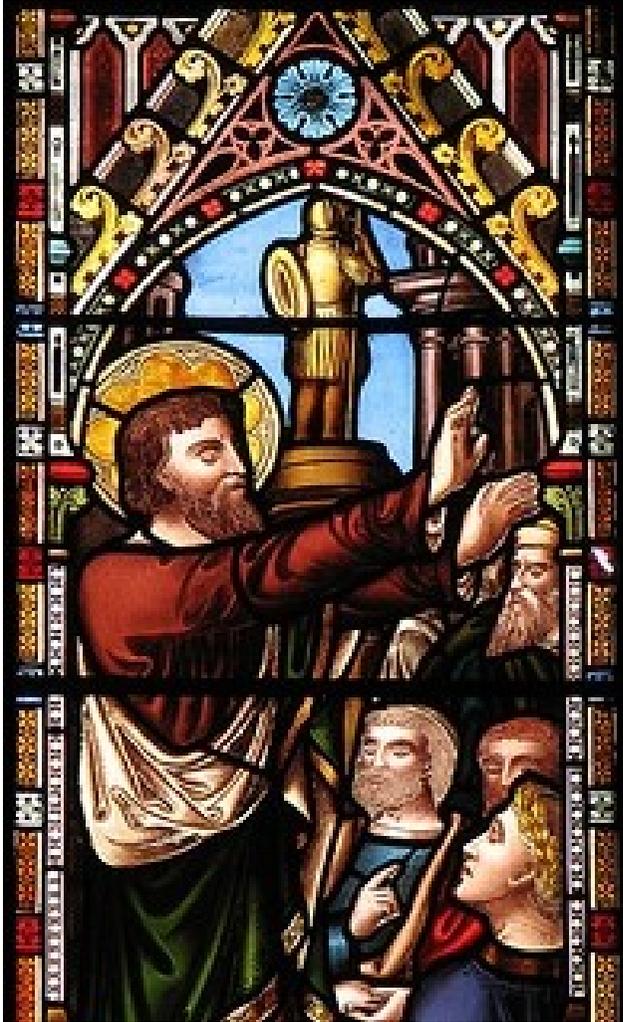


# The Forgotten God



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Cover art: Paul preaching his Unknown God sermon

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## We are Adam and Eve

*How the Genesis Story is About Us*

### Adam is Man

Although the name Adam doesn't appear in the King James Version of the Bible until over half way through the second chapter of Genesis, in the original Hebrew language Adam appears in the first sentence regarding the creation of man and woman, when it tells us "God created man in His own image ... male and female created He them."<sup>1</sup> The English translation of the word Adam is "man," and is used to speak of both man and woman in this case. This concept is repeated again a few chapters later where it tells us "Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called *their* name Adam"<sup>2</sup> So whenever the word Adam appears it could be speaking of the first man on earth specifically, an individual man, a man and woman, or all of mankind.<sup>3</sup>

### From the Dust

The arrival of man, the height of God's creation, upon the earth is a brief affair, lasting one verse, in which "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word for breath is also translated spirit,<sup>5</sup> as in God's Spirit or the spirit within man. Our spirit, - which comes from God, its Father - gives life to our body.<sup>6</sup>

But how are we to understand Moses' account that Adam was made of dust? Is he speaking literally? Did Adam start his existence as a clump of dirt? One of the problems with this view is that the scriptures

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1 Genesis 1:27.

2 Genesis 5:2.

3 Smith's Bible Dictionary - "*Man* , generically, for the name Adam was not confined to the father of the human race, but like *homo* was applicable to *woman* as well as to *man*."

4 Genesis 2:7.

5 Eastons Bible Dictionary - "Spirit: Heb. ruah ... properly wind or breath."

6 John 6:63 - "It is the spirit that quickeneth; ..."

Job 33:4 - "... the breath [Hebrew: Spirit] of the Almighty hath given [us] life"

tell us that Adam was not alone in being made of the dust of this earth, Ecclesiastes reminds us that “all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”<sup>1</sup>

The Bible speaks figuratively about our creation in other ways too, Isaiah tells us we were hewn from a rock and dug from a pit,<sup>2</sup> whereas the book of Job talks of us “dwell[ing] in houses of clay!”<sup>3</sup> Each of these statements has symbolic truth, but are not literal. Our bodies are made up of elements, and those are made up of atoms, which consist of infinitesimal matter.<sup>4</sup> To the ancient Israelites “dust” was undoubtedly the nearest word they had to express this idea.

From being spoken of as “dust” we learn several important lessons: that “All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.”<sup>5</sup> and that in our “own carnal state,” we are “even less than the dust of the earth.”<sup>6</sup> but when “the dust returns to the earth as it was ... the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”<sup>7</sup>

Mortal life comes into the world through only one way: “the fruit tree yields fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself.”<sup>8</sup> That is like comes from like, and life comes from life. As Paul elaborates “that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be, but grain, it may be of wheat, or some other; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.”<sup>9</sup> This is why Jesus is able to state that “every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.”<sup>10</sup>

In other words: only procreation produces life. Yet this natural law was not limited to vegetables, but to every “living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind.”<sup>11</sup>

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1 Ecclesiastes 3:20.

2 Isaiah 51:1.

3 Job 4:19.

4 D&C 131:7-8 - “There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter.”

5 Job 34:15.

6 Mosiah 4:2.

7 Ecclesiastes 12:7.

8 Genesis 1:11.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 198 - “it is a decree of the Lord that every tree, plant, and herb bearing seed, yielding fruit, whose seed bring forth of its kind, and cannot come forth after any law or principle.”

