



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

## Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

### General Information

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) is “the official name of the religion commonly called [the Mormon Church](#).” It was founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. in 1830. According to Smith, an angel appeared to him and revealed that a true account of the Gospel message had been bestowed by the resurrected Jesus on the ancient inhabitants of North America. Mormon, one of the last prophets of these people, collected and edited stories of the tribe’s history and their encounter with the risen Christ. The angel led Smith to the *Book of Mormon* and provided him with the tools necessary to translate it.

More information about the LDS, including the Church's beliefs, structure, and history, can be found by going to <http://lds.org>.

**Number of Members in the US: 7.1 million**

**Number of Members Worldwide: 13.8 million**

### Statements from *The Doctrine and Covenants* on Animals

**Humans may use animals, but should use them sparingly, with thanksgiving, and only in times of extreme need**

- **According to *The Doctrine and Covenants*, one of the LDS' four sacred texts, animals are provided by God for human use. Nevertheless, God has ordained that animals should be used "sparingly" and "with thanksgiving." God also has declared that He is most pleased when we use them "only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine."**
- "Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly; And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine. All grain is ordained for the use of man and of beasts, to be the staff of life, not only for man but for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and all wild animals that run or creep on the earth; And these hath God made for the use of man only in times of famine and excess of hunger."  
—from *The Doctrine & Covenants*, 89:12-15. See also 49:18-21 and 59:16-20.

### **Animals have souls and are destined to live in peace and eternal happiness on a transformed earth**

- **In *The Doctrine and Covenants*, Joseph Smith shares revelations he received concerning the correct interpretation of particular Biblical passages and the final fate of the earth. In this sacred text, Smith reveals that animals have spirits, that they are destined for "eternal felicity" on a transformed earth, and that all "enmity" between humans and animals eventually will cease.**
  - "Q. Are the four beasts [described in Revelation 4:6] limited to individual beasts, or do they represent classes or orders?  
"A. They are limited to four individual beasts, which were shown to John, to represent the glory of the classes of beings in their destined order or sphere of creation, in the enjoyment of their eternal felicity."  
—from *The Doctrine & Covenants*, 77:3.
  - "And prepare for the revelation which is to come, when the veil of the covering of my temple, in my tabernacle, which hideth the earth, shall be taken off, and all flesh shall see me together. And every corruptible thing, both of man, or of the beasts of the field, or of the fowls of the heavens, or of the fish of the sea, that dwells upon all the face of the earth, shall be consumed; And also that of element shall melt with fervent heat; and all things shall become new, that my knowledge and glory may dwell upon all the earth. And in that day the enmity of man, and the enmity of beasts, yea, the enmity of all flesh, shall cease from before my face."  
—from *The Doctrine & Covenants*, 101:23-26.

### **Historical References on Animals**

#### **Joseph Smith called upon men to "lose their vicious dispositions and cease to destroy the animal race"**

- **Every President of the LDS is considered a seer and a prophet whose pronouncements are accorded the weight of divine revelation. Joseph Smith, the founder and first President of the Church, exhorted men to "lose their vicious dispositions and cease to destroy the animal race."**
  - "In pitching my tent we found three massasaugas or prairie rattlesnakes, which the brethren were about to kill, but I said, 'Let them alone—don't hurt them! How will the serpent ever lose his venom, while the servants of God possess the same disposition, and continue to make war upon it? Men must become harmless, before the brute creation; and when men lose their vicious dispositions and cease to destroy the animal race, the lion and the lamb can dwell together, and the sucking child can play with the serpent in safety.' The brethren took the serpents carefully on sticks and carried them across the creek. I exhorted the brethren not to kill a serpent, bird, or an animal of any kind during our journey unless it became necessary in order to preserve ourselves from hunger."  
—from Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Period 1, History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet*, Vol. II (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1904), 71-72.

