Amazingly, the pastor read from a scripture that said that any prophet was accursed who taught anything contrary to the gospel. The sermon seemed to be directed right at the Robertsons. Judy prayed to thank God for leading them there. At the end of the sermon, the pastor shook hands with each of them. They both felt a genuine warmth from the pastor and planned to return to the church.

In chapter eighteen, Judy had joined a Bible group that studied three new verses each week. Judy was assigned a verse that cautioned against letting man corrupt one's devotion to the Lord through "philosophy or vain deceit" (p. 116). Jim was studying the scriptures as well and they both continually found verses that applied to their experience. Judy happily returned to drinking coffee—something that the Mormons had forbidden. But not drinking coffee was a law of man not of the Lord. Judy was able to enjoy her morning coffee once again.

Their new church offered an "Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts", seminar which sounded perfectly suited for Janet, who was struggling with the adjustment to their new life. The Robertson's didn't have the \$55 dollars that the seminar cost for family attendance. Judy prayed for a way to find the money so that they could attend the conference. Suddenly, it struck Judy that she could sell an 100-pound sack of pinto beans that she had been forced to buy and store. Judy was able to sell the sack of beans for \$55, exactly what she needed, to a dry food outlet. The incident only strengthened her faith in the Lord.

The family attended the seminar and found ways through the gospel in which to deal with the problems many teens encounter. The Robertsons also attended the Billy Graham Crusade at Arizona State University. Janet went forward that night and accepted Christ in her life. Both Janet and Steve were baptized by the youth pastor at the church.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary and Analysis

In chapter nineteen, Judy wanted to tell all her Mormon friends about the truth her family had learned—that the Mormon church was teaching anti-gospel lies. Judy was sincerely concerned that her Mormon friends were dooming themselves and committing themselves to Lucifer. Judy asked for the Lord to help her find a way to help them. In an effort to help the first friends they made in Mesa, Jim and Judy decided to visit Joe and Ellen to tell them why they left the church and how they had found Jesus Christ again. They brought with them a list of Mormon teachings that conflicted with the Bible. But Joe and Ellen were mainly silent during their visit and made no signs that they were willing to open their hearts or minds to Jim and Judy's revelations.

Jim and Judy complied with the request to present a comparison between Mormonism and Christianity at Sunday School. Since there were so many Mormons in the area, church members were curious about the people and the religion. The most important point they got across to the curious church members was that they had been vulnerable to the influence of the Mormon church because they hadn't studied the scriptures. Church members referred friends and family members who were struggling with the Mormon faith to Jim and Judy. Judy and Jim were happy to counsel these people using both their knowledge of the scriptures and their first-hand experience with the Mormon church.

In chapter twenty, Beth and Chet, who were on the verge of joining the Mormon Church, were sent to Judy and Jim. After the Robertsons made their presentation, the couple was relieved that they found out the truth about the church in time but were angered that they had almost been led astray. Beth wanted to form a group to educate people about Mormonism. The next week, Beth and Chet and the Robertsons met with a small group of people who were all interested in learning more about Mormonism. Beth began her talk by proclaiming that Mormonism was a cult. Someone pushed back and said that Mormons seemed to be fine, religious people. Many thought that Mormonism was just another Christian denomination and didn't consider it a threat.

Bob Johnson was at the meeting and he agreed that the Mormon church kept people from Jesus. The Mormons believed that the only way to receive salvation was through Joseph Smith. Pastor Charles Cook and the minister of education from Judy's church were present. They thought it was a good idea to alert people about the techniques the Mormons use to lure new members. The group met weekly and developed ways in which to deal with the Mormon presence. Their two-pronged approach would be to teach Christians about Mormonism and educate Mormons about the difference between their religion and Christianity.

The group placed an ad in the newspaper inviting former LDS members to join them. Many people wound up attending the meetings, which had the feel of a 12-step

program. Each meeting was opened with a prayer and everyone had the opportunity to air their grievances and share their experiences. There was study and discussion of the gospel. The group was asked to hold seminars at various churches who observed that some of their members, especially younger ones, were being lured by the Mormons. Jim and Judy had begun a ministry that still was destined to grow.