9 JST 1 Corinthians 15:37-38.

10 Luke 6:44.

11 Genesis 1:24.

But how does this apply to Adam and Eve?

### Image and Likeness

A key to understanding the creation of mankind can be found in the words “God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”<sup>1</sup>

Some Christian commentators conclude that this must be referring to man's mind or soul having some Godlike attributes, for their vision of God is of an infinite being without a body.<sup>2</sup> But Moses who wrote this passage, knew his heavenly Father “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.”<sup>3</sup> As did his companions, Aaron, Nabab, Abihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel who also “saw God.”<sup>4</sup>

In what way then are we in the likeness and image of God? Genesis tells us “Adam ... begat a son in his own likeness, after his image;”<sup>5</sup> The wording here is exactly the same as when speaking of the creation of mankind. Seth was in the likeness and image of his father Adam,<sup>6</sup> as many children are the image and likeness of their parents. It is in this same way that we are in the image and likeness of our heavenly parents who said “let us make man in *our* image.”

As Paul taught the believers of an unknown deity, God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth ... For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; ... For we are also his offspring.”<sup>7</sup>

God, who is “the father of our spirits”<sup>8</sup> is the father of our bodies also. For as Malachi asks “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?”<sup>9</sup> This is why we pray to “our father who art in heaven.”<sup>10</sup>

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1 Genesis 1:26.

2 Clarke's Bible commentary for Genesis 1:26

3 Exodus 33:11, also Deuteronomy 5:4 & 34:10.

4 Exodus 24:9-17.

5 Genesis 5:3.

6 D&C 107:43 - “Because he (Seth) was a perfect man, and his likeness was the express likeness of his father, insomuch that he seemed to be like unto his father in all things, and could be distinguished from him only by his age.”

7 Acts 17:26 & 28.

8 Hebrews 12:9.

9 Malachi 2:10.

10 Matthew 6:9.

## The Latter-day Saint Perspective

This idea – though a simple one – was largely lost from the world “until the times of restitution of all things”<sup>1</sup> in which we live. At first hinted at by the Prophet Joseph Smith who asked “When did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor? ... everything comes in this way.”<sup>2</sup> And taken to its natural conclusion by his successor, Brigham Young, who taught that God “created man, as we create our children; for there is no other process of creation in heaven, on the earth, in the earth, or under the earth, or in all the eternities, that is, that were, or that ever will be.”<sup>3</sup> “He is the framer of our bodies, and set the machine in successful operation to bring forth these tabernacles. ... This is the doctrine taught by the ancients, taught by the prophets, taught by Jesus, taught by his Apostles, taught by Joseph Smith, thought by those who believe the same doctrine that Joseph believed in - the revelations that God has given in modern times, who believe in that being after whose image and in whose likeness man was formed, framed and made, precisely like Him that made him.”<sup>4</sup> “We are his children, literally, spiritually, naturally, and in every respect.”<sup>5</sup>

But what are we to make of the story of Eve being created from Adam's “rib”?<sup>6</sup> Up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century those going through the temple endowment were taught in the “Lecture at the Veil” that “It is said by Moses the historian that the Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam, and took from his side a rib and formed the woman that Adam called Eve. This should be interpreted that the man Adam like all other men had the seed within him to propagate his species, but not the woman; She conceives the seed, but she does not produce it; consequently she was taken from the side or bowels of her father.”<sup>7</sup>

As the scriptures tell us “the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; ... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his

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1 Acts 3:21.

2 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 373.

3 Journal of Discourses 11:122, 18 Jun 1865.

4 Journal of Discourses 13:250, 25 September 1870.

5 Journal of Discourses 14:135-136, 21 May 1871.

6 Genesis 2:21-23 - “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

7 Diary of L. John Nuttall (secretary to the First Presidency), 7 February 1877.

mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”<sup>1</sup> Thus reaffirming that man and woman are incomplete without eachother: “neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord”<sup>2</sup> as the story of the rib emphasizes.

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1 Genesis 2:18 & 24.

2 1 Corinthians 11:11.

### Points to Consider

- *What is the name for mankind?*
- *In what way does the story in Genesis represent us?*
- *In what way were created like Adam?*
- *In what way is man part of woman and woman come from man?*
- *In what way do we partake of the fruit?*
- *What are the good and bad consequences (for us) of partaking of the fruit?*
- *In what way are we separated from God?*

<b><i>Figurative Adam &amp; Eve of Genesis</i></b>	<b><i>'Real' Adam from Temple ceremony</i></b>	<b><i>Us – Adams &amp; Eves</i></b>
Created from dust	Offspring of parents	our bodies made of the “dust” of this planet
Eve created from rib	Man produces seed through which female (as well as male) children come into life	Man and woman are together “one flesh”
Ate of forbidden fruit of tree of knowledge	Ate of 'mortal' fruits so bodies could produce mortal children	In gaining knowledge we are susceptible to mistakes and sins
Cast out from the garden	Left heavenly realm inhabited before	We leave God's presence when enter mortality
Prays and 'repents' to God	Under direction of his heavenly Father	We look to God in worship, for answer to prayers & forgiveness
Adam dies	Adam leaves his life on this earth, and the aspects of mortality He took upon Himself	Our mortal bodies die, and our spirit lives on

## **Joseph Smith's Teachings on Adam**

“If you were to ask Joseph [Smith] what sort of a looking man Adam was;” he “would tell you at once; he would tell you his size and appearance and all about him.”<sup>1</sup> recollected Church President, John Taylor. To those who believe Joseph Smith saw Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, the Apostle Peter, Moses, and Elijah<sup>2</sup> it perhaps comes as no surprise that the Prophet Joseph had also met Adam, the father of the human race.