**Smith revealed that God will redeem all that He has made, "whether beasts, fowls, fishes, or men"**

- **Smith was granted frequent revelations concerning the correct interpretation of biblical passages. According to Smith, the final book of the Bible reveals that animals exist in heaven, that all animals will be saved by God, and that some animals are "perfect...like angels in their sphere."**
  - "John saw the actual beast in heaven, showing to John that beasts did actually exist there....John learned that God glorified Himself by saving all that His hands had made, whether beasts, fowls, fishes, or men."  
—from Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Period I, History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet*, Vol. V (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 343.
  - "Says one, 'I cannot believe in the salvation of beasts.' Any man who would tell you this could not be, would tell you that the revelations are not true. John heard the words of the beast giving glory to God, and understood them. God who made the beasts could understand every language spoken by them. The beasts were four of the most noble animals that filled the measure of their creation, and had been saved from other worlds, because they were perfect. They were like angels in their sphere."  
—from Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol. V, 343-44.

**Brigham Young, Smith's successor, confirmed that animals will receive salvation**

- **When Joseph Smith was killed in 1844, Brigham Young took his place as president and prophet of the LDS. Young praised animals for being more obedient than men to God's laws, and promised that animals, like humans, will receive salvation.**
  - "Are these great weaknesses to be found in the birds of the air, in the fishes of the sea, or in the beasts of the field? No. The animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms abide the law of their Creator; the whole earth and all things pertaining to it, except man, abide the law of their creation."  
—from Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9, (Liverpool: George Q. Cannon Publ., 1862), 246.
  - "...always keep in view that the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms—the earth and its fulness—will all, except the children of men, abide their creation—the law by which they were made, and will receive their exaltation."  
—from Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8 (Liverpool: George Q. Cannon Publ., 1861), 191.

**Young also confirmed that animals should be used sparingly and only in times of need**

- **Animals, said Young, perform God's work and we should allow them to eat their fill from the land without suffering any harm from us. We may use animals, confirmed Young, but only when our own survival requires it.**
  - "According to present appearances, next year [1868] we may expect grasshoppers to eat up nearly all our crops. But if we have provisions enough to last us another year, we can say to the grasshoppers—these creatures of God—you are welcome. I have never had a feeling

to drive them from one plant in my garden; but I look upon them as the armies of the Lord..."

—from Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 12 (Liverpool: Albert Carrington, 1869), 121.

- "Thursday, May 6 (1847)--Traveled nineteen miles. The prairie appeared black being covered with immense herds of buffalo. Friday, May 7—I preached in camp and advised the brethren not to kill any more buffalo or other game until the meat was needed."  
—from Brigham Young, *A Prophet's Journal: Brigham Young's own story in his own words*, compiled by Lee Nelson (Provo, UT: Council Press, 1980), 216-217.

### **According to Young, "the more kind we are to animals, the more peace will increase"**

- **Once humans "cease hostility" toward animals, said Young, animals will live in peace with humans "and the savage nature of the brute creation will vanish away."**
  - "If we cease hostility, with the serpents and lay aside all enmity and treat all animals kindly, being humble and faithful with long suffering and forbearance no man need ever have a horse or a cow bitten by a snake. The serpents would soon become perfectly harmless, so that they could be handled without danger, children could play with them without receiving harm."  
—from Young, *A Prophet's Journal*, 152.
  - "Let the people be holy, and the earth under their feet will be holy. Let the people be holy, and filled with the spirit of God, and every animal and creeping thing will be filled with peace; the soil of the earth will bring forth in its strength, and the fruits thereof will be meat for man. The more purity that exists, the less is the strife; the more kind we are to animals, the more will peace increase, and the savage nature of the brute creation will vanish away."  
—from Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol I (Liverpool: F.D. and S.W. Richards, 1851), 203.

## **Contemporary References on Animals**

### **President David O. McKay (1951-1970): "A true Latter-day Saint is kind to animals"**

- **Like the founding presidents of the LDS, modern-day LDS presidents are considered prophets and seers who are directly inspired by God. In the 20th century, several presidents have extolled the virtues of kindness toward animals. President David O. McKay, for instance, equated a "true" Latter-day Saint with someone who is kind to all God's creatures.**
  - "A true Latter-day Saint is kind to animals, is kind to every created thing, for God created all."  
—from David O. McKay, "Conference Reports (Oct. 1951), 180 as reprinted in Richard D. Stratton, *Kindness to Animals and Caring for the Earth: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Latter-day Saint Church Leaders* (Inkwater Press, 2004), viii.