Chapters 21, 22 and 23 and Epilogue

Chapters 21, 22 and 23 and Epilogue Summary and Analysis

In chapter twenty-one, an anonymous donor who signed a letter to Jim and Judy as "a fellow concerned Christian in spirit" (p. 139), sent a check for \$400 to help cover the cost of a booklet on how to witness to a Mormon that the group was preparing. The man felt it was urgent to complete and distribute the information as soon as possible. If the booklet was not completed by a certain date, the person asked that his check be returned to him. Jim and Judy shared the letter and the challenge with the group. Everyone was on board and the booklet was completed on time. When Judy took the booklet to the printers, she found it was going to cost way more than \$400 to print. Bill, the printer, looked through the material, agreed with it and volunteered to do the printing for the \$400. "Witness to Mormons," first printed in 1979, has been distributed and sold in over sixty-four countries.

The group received letters of thanks from many people who benefited from the booklet. The group began placing excerpts from the book in weekly paid ads in the Mesa Tribune. After several ads were placed, a Mormon convert, Max Jennings, called and complained to the paper that the Concerned Christian group wasn't placing ads to further Christianity, they were trying to tear down his faith. The newspaper decided to no longer run ads from the group. The group only wanted to force the Mormons to be more transparent in their beliefs and educate unsuspecting people.

In chapter twenty-two, in March 1983, Concerned Christians showed a film, "The Godmakers," at Centennial Hall in Mesa to a packed audience of 1,500 people. It was a documentary that featured interviews of former LDS members. Judy and Jim were both interviewed for the film. "The Godmakers" was shown for Ex-Mormons for Jesus groups throughout the country. The film made clear that Mormonism was not based on the Biblical Jesus. A firestorm followed, erupting on the Mesa Tribune editorial page and on the pulpit. The Robertson's pastor devoted sermons to the issue. A Catholic monsignor weighed in, as did the publisher of the newspaper, who called the attack on the Mormons "repugnant." Max Jennings continued his campaign to silence the Concerned Christians. Despite the controversy, former LDS members continued to seek guidance from the group. Although it was a bumpy ride for Judy and Jim, they had no regrets for speaking out and exposing Mormonism for what it was. When Judy wrote this book, twenty-eight years after leaving the Mormon church, she and Jim continued their efforts to expose Mormonism as a false religion.

In chapter twenty-three, at the height of the Concerned Christians campaign to expose Mormonism, the bank where Jim worked warned him that some big Mormon customers were threatening to pull their funds. Jim told his bosses he was being called by the Lord and wouldn't be silenced. Due to the continuing pressure of the Mormons, Jim was eventually removed from his job as Vice President of Personnel and was given a

temporary community-service assignment. After that assignment ended, Jim was told that he had to either stop speaking out against the Mormons or he would lose his employment. Jim left the bank and soon decided to work full time for Concerned Christians. The job was fulfilling for Jim and he and Judy continued to minister to people who were confused about their Mormon religion and those who had left the church.

In the epilogue, between 1987 to 1993, Jim and Judy traveled in the Samoan and Tongan islands in the South Pacific to minister to people who were being heavily influenced by Mormon missionaries. They helped to establish Bible camps and seminars for pastors throughout the region. After they returned to Mesa in 2001, the Concerned Christians organization had expanded and needed larger office space. They purchased a building two blocks behind the Mesa LDS temple where they continue their work.



Characters

Judy Robertson

Judy Robertson had been raised in a Christian church all her life. After she and her husband, Jim, married, they joined the First Christian Church in their hometown of Fayetteville, Arkansas. They and their two children attended services and Sunday School at the church. Judy knew that she had never learned the scriptures well enough to live by them. When the family spent a summer in Mesa, Arizona, they began attending Mormon services with friends and neighbors they met. Judy and Jim eventually became members of the LDS, which Judy eventually considered the biggest mistake they ever made.

Judy struggled for years trying to be a "good" Mormon woman, but she became depressed and felt an inner void that she had never experienced before. Later, after leaving the Mormon church, she realized that the emptiness she felt was her own abandonment of Jesus Christ. Reflecting on why she had been led astray by Mormonism, she attributed it to her lack of in-depth knowledge of the Bible and the guidance that the gospel provided for living a good Christian life. Once Judy had the realization that her life had declined without the Lord, she turned back to Him and felt a huge burden lifted off her shoulders.

Judy and Jim banded together with others who had similar experiences with the Mormon Church and created a group called Concerned Christians. The group counseled former LDS members and Mormons who were contemplating leaving the Mormon church. Their reach was far and wide—they literally helped Christians all over the world resist the lure of the Mormon Church—a church that was not the true church as they boasted but taught the laws of man that were in direct conflict with the laws of Jesus Christ.