Not only had he seen Adam, but his contemporaries also relate that he was very much acquainted with aspects of his life that we do not have in the current Bible. It seems that “so great was his strength” and speed that he could “outstrip” wild animals and catch them.<sup>3</sup> From those who knew the Prophet we also learn that he “said that Eve had twenty-eight sons and twenty-eight daughters, and that Adam had many wives.”<sup>4</sup>

Whilst the world looked upon Adam as a sinful man, the New Testament tells us “Adam was not deceived” and that it was not him who “was in the transgression,”<sup>5</sup> and the Prophet likewise proclaimed that “Adam did not commit sin in eating the fruits”<sup>6</sup> In fact the ancient Apocrypha tells us “Adam [was] above every living thing in the creation,”<sup>7</sup> and a revelation from the Lord in 1835 implies that Adam was perfect.<sup>8</sup>

It is sad that though the Ten Commandments tells us that you must “honor thy father,”<sup>9</sup> that so many in the Christian world so readily dishonor Adam, who is the father of us all.

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1 John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses* 18:326.

2 JS-H 1:17,72, D&C 110:2,11,13

3 John L. Lytle, *Journal of Charles L. Walker*, p. 39, 16 April 1882. See *Journal of Oliver B. Huntington*, p. 207.

4 William W. Phelps attested to remembering this, after which Brigham Young confirmed its truthfulness. - *James Beck Journal (Notebook)* 1859-1865, 8 October 1861. H.W. Naisbitt also testified to Joseph Smith teaching that Adam had more than one wife. - *Journal of Discourses* 26:115-116

5 1 Timothy 2:14

6 McIntyre minute book, 9 February 1841, *Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 63.

7 *Ecclesiasticus* 49:16, see 2 *Esdras* 6:54.

8 D&C 107:43 tells us that Seth “was a perfect man” and that he was “like unto his father in all things.” Therefore if Seth was perfect and like Adam in all things, then Adam must have been perfect to.

9 *Exodus* 20:12

## **Adam – his PreMortal Roles**

Adam's role did not begin on this earth though, the Lord revealed to the Prophet that Adam was Michael,<sup>1</sup> the archangel<sup>2</sup> who, with “his angels fought against the dragon,” Satan, in the war in heaven.<sup>3</sup> Fortunately for us Adam won that conflict,<sup>4</sup> but the war is still ongoing, and he as Michael will yet win what the scriptures call “the battle of the great God” and “the devil and his armies shall be cast away ... that they shall not have power over the saints any more at all.”<sup>5</sup>

We sometimes forget that one being can fulfill many roles and responsibilities, and go by many names. The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith even teaches that Adam, before he came to earth, took precedence over Jesus Christ in the hierarchy of the Priesthood: It was Adam to whom “the priesthood was first given”<sup>6</sup> even “before the world was formed”,<sup>7</sup> and it was he who was “the first to hold the spiritual blessings.”<sup>8</sup> “The keys of salvation”<sup>9</sup> for the whole universe<sup>10</sup> “were first given to Adam.”<sup>11</sup> He holds the presidency of all dispensations<sup>12</sup> and whenever “the keys ... are revealed from heaven” it is “by Adam's authority”<sup>13</sup> It is also Adam who “watches over [the] ordinances [and] reveals them from heaven,”<sup>14</sup> and who will one day “sound his trumpet, and then shall all the dead awake, for their graves shall be opened, and

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1 “Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all” - D&C 27:11.

2 “before the earth shall pass away, Michael, mine archangel, shall sound his trumpet, and then shall all the dead awake, for their graves shall be opened, and they shall come forth” - D&C 29:26.

3 Revelations 12:7.

4 “the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, ... and his angels were cast out with him.” - Revelations 12:8-9.

5 D&C 88:114.

6 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157.

7 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157, see Words of Joseph Smith, p. 8.

8 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 167, see Words of Joseph Smith, p. 39.

9 “Michael - given unto him the keys of salvation” - D&C 78:16.

10 “Adam delivers up his stewardship - which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe, but retains his standing as head of the human family.” - Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157.

11 “He (Adam) is the head, ... The keys were first given to him, and by him to others.” - Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 158, see Words of Joseph Smith, p. 9.

12 “every man holding the Presidency of his dispensation, and one man holding the Presidency of them all, even Adam” - Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 169, see Words of Joseph Smith, p. 40.

13 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157, see Words of Joseph Smith, p. 8.

14 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 168, see Words of Joseph Smith, p. 39.

they shall come forth.”<sup>1</sup>

Although plainly taught during his lifetime, these teachings have often been overlooked. Yet this was not all that Joseph knew about Adam. To his closest associates he revealed much more.

Zebedee Coltrin related how he, Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph to a secluded “place where there was some beautiful grass and grape vines.” He said to the brethren who were with him, “Let us pray, [and] they all prayed in turn. ... Brother Joseph then said, ‘Now brethren, we will see some visions.’ [Then] Joseph lay down on the ground on his back and stretched out his arms and the two brethren lay on them.”<sup>2</sup> They “shut their eyes [and] after they had prayed he told them to open their eyes. They did so and saw a brilliant light.”