**President Joseph Fielding Smith (1970-72): animal cruelty is a sin that will be punished by God**

- **President Joseph Fielding Smith said cruelty to animals leads to cruelty to humans, is a sign of the absence of true religion, and will be punished by God.**
  - "...doing wrong to animals is but a stepping stone to the doing of wrong to our fellow men."  
—from Joseph F. Smith, in Stratton, *Kindness to Animals*, 66.
  - "Kindness to animals and to all living things is one good way of expressing true religion. Cruelty to the dumb creation always shows an absence of the true religious spirit; and in most cases, is simply barbarous."  
—from Smith in Stratton, *Kindness to Animals*, 67.
  - "I believe that cruelty to a caged bird is a sin in the sight of God; and if those who do it, or permit it, are not somewhere held accountable, there is no such thing as justice."  
—from Smith in Stratton, *Kindness to Animals*, 63.

**President Joseph Fielding Smith: Jesus died so that all creatures might have immortal life**

- **Joseph Fielding Smith affirmed the long-held LDS position that Jesus died for the salvation of all God's creatures, including animals.**
  - "We have the assurance that through the sacrifice made on the cross all mankind and every other creature, even the earth itself, are redeemed from death and shall receive the resurrection and be restored to immortal life."  
—from Smith in Stratton, *Kindness to Animals*, back cover.

**President Smith: Hunting for sport is wicked; animals should be killed only when food is needed**

- **Joseph Fielding Smith was appalled by men's "blood-thirsty desire to kill and destroy animal life." For Smith, hunting is wicked unless it is required for food.**
  - "I never could see why a man should be imbued with a blood-thirsty desire to kill and destroy animal life. I have known men—and they still exist among us—who enjoy what is, to them, the 'sport' of hunting birds and slaying them by the hundreds, and who will come in after a day's sport, boasting of how many harmless birds they have had the skill to slaughter, and day after day, during the season when it is lawful for men to hunt and kill (the birds having had a season of protection and not apprehending danger) go out by scores or hundreds, and you may hear their guns early in the morning on the day of the opening, as if great armies had met in battle; and the terrible work of slaughtering the innocent birds goes on."  
—from Joseph Fielding Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1930), 265-66, as quoted by Spencer W. Kimball, "Fundamental Principles to Ponder and Live," *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 43.
  - "I do not believe any man should kill animals or birds unless he needs them for food, and then he should not kill innocent little birds that are not intended for food for man. I think it

is wicked for men to thirst in their souls to kill almost everything which possesses animal life. It is wrong, and I have been surprised at prominent men whom I have seen whose very souls seemed to be athirst for the shedding of animal blood."

—from Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, as quoted in Kimball, "[Fundamental Principles](#)," 43.

**President Spencer W. Kimball (1973-85): It is wicked to take the life of animals unnecessarily**

- **Spencer W. Kimball, Joseph Fielding Smith's successor as LDS president, spoke approvingly of Smith's opposition to hunting. Kimball affirmed that it is "wicked...[and] a shame" to shed the blood of animals unnecessarily.**
  - "Now, I also would like to add some of my feelings concerning the unnecessary shedding of blood and destruction of life. I think that every soul should be impressed by the sentiments that have been expressed here by the prophets. And not less with reference to the killing of innocent birds is the wildlife of our country that live upon the vermin that are indeed enemies to the farmer and to mankind. It is not only wicked to destroy them, it is a shame, in my opinion. I think that this principle should extend not only to the bird life but to the life of all animals."  
—from Kimball, "[Fundamental Principles](#)," 43.

For more HSUS Faith Outreach resources, including *The Fill the Bowl Project* and *Animal Protection Ministries: A Guide for Churches*, visit [www.humanesociety.org/faith](http://www.humanesociety.org/faith).

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