Jim Robertson

Jim Robertson had been raised in the Lutheran Church and joined the First Christian Church in his hometown of Fayetteville, Arkansas, after he married his wife, Judy. Jim spent time in Mesa, Arizona, overseeing produce for his client during harvesting seasons. He brought his wife and children with him one summer on a working vacation. They stayed all summer, during which time they decided to join the Mormon church. Looking back on this decision, Jim agrees with Judy that they were naïve and not well-versed enough in the scriptures to recognize that the Mormon church was not the "true church" it purported to be; rather, it was a false church that followed the laws of the man, Joseph Smith, who founded the church in the 1800s. Jim kept silent about his growing dissatisfaction with the Mormon church. The officials at the church warned Jim and Judy not to discuss anything that they witnessed in the temple—not even with each other.



Jim began reading the Bible and had the growing conviction that the Mormon church did not follow the laws of the gospel at all and that it was not the church for him and his family. Jim and Judy left the church and formed a group—Concerned Christians—to help others who were going through the same struggle and experience that they had. Jim was so devoted to the cause of exposing Mormonism for what it was, that he lost his job over it. The bank where Jim was a Vice President was continuously pressured by wealthy Mormons to silence Jim. If they couldn't get their Vice President to stop his campaign against Mormonism, the wealthy Mormons threatened to remove their deposits. Jim told his bosses he would never be silenced and left the bank. The Concerned Christians went on with their work to expose Mormonism as anti-Christian and to help Christians resist the strange lure of the church.

Joe Jackson

Joe Jackson was a potato farmer and was one of the first friends that Jim Robertson met while he worked in Mesa, Arizona. Joe influenced Jim and his family to join the Mormon church.

Bishop Nelson

Bishop Nelson was the head of the Mormon temple that the Robertsons belonged to. When they told Bishop Nelson that they were leaving the Mormon church, he didn't want to know the reason but was confident that they'd be back.

Janet, Steve and Kirk Robertson

Janet, Steve and Kirk were the children of Jim and Judy Robertson. The two older children, Janet and Steve, had a difficult time leaving the church. Their Mormon friends weren't allowed to play with them after the family left the church.

Greg and Linda

Greg and Linda were Mormons and good friends of Jim and Judy Robertson. The Robertsons were sure that Greg and Linda would be supportive but were disappointed when their friends told them they would eventually come to their senses and return to the Mormon church.

Lyn and Larry Jackson

Larry was the brother of Joe Jackson. Larry and his wife, Lyn, were good friends of the Robertsons until they decided to leave the Mormon church.



Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith is the founder of the Mormon Church. He was the first prophet of the church and claimed to have been visited by angel-like beings who told him that they were god and his son, two separate entities.

Brigham Young

Brigham Young was in the first group of "saints" who arrived in Utah to establish the Mormon church and be free to worship.

John and Lorene Maguire

After leaving the Mormon church, Jim called his old friends, John and Lorene Maguire, back in Arkansas. The Maguires were thrilled that they had left the Mormon church and advised them to find Christian friends as soon as they could.



Objects/Places

Mormonism

The Mormon church was established in 1820 by Joseph Smith who saw visions of angel-like beings when he was fourteen years old. These beings identified themselves as god and his son. Based on this experience, Mormonism was created and established man-made laws that are in conflict with the gospel.

Christianity

Christianity is the faith that follows the laws of Jesus Christ as described in Bible scriptures and in the gospel. Followers of Jesus Christ do not adhere to any mediator between Christ and those who are devoted to him.

Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon is, according to Mormonism, a continuation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a book that is not recognized by Christian faiths.

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Jim and Judy Robertson were born and raised in Fayetteville, Arkansas. They were both raised as Christians and when they married joined the First Christian Church of Fayetteville.

Mesa, Arizona

The Robertsons moved to Mesa, Arizona, on a business venture and to strengthen their declining faith in the Mormon religion. They eventually left the church and returned to Christianity. They helped established the Concerned Christians group in Mesa.

Mormon Temple

Only members of the Mormon church are allowed to enter a Mormon temple. LDS members are cautioned by church officials to never reveal to outsiders what takes place inside the temples.



Phoenix, Arizona

After his business venture in Mesa failed, Jim Robertson took a position with a large financial institute that was located in Phoenix, Arizona. Jim eventually left his position as VP of Personnel when he refused to cave to pressures to stop speaking out against Mormonism.