“The heavens gradually opened, and they saw a golden throne, on a circular foundation, something like a light house, and on the throne were two aged personages, having white hair, and clothed in white garments. They were the two most beautiful specimens of mankind he ever saw. Joseph Said, ‘They are our first parents, Adam and Eve.’ Adam was a large broad shouldered man, and Eve as a woman, was as large in proportion.”<sup>3</sup>

Apparently Heber C. Kimball, who was one of Joseph’s most trusted associates, either shared this vision or remembered additional details from those who related it to him, as he spoke of the “vision that Joseph Smith had, when he saw Adam open the gate of the Celestial city and admit the people one by one. He then saw Father Adam conduct them to the throne one by one, when they were crowned Kings and Priests of God.”<sup>4</sup>

It may seem strange to some that Adam would be opening the gate to the celestial kingdom and sitting upon a throne there. These events may seem very mysterious indeed, and yet Joseph saw it as part of his mission to reveal the mysteries of God to those prepared to receive them,<sup>5</sup> and those who knew him – when they were beyond the persecuting mobs and settled in the safety of early Utah – began to feel able to relate and record more openly what had only spoken about in

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1 D&C 29:26.

2 Journal of Abraham H. Cannon, 25 August 1890.

3 Salt Lake School of the Prophets minute book, 11 October 1883.

4 Heber C. Kimball, 17 March 1861, Journal of Discourses 9:41.

5 “It has always been my province to dig up hidden mysteries – new things – for my hearers.” - Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith 364.

secret before.

## **Adam as an Immortal Being**

To his dear friend Anson Call he related that Adam “came here from another planet - an immortalized being and brought his wife Eve with him - and by eating of the fruit of the earth, became subject to death and decay - was made mortal and subject to death.”<sup>1</sup>

This opens our field of understanding much more widely. If Adam and Eve were already immortalized beings who came from another planet, then they must have been though mortal lives already (upon another earth) and had been resurrected.<sup>2</sup> It would also seem that the eating of the temporal fruits of this earth enabled them to dwell here as mortals would.<sup>3</sup> Before coming to earth, as resurrected beings, they would have only been able to produce spiritual children,<sup>4</sup> but taking upon them aspects of mortality they were able to start mortal life upon the earth.

Some have supposed that Adam was literally created from the dust of this earth, although the scriptures tell us that “all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”<sup>5</sup> Yet we had mothers who conceived, carried and gave birth to us through natural means. The Genesis account is undoubtedly figurative, for if we were to believe such verses literally then we would have to believe as Isaiah says that each of us were “hewn” from a “rock,” and “dugged” from a “pit”<sup>6</sup>

Moses, author of Genesis, himself recounts how God said that each plant yielded seed, just as each animal brought forth life “after his kind.”<sup>7</sup> As the Prophet explained, “it is a decree of the Lord that every tree, plant, and herb bearing seed should bring forth of its kind, and

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1 Joseph Smith to Anson Call, John M. Whitaker Papers.

2 “God must deliver up the spirits of the righteous, and the grave deliver up the body of the righteous; and the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal.” - 2 Nephi 9:13.

3 Brigham Young spoke of the need for Adam and Eve to “eat and drink of the fruits of the corporeal world, until this grosser matter is diffused sufficiently through their celestial bodies to enable them, according to the established laws, to produce mortal tabernacles for their spiritual children.” - Journal of Discourses 6:275.

4 “that which is born of spirit is spirit” - John 3:6 (note: a resurrected body is also called “a spiritual body” - D&C 88:27-28.)

5 Ecclesiastes 3:20, see Mosiah 2:25.

6 Isaiah 51:5.

7 Genesis 11-12,21-25, see Luke 6:44.

cannot come forth after any other law or principle.”<sup>1</sup> He illustrated this with a question: “Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor?”<sup>2</sup> We observe the rule of procreation around us, in nature and by our own existence and that of our children. God works through natural laws, and the natural means of creating life is procreation, and Joseph Smith taught us that “everything comes in this way.”<sup>3</sup>

## **Adam – Father of the Human Race**

This raised a question in Joseph’s mind, which he shared with John Taylor: If “Adam is the Father of our bodies. Who is to say He is not the Father of our spirits?”<sup>4</sup> Could Adam and Eve in their immortal states have brought forth our spirits before taking on the role of providing those spirits with earthly bodies?

Nephi, in the Book of Mormon, speaks of Adam and Eve as being “our first parents.”<sup>5</sup> Abraham calls Adam our “first father,”<sup>6</sup> and Joseph taught that he was the “head of the human family”<sup>7</sup> and “the first and oldest of all, the great, grand progenitor ... because he was the first and father of all.”<sup>8</sup>

This being the case raises an obvious question – “if Adam is the father of our Spirits, then is he our heavenly Father?” What else could we call him? If God is the Father of our spirits,<sup>9</sup> and he came to earth as Adam, then that makes him the Father of our bodies too. He didn’t leave the responsibility to anyone else. How could he? How could we have become like God if we were not his children spiritually and literally?

Joseph hinted at this in public when he told the Saints, “The Father called all spirits before Him at the creation of man, and organized them. He (Adam) is the head, and was told to multiply.”<sup>10</sup> As his friend Patriarch Benjamin F. Johnson realized, the Prophet Joseph was teaching

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 198.

2 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 373.

3 Ibid.

4 John Taylor, 13 January 1880, L. John Nuttall Papers.

5 1 Nephi 5:11, see 2 Nephi 9:9.

6 Abraham 1:3.

7 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157, Words of Joseph Smith, p. 9.

8 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 167, Words of Joseph Smith, p. 39.

9 “God of the spirits of all flesh” - Numbers 16:22; “the Father of spirits” - Hebrews 12:9

10 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 158, Words of Joseph Smith, p. 9.

“that God was the great head of human procreation - was truly the Father of both our spirits and our bodies.”<sup>1</sup> And therefore had come to earth in the role of Adam.

Brother Joseph’s greatest disciple and successor, Brigham Young heard this doctrine from him firsthand and taught it himself publicly on many occasions, said he, “It was Joseph’s doctrine that Adam was God ... God comes to earth and partakes of the fruit. Joseph could not reveal [to the Church] what was revealed to him.”<sup>2</sup>

This explains what Joseph Smith had in mind when he said, “Everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organization of this earth, and relates to their dispensation of things to men on the earth; these personages, according to Abraham’s record, are called God the first, the Creator; God the Second, the Redeemer; and God the Third, the witness or testator.”<sup>3</sup> God the first, our heavenly Father, had the first dispensation on earth, as Adam, and His Son, the Redeemer, came in the meridian of time as Jesus.

However, this knowledge raises many more questions. Fortunately we have not been left without answers on any of them.

## **Objections to Joseph’s Teachings Answered**

Some have wondered - “how could Adam be God when he was called an angel?” The first thing to remember is that he was no ordinary angel – he was the archangel, the head of the angels. Who else but God would be head of the angels?

Secondly, what does it mean to be an angel? The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that there are only “two kinds of beings in heaven, namely: Angels, who are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones” and spirits.<sup>4</sup> What category would God fit into?

Others raise an objection to the fact that Genesis seems to say that Adam “died.”<sup>5</sup> However, the Bible also says that “Moses ... died,”<sup>6</sup> yet we know that although he became dead as to the things of the world, and as far as most of the world was concerned, yet in reality Alma tells

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1 Benjamin F. Johnson, October 1903, Letter to G.S. Gibbs.

2 Brigham Young Papers, Meeting of Quorum of Twelve, 4 April 1860.

3 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 190.

4 D&C 129:1,3.

5 Genesis 5:5.

6 Deuteronomy 34:5.

us “the Lord took Moses unto Himself”<sup>1</sup> like Enoch who ascended into heaven.<sup>2</sup> No doubt the same could be said of Adam – he left his mortal life behind, and returned to his heavenly home.

Some wonder who Adam prayed to. Yet Jesus was considered a God but still prayed to his father. Joseph Smith taught that “God the Father ... had a father,”<sup>3</sup> so Adam would have prayed to his Father, or whoever was responsible for his godly role whilst he was upon the earth.

A few people have suggested that even though Adam was the Father of our spirits that it is his father whom we should be praying to. Yet the scriptures tell us the opposite, it is the Father of our Spirits who we should call our Heavenly Father and pray to,<sup>4</sup> that is who Jesus prayed to.

There have been questions about passages which suggest that Jesus is higher than Adam. However, just as an Apostle may serve as a missionary, so too could God – when he became Adam – take upon himself another responsibility, whilst not losing the higher one he ultimately holds. In this way there are areas in which the office of Jesus might be higher than the office of Adam, but as our Heavenly Father he also held the highest office of all – as the Father of the Savior and God over all the earth.

It is interesting how Jesus is frequently called “the Son of Man.”<sup>5</sup> Yet God is also called “Man – of holiness [and] counsel”<sup>6</sup> in the Joseph Smith translation. It is even more revealing when we realize that the Hebrew word for man is “Adam.”<sup>7</sup> As the Prophet put it (perhaps hinting to the Saints) “God [is] a man like one of us, even like Adam.”<sup>8</sup>

Even if there were ways in which Jesus’ responsibilities were greater than God’s - whilst he was in the role of Adam upon the earth, or of Michael when leading the angels in battle – Joseph taught that it was Adam who presided over the keys of the universe and all dispensations<sup>9</sup>

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1 Alma 45:19.

2 “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” - Genesis 5:24, see Hebrews 11:5.

3 “If Jesus Christ was the Sons of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that he had a Father also.” - Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith p. 373.

4 “shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits” - Hebrews 12:9.

5 The term is used 84 times in the New Testament. See Luke 22:47 for one example.

6 JST Genesis 7:42.

7 See the KJV Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon.

8 Words of Joseph Smith, p. 361, Samuel W. Richards record, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1844.

9 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157,169.

(which must have included the keys Jesus held), and he also revealed that it was through Adam that “Christ has been revealed, and will continue to be revealed.”<sup>1</sup> Something we see illustrated on each occasion God has introduced Jesus with the words, “This is my beloved Son.”<sup>2</sup>

A good question is “if God is Adam why isn’t there any evidence of it within the scriptures?” To which there is a good answer “the evidence is there if you understand this doctrine and know where to look.”

## **Adam as the Ancient of Days**

We have already spoken of how Adam previously acted in the role of Michael and will at the commencement of the millennium “sound his trump, and then shall all the dead awake.”<sup>3</sup> Whilst that revelation calls him Michael, Paul the Apostle of Jesus said it was “the Lord himself” who “shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise.”<sup>4</sup>

In the book of Daniel the scriptures speak of one called the “Ancient of Days,”<sup>5</sup> who sits on a throne, surrounded by fire. That thousands would minister unto him, that he would open the books of judgement,<sup>6</sup> and the Son of Man would come to him<sup>7</sup> and be rewarded by him.<sup>8</sup>

It was revealed to the Prophet Joseph that the Ancient of Days was none other than Adam himself,<sup>9</sup> the most ancient of all beings upon the earth. There is another title however by which the Ancient of Days goes by, which is used by John the Beloved apostle in his vision which we call the book of Revelation. He also saw these same events: the same

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 167, Words of Joseph Smith, 39.

2 Matthew 3:17,17:5, Mark 1:11;9:7, Luke 3:22; 9:35, 2 Peter 1:17, 3 Nephi 11:7, D&C 93:15, JS-H 1:17.

3 D&C 29:26.

4 1 Thessalonians 4:16, see D&C 43:18.