Samoa and Tongan Islands

Jim and Judy Robertson ministered to Christians in the Samoan and Tongan islands in the South Pacific between 1987 to 1993. They set up Bible groups and taught the people ways in which to avoid being lured by Mormon missionaries.

The Godmakers

The Godmakers was a film about the struggle of Christians who had become involved in the Mormon church. The film was created by a group of ex-LDS members and was shown in Mesa, Arizona, where the Robertsons lived, as well as all across the United States.

Salt Lake City, Utah

The Mormon Church is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. The region where Salt Lake City was founded was discovered by Brigham Young.



Themes

Christianity

Judy and Jim Robertson had been Christians their entire lives. They both grew up in Fayetteville, where Jim was raised a Lutheran and Judy was a member of the Disciples of Christ denomination. When Jim and Judy married, they joined the First Christian Church of Fayetteville. Although Christianity had always been part of their lives, they had failed to learn the scriptures and learn to draw from the gospel as a guide for leading good Christian lives. By neglecting their devotion to Jesus Christ, both Judy and Jim had let themselves open to the appeal of Mormonism. They eventually joined the church and became LDS members.

After years attempting to live up to the rules and regulations of the Mormon church, Judy could not shake the feeling that something was missing. The important "something" that was missing was that Christ was no longer in her life. Struggling with her dilemma, she realized that the Lord had not abandoned her—He was there in her heart and it was she who had let His love go dormant. Jim had grown dissatisfied with the Mormon church and began reading the Bible, which served to revive the Christianity which he too had abandoned.

The natural question of why were they so easily influenced by a non-Christian religion arises in the case of Judy and Jim. Why had they been so vulnerable to a "new" religion—one that did not have a central focus on Jesus Christ? Perhaps they were having marital problems or emotional problems at the time that Judy Robertson, author of "Out of Mormonism" did not delineate in the book. The excuse that they didn't know the scriptures enough to ward off an evil influence seems weak at best.

Mormonism

The Mormon church was established by Joseph Smith, who is considered the first "prophet" of the church. When Smith was fourteen years old, he saw a vision of two angel-like beings in the forest. One being indicated that the other being was his son, reportedly saying, "This is My Beloved Son." From that exchange, it was determined that the two beings represented the father and the son as two separate entities. Smith was warned by these beings that he should not join any of the current religious sects because they were all abominations of his word.

The establishment of the Mormon church in Utah involved "saints" who traveled on a difficult journey to the western region of the United States where they would be free to worship. Brigham Young was the "saint" who had discovered the valley where Salt Lake City would be established. The root of the name Mormons are often known by—the Latter Day Saints—is based on these "saints" who struggled to the land where the Mormon church was headquartered.



There is a good deal of secrecy involved in the Mormon church. Members of the church are not allowed to discuss anything that goes on in the Mormon temples with any outsiders and, in fact, even with each other. These members are taught secret code words and handshakes to convey messages to one another when they are in the company of "non-believers." The Mormon church requires each family to have at least one year's supply of food in case of an emergency. Mormons are required to study their family's genealogy so that they can perform rituals for dead relatives who are waiting for their assistance to reunite with the Heavenly Father. All LDS are required to wear neck to knee garments that have to be next to their skin at all times.

Although Mormonism sometimes claims to be a Christian religion, there are many conflicts with Christianity. The faith was founded on the belief of a separate father and son. There is mention of a heavenly mother and "spirit" babies who are waiting to be born so they can have bodies and return to the Heavenly Father. There is also mention of three heavens. There are many scripture references in the gospel that conflict with the teachings of the Mormons.

Since this book was based on experiences with the Mormon church thirty years ago, research would have to be conducted to determine if the Mormon practices depicted in the book are still part of the faith.

The Intimidating Nature of Mormonism

Mormonism, as described in Judy Robertson's book, "Out of Mormonism," is rife with secrecy, long and exotic rituals and laws and rules that cannot be questioned by church members. No one is allowed in a Mormon temple until he has first become a member and secondly passed a year of probation to make sure he is worthy of full membership. The endowment ceremony and the sealing ritual that take place for new Mormons together last some five hours. The new members must vow not to reveal anything that takes place in a Mormon temple and must agree to have their throats slit and their intestines disemboweled if they do so.