5 “the Ancient of days did sit, ... his throne [was like] the fiery flame,” - Daniel 7:9.

6 “A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him ... the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” - Daniel 7:10.

7 “behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days” - Daniel 7:13.

8 “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom” - Daniel 7:14.

9 “Adam shall come to visit his people, or the Ancient of Days shall sit, as spoken of by Daniel the prophet.” - D&C 116:1, 27:11, 138:38.

throne,<sup>1</sup> fire,<sup>2</sup> thousands ministering,<sup>3</sup> books of judgement,<sup>4</sup> Jesus coming to him<sup>5</sup> and being rewarded.<sup>6</sup> Yet John had a different name for the person on the throne - "the Almighty God."<sup>7</sup>

When Joseph Smith proclaimed Adam as the Ancient of Days, undoubtedly some of his audience knew what that implied. The religious reformers, leaders and scholars of their day and before knew who he was.

John Wesley, the father of Methodism, spoke of "God the king, and judge of all, called the Ancient of days, because of his eternal deity."<sup>8</sup> Likewise Matthew Henry's Bible commentary spoke of the "Judge" who was "the Ancient of days himself, God the Father," who was "called the Ancient of days, because he is God from everlasting to everlasting."<sup>9</sup>

Joseph plainly explained to the Saints that "all that have had the keys must stand before" Adam, and speaking of these events that "the Son of Man" (Jesus) would stand "before him, and there [be] given [by] him glory and dominion."<sup>10</sup>

Elsewhere the Prophet refers to these same events again but instead of using the name Adam he simply calls him the Father. Says he, "Christ shall present the kingdom to the Father"<sup>11</sup> "that He may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt Him in glory."<sup>12</sup>

## **Brigham Young's teachings on Adam**

Despite all these teachings of Joseph Smith it is Brigham Young who is better known for teaching this doctrine. It seems that Joseph realized that most of the Saints in his day wouldn't be prepared to receive

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1 "a throne was set in heaven" - Revelations 4:2.

2 "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and [there were] seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" - Revelations 4:5.

3 "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand" - Revelations 5:11.

4 "I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book" - Revelations 5:1.

5 "in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain," - Revelations 5:6.

6 "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." - Revelations 5:12.

7 "saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." - Revelations 4:8, see v. 11.

8 John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible, 1754-65.

9 Matthew Henry Bible Commentary, 1706.

10 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 157, Words of Joseph Smith, 9.

11 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 169.

12 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 347, Words of Joseph Smith, 358.

this truth, and that it would be up to his successor to reveal it plainly to the people. Joseph subsequently taught Brigham the doctrine that it was “God” who “comes to earth, eats and partakes of the fruit”<sup>1</sup> perhaps as early as between 1835-37 at the home of Luke Johnson.<sup>2</sup> Young went on to lead the Saints – out of Illinois and to a knowledge of who their Father in heaven was. He gave many public sermons on the subject, including some in General Conference, and he attributed the knowledge he had received to Joseph Smith<sup>3</sup> and God himself.<sup>4</sup> Said he, “I could not find any man on earth who could tell me this, although it is one of the most simplest things in the world, until I met and talked with Joseph Smith.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Is this knowledge important?**

Some question whether any of this is important for us to know, or if it is a mystery better left alone. Yet the Prophet tells us that far from being an unnecessary subject for us to study and understand, “it is” in fact “the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God.”<sup>6</sup>

The Savior informed the disciples in his day that “this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God.”<sup>7</sup> So without this knowledge our exaltation is insecure, but with these facts we begin to understand the “mystery of Godliness”<sup>8</sup>

With this knowledge we realize how close God actually is to us, how much He did to give us an opportunity to come to this world, and how well He understands our lives upon this earth. We also have an insight into what roles we may yet fulfill if we are worthy.

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1 Minutes of Meeting at Historian’s Office, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1860.

2 Although it may have been years later at Orson Hyde’s home, Brigham says it was taught, “when in Luke Johnson’s at Orson Hydes.” Johnson was excommunicated in the Autumn of 1837.

3 Brigham Young Papers, Meeting of Quorum of Twelve, 4 April 1860 & 14 May 1876; 16 December 1876, Meeting of School of Prophets, Wilford Woodruff Journal; 18 June 1873, Deseret Weekly News 22:308.

4 25 April 1855, Deseret Theological Institute; 8 October 1861, B.Y. Addresses 4:138; 18 May 1873, JD 16:45-46; 18 June 1873, Deseret News.

5 18 June 1873, Deseret Weekly News 22:308.

6 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith p. 345.

7 John 17:3.

8 D&C 19:10.

## Paracletes – The Earliest Adam-God Teachings

*In the summer of 1845 a curious article appeared in the Times & Seasons magazine<sup>1</sup>, the official LDS Church periodical of the time. We cannot know for certain who the author was, but we do know that the Editor John Taylor approved it for publication. The first part concluded with the disclaimer that it was “not revelation, but the innuendoes relate to holy transactions, which may lead good people to search after truth and find it.”*

*As for the title of the article, “Paracletes”, it is a Greek word which the New Testament translates Comforter; another name for the Holy Ghost. Whether the author is referring to the spirit with which the article should be read or to the “holy spirits” his story is about is unknown.*

*This commentary attempts to explain its symbolic language, and make it more accessible to modern Latter-day Saints who may not realize what it is trying to teach, and the significance of the article itself. It is hoped that it will help those reading to “search after the truth and find it.”*

1. Once upon a time, the most honorable men of the creations or universes, met together to promote the best interest of the great whole. – The ‘head’ said to his oldest son, “you are the rightful heir to all, but you know I have many kingdoms and many mansions, and of course it will need many kings and many priests, to govern them, come you with me in solemn council, and let us and some of the ‘best’ men we have had born in the regions of light, to rule in those kingdoms and set them in order by exhibiting good that evil may be manifest.”

*It would be easy to presume that the head spoken of here is our heavenly Father; and that the son spoken of is Jesus, but - as we will see as we read on - this particular head is the father of our God (who is actually spoken of as his ‘son’ in this passage).*

2. It was said and done, for every thing there, was adopted from the ‘head’ by common consent. As free agency gave the sons of the ‘head’ a fair chance to choose for themselves, the most noble of the hosts, came

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1 Times and Seasons, Vol.6, p. 891 & 917.

forward and selected a world or kingdom, and a time or a season, when he would take his chance, at winning the hearts of the multitude, a kingdom, crown, and never ending glory.

*This is not speaking of our pre-existent spirit world, but of times and events long before that: because in that state we do not have our choice of worlds, nor do we win our own planetary kingdom.*

3. The innumerable multiplicity of kingdoms, or spheres for action, with beings and animals in proportion, and time, times, eternity and eternities, for a full development of the qualities and powers of each, would so far exceed the common comprehension of mortals, that I can only say eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath a natural heart yet been able to calculate either. I then shall content myself, for this time to sketch but one. Idumia<sup>1</sup> is the one as interesting as any, and being situated at an immense distance from the center or “head’s” residence, and many eternities from the birth of the “Son of the morning” or even the great holy day when the “morning stars sang together,”<sup>2</sup> because so many worlds had been wrought out and left “empty and desolate,”<sup>3</sup> as places for “all the sons” of God to multiply and replenish the earth, I select that.

*The “head’s residence” in this case is probably Kolob, the world where our heavenly Father’s father resided, and where our earth (which it calls Idumia) during its early organization revolved around until it “fell” into its present orbit.*

4. Time being divided into seven parts, the following men agreed to leave the mansions of bliss, and spiritually help (organize) every thing necessary to fill a kingdom for the space of many of the Lord’s days, viz: Milauleph, Milbeth, Milgimal, Mildauleth, Milhah, Milvah and Milzah. Now after they had organized the kingdom of Idumia spiritually, then one at a time, was to come temporally and open the door of communication with the spiritual kingdom, that all that would, might return to their former estate; for, for this reason, all the regions created and to be created, were filled with a variety of beings: agents to themselves but accountable to the ‘head’ for promises, made, when they

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1 “Idumea, or the world” (Doctrine & Covenants 1:36.)

2 Job 38:7.

3 “In the beginning God organised the heaven and the earth. And the earth was empty and desolate;” (Words of Joseph Smith, p. 60.)

agreed “to go” and be born of the flesh as they had been of the spirit; that they might know the evil, and choose the good: and then be born (again) of the spirit and the water, and enter into the mansions prepared for them before the foundations of the worlds.

*There would be one man to head and live in each dispensation. Each of the names represents the first seven letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order.*

5. Milauleph being the eldest and first chosen for Idumia, came on when “there was not a man to till the ground,”<sup>1</sup> that is, there was not a “man of flesh” to labor temporally; and his elder brethren who had wrought out their salvation, upon worlds or realms, or kingdoms, ages, yea even eternities before, formed him a temporal body like unto their spiritual bodies, and put the life of his spiritual body into it, and gave him the power of endless lives.

*Milauleph is undoubtedly Adam, the first (aleph) man. The fact that his elder brethren had already wrought out their salvation upon other worlds, and he had already before had a temporal body and now had the power of endless lives shows that he was a resurrected and exalted being; a God, before coming to this earth.*

6. Now the acts of his spiritual body, while he was a child with his father and mother in heaven; and his acts while he was in the spiritual councils of the Gods for millions of years; and his acts upon Idumia, while he named, arranged and prepared every thing upon it to fulfil the end and aim of their creation, behold they are written in ‘the books’<sup>2</sup> of the ‘head,’ – which are to be opened when the judgment comes for just men to enter into the joys of a ‘third existence’ which is spiritual.

*Adam began as a spirit like the rest of us, but his father and mother in heaven are not ours. He grew to be a God and sit with the councils of the Gods for aeons before coming to earth. His life during that time will be a mystery to us until our day of judgement, when we will have spirit running through our veins.*

7. Milauleph had one thousand years to account for, as well as to be ‘arch

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1 Genesis 2:5.

2 Moses 6:5,46.

angel<sup>1</sup> of Idumia, after he laid down his temporal body. Behold here is wisdom, he that hath ears to hear let him hear, for Milauleph, as yet had not been tempted with evil that he might know the good. He had not exercised the power of endless lives that he might do the works that his father had done: and he had not “fell that men might be.”<sup>2</sup> Although he had seen his eldest brother create worlds, and people them; and had witnessed the course and conduct of that world and people, as free agents, “sinning and being sinned against,” while ‘death’ who held a commission from the “Son of the morning,”<sup>3</sup> to end the first partnership between the spirit and the body, yet, with all this knowledge, and a liberal education in the great college of the nobles of heaven, wherein all perfection was taught, all science explained from first to last, and all that was, is, or will be, was exhibited on the great map of perpetual systems, and eternal lives, Milauleph had to take his wife or one of the “Queens of heaven,” and come upon Idumia, and be tempted, overcome, and driven from the presence of his Father, because it had been agreed by the Gods and grand council of heaven, that all the family of the ‘head’ that would do as he or his eldest son did, should be exalted to the same glory.