During the ceremonies, with no explanation, the new members are required to wear long garbs and aprons and be shielded by a veil. The members also must wear uncomfortable garments that stretch from neck to the knees at all times—even during intimate times with their spouses. Women must swear to listen to the laws that are established by their Mormon husbands who become part of the priesthood when they are accepted into the church. The women are not to question the decisions of their husbands.

Members of the LDS are not allowed to question the tenets of the church and are forbidden to read any material that questions anything about the faith. If the Bishop of a Mormon ward makes a request of any of its members, those members must agree to fulfill the request with no questions asked. If members of the church are having doubts about the faith, they cannot express those doubts but are told to pray and read the Book of Mormon. Mormon families must ostracize any individuals who have left the church.

The Mormon church constitutes a closed society. They willingly accept new members, in fact, missionaries are sent out to minister to people to join the church. However, there is no transparency about their activities and no discussions can be held about the veracity of any of their laws or traditions. Mormons practice their religion under duress and intimidation.

Style

Perspective

Out of Mormonism by Judy Robertson is told in the first person narrative. Judy Robertson and her husband Jim made a decision to join the Mormon church, also known as the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Years after they made this step, they had serious doubts about the faith which led to their eventual departure from the church. Looking back after they left the church, they realized that they had been deceived and lured by church members, who led them to believe that Mormonism was a Christian denomination. With that in mind, Judy and Jim Robertson, along with others who had the same experience, established a help group, called Concerned Christians, for people who were being recruited by the church and for members who had doubts about the faith and wanted to leave. With this background, no person could have been better suited to write the book of the religious journey of the Robertsons than Judy Robertson herself.

Judy and Jim had both grown up in a Christian religion and it was somewhat surprising that they joined a faith that was so obviously lacking in Christian teachings. Judy's explanation for their abandonment of Christianity was their lack of in-depth knowledge of the gospel and the scriptures. This is where the story of their religious transformation becomes weak. They placed the majority of the blame for their decision on the Mormon church—but they were adults who had a Christian background. It seems as though the Robertsons were reluctant to take the responsibility for their own actions. They were intimidated by the rules of the Mormon church but it doesn't seem that they were brainwashed. It may have been from anger at their own actions that they became such ardent defenders of Christianity and so eager to expose Mormonism as a false religion.

Judy and Jim Robertson established and helped run the Concerned Christians group, which was devoted to exposing Mormonism and helping those being tempted by the religion to learn to resist it. There seems to be a conflict between their spirit the Robertsons displayed before becoming Mormons and the spirit they had after leaving the church. Only vague references are made as to why they stayed so long in a faith that they felt uncomfortable with.

Tone

Judy Robertson presents her and her family's personal religious journey in a controlled and generally respectful manner; however, there are subtle comments and descriptions of episodes that are tinged with a measure of anger. Robertson and her husband, Jim, came to the realization that the Mormon church, which they had joined, was a false church whose laws were in direct conflict with the teachings of Jesus Christ.



Robertson maintains a posture of one that educates and informs. Although it is not blatant, there is an underlying fervor displayed when she describes her passion for her religion and her regret of the time she spent as an LDS member. There is evidence of angst when she speaks about those years and wonderment at her own weakness in being lured into something for such a long time that she knew deep-down was flawed. The anger she expresses is twofold: disappointment in herself for being lured by Mormonism and outrage that the LDS religion portrays itself to be a Christian religion.

Although the Robertsons take some of the blame for falling for the tenets of the Mormon church, they place the majority of the blame on the church and the Mormons they feel influenced them. There is the uneasy feeling when reading about their long journey in and out of Mormonism, that the Robertsons did not look more closely at some void within themselves as the major reason they turned to a new and non-traditional faith for answers.

Structure

Out of Mormonism is separated into four major sections. Part One: Mormonism Looks Good contains four chapters; Part Two: My Life as a Mormon Woman contains eight chapters; Part Three: Light to Blinded Eyes has six chapters; and, Part Four: My Life after Mormonism contains five chapters. An epilogue provides an update of the more recent efforts of Judy and Jim Robertson and the Concerned Christians group that they helped establish. The account tells how the family first embraced Mormonism, ultimately rejected it in favor of Christianity and then set out with other like-minded Christians in an organized campaign to expose Mormonism as a false church. The story of the Robertson's journey through religious transformation is told in basically a chronological order beginning when the family first encountered the Mormons on their family vacation in Arizona.

An acknowledgment section precedes the book. Following the epilogue, there is a large Resources section with four appendices. Appendix A, titled "The Road to Mormonism Beckons Travelers Unawares," lays out the traps that can lure Christians into Mormonism. Many scriptures are quoted that counter specific teachings of the Mormon church. This section represents the type of material that the Concerned Christians group used to educate people on the truth about the Mormon faith. Appendix B: "The Road out of Mormonism is Paved with Perseverance," also provides educational material that focuses on leaving the LDS church. Appendix C: "The Road to Eternal Life is through Jesus Christ," is the final guide for abandoning the tenets of the Mormon church and finding strength in Christ. Appendix D: "How to Run the Race with Jesus" is a guide on how to live a daily Christian life. A "Glossary of Mormon Terms," helps the reader understand words and terms unique to Mormonism. In "Endnotes", the author identifies sources used in the writing of the book.



Quotes

"I'd been a church attendee all my life, listened to lots of sermons, but I didn't know how my faith should work in times of crisis. That's why I looked forward to this family trip and meeting these 'fine' people Jim kept telling me about."

Chap. 1, p. 15

"How comfortable it must be to just follow an already planned program. The brain could rest a bit. I didn't stop to think about the danger in this. I was too naïve, and hungry for something that made sense to me."

Chap. 2, p. 21

"With our skimpy knowledge of the Bible, we accepted, unchallenged, their explanation for certain Scriptures. We swallowed the alluring bait—hook, line, and sinker."

Chap. 3, p. 25

"I believe Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, that Spencer Kimball is a prophet of God, and that this is the only true church. I love my mommy and daddy, my sisters and brothers, and I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen."

Chap. 6, p. 37

"Heavenly Father and one of his wives gave birth to us in heaven,' [Judy] taught, 'they sent us to earth to gain a physical body. Our life here is a test to prove ourselves worthy to return to heave. As Latter-day Saints, we must obey the commands given us through Heavenly Father's prophets."

Chap. 6, p. 39

"Nell tried harder than anyone I knew to keep all the laws and ordinances of the church. But she hadn't been able to have any more children after her second child. . . It was the duty of the Mormon woman to bring down as many spirit babies as possible to give them bodies so they could return one day to heavenly Father—a flesh-and-bone god."

Chap. 7, p. 42

"I literally partook of the lie of Satan, as did my husband, Jim, that day. It would change the course of my life as I took a bite of that forbidden fruit just as Eve did...in the beginning."

Chap. 10, p. 63

"I couldn't tell about the temple ceremony and what we'd gone through. I'd taken a blood oath not to reveal any of it. I had drawn my thumb across my neck and lower abdomen saying I'd submit to having 'my throat cut and my bowels ripped out' if I ever did."

Chap. 11, p. 67

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Chap. 18, p. 116



"As Mormons, we had been leading our children away from the Lord. So much time was spent in the Mormon Church cleaning up our outward lives. But we failed in the most important aspect: examining our own hearts."

Chap. 18, p. 119

"The 'strong man' has not yet been bound, if I may put it so. The majority of the people are too afraid of their demons to turn to God as yet."

Chap. 20, p. 135

"The secret doors of Mormonism, long held shut to the public, were opened wide for all to see. All was unveiled. The wolf was caught half-dressed in his sheepskin."

Chap. 22, p. 148



Topics for Discussion

What are some of the differences that Judy and Jim found between Mormonism and Christianity? What could have been reasons that Jim and Judy were drawn to the Mormon religion?

Why did Judy become depressed after she returned from Arizona? Why did Jim lose interest in the Mormon church after their summer in Mesa? Why were they reluctant to discuss their feelings and thoughts with each other?

What occurred during the ceremony in which Judy and Jim became worthy members of the Mormon church? What did Mormons have to wear next to their skin at all times? What were possible reasons that Mormons are told not to reveal to outsiders what goes on in the temples?

What experiences did Judy have that convinced her that they had followed the wrong religion? What had Jim read to change his mind? What reaction did Jim have when Judy revealed that she no longer believed in the Mormon Church?

How did Jim and Judy's children react to the family leaving the Mormon church? Which child had the most difficulty transition and why? How did Mormon friends react to their departure?

How were the Robertson's lured back to Mesa, Arizona so that they would be around more Mormons? Why did the Mormon church order their members to have a year's supply of food on hand? Why did the Mormons want their members to have knowledge about their genealogy?

What group did the Robertsons help form? What work did the group do and what efforts did they make to spread the word about the anti-Christ teachings of the Mormon church? What type of individuals came to them for help?