*Adam was an arch-angel, head of the angels, but when he came to earth his body became temporal, as his father had done before him, so that “men might be” upon the earth. It seems that He had already seen an elder brother go through a similar process. Adam (as Milaluph) selected one of his wives (a queen of heaven) to come to the earth with (who we know to be Eve). All the righteous spirit children of a heavenly Father will one day be able to do the same (presumably beginning with the eldest brother – or Savior).*

8. This was to be accomplished by the power of ‘perpetual succession’ in eternal lives, wherein there was no “remission of sin without the shedding of blood;”<sup>4</sup> no forgiveness without repentance; and no glory without perfect submission to the ‘head.’ The foundation was truth: and the continuation, perpetual succession by revelation. Milauleph, then, knew that he and his wife would sin, and be troubled; but as the eternal spirit in him was the candle of the Lord, he knew also that the light

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1 Doctrine & Covenants 107:54.

2 2 Nephi 2:25.

3 Isaiah 14:12.

4 Hebrews 9:22.

thereof upon the eyes of his understanding,<sup>1</sup> would show some of the way marks to the original ‘truth,’ whereby he might work out his salvation with fear and trembling.<sup>2</sup> That none of the work of the hands of the ‘Son’ might be lost or any souls which his father had given him,<sup>3</sup> might be left in prison, angels were commissioned to watch over Idumia, and act as (spiritual guides) to every soul, “lest they should fall and dash their feet against a stone.”<sup>4</sup> They were denominated the angels of our presence.<sup>5</sup>

*Who is the Son spoken of here? It could be speaking of Jesus, the Son of our Father; or our God as the son of His father.*

## Part 2

1. To continue the history of the seven holy ones, who agreed to take upon them bodies of flesh, and work out a more exceeding and eternal crown of glory, upon Idumia, it will be necessary to premise, that Milauleph, and his first companion in the flesh, knew before they left their “first estate,” what their fathers' will was; and that when they should begin to replenish the earth<sup>6</sup>, Satan, who had been raised and educated with them in their father's family, would descend from heaven like lightning to tempt them, that they might know to choose good and reject evil<sup>7</sup>. These two, who had engaged to people Idumia: to subdue it, and to return, having kept the faith once delivered to the chosen seed, were informed, when they agreed to go and labor their hour, that besides the comforter, to bring all things to their remembrance, the angels which attended them on high should attend them below to preserve them from the secret of unforeseen snares of those angels who kept not their first estates<sup>8</sup>, but were left in their sins, to roam from region to region, and in

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1 Moses 5:10.

2 Moses 5:58.

3 some may presume from this that God will exalt all his children, yet it doesn't say this ...

4 Psalms 91:12; Matthew 4:6.

5 The first installment ended because he explained that his “story of the whole who managed the seven dispensations of Idumia, will be too long for one communication.” Yet promised “If this meets the approbation of virtuous minds, I shall write more.” which he did.

6 Genesis 1:28.

7 Moses 3:17.

8 Jude 1:6; Abraham 3:28.

chains of darkness, until the great day of judgment.

*Each of these 'holy ones' will come to earth to head their different dispensations. Adam and Eve knew that they would 'fall.' They would be protected by angels against Satan'sangels, which wander upon the earth.*

2. It was written in the law of the Lord on high, that they that overcome by obedience, should be made kings and queens, and priests and priestesses to God and his Father,<sup>1</sup> through the atonement of the eldest son, and that natural eyes should not see, nor natural ears hear, neither should the natural heart conceive the great, glorious, and eternal things, honors and blessings, that were then, in the Father's dominions, and mansions, prepared in the beginning for them that kept the faith to the end,<sup>2</sup> and entered triumphantly into their third estates: (the eternal life).

*Through Christ's atonement we can become kings and priests (or queens and priestesses), and thus become qualified for our exaltation.*

3. It was also written in the law of the Lord on high, that when the Lord punished men for their sins, he would "punish the hosts of the high ones on high," and the "kings of the earth upon earth,"<sup>3</sup> – that spirit might judge spirit, and flesh judge flesh; for this honor have all the just, and this honor have all the saints.

4. Having this understanding Idumia was placed in its space, but was "desolate and empty." and the life organizing power of the Gods, or sons of the "head," moved over the matters and then the land and water separated. And the Gods called "light, and light came" and they went on and organized a world, and created every thing necessary to beautify and adorn it, with life and the power of lives to sustain it, until it should fill the measure of all designed, from a mite to a mammoth; from a man to a God; and Milauleph's and his wife's spirits, clothed in heavenly garments, and learned in eternal wisdom, witnessed the creation, as the spirits of the Gods had witnessed their Father: for even the elder brother

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1 Revelations 1:6.

2 Isaiah 64:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9.

3 Isaiah 24:21.

could do nothing but what he had seen his Father do in eternities before<sup>1</sup>.

*This illustrates that multiple Gods were involved in the organization of the earth, and that God's spirit children witnessed this 'creation' as it happened, as our heavenly Father did when he was a spirit child.*

5. Perhaps this subject may excite the curiosity of some: as it will lead the mind back among the worlds that have been organized and passed away, – and among the Gods and angels that have attended to execute the laws and decrees of one universe after another, from eternity to eternity, from the beginning till now; and, to increase the curiosity of having this present world pass away with a great noise, when there is no place found for it; – and of having organized a new heaven and a new earth<sup>2</sup>, wherein dwelleth 'righteousness' and as our fathers cannot be perfect without us, nor we without them<sup>3</sup>; and as the man is not without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord<sup>4</sup>, perhaps Milauleph and his wife, as king and queen to God, and all the sons and daughters of the 'head' will shout for joy, and the morning stars sing together again, at the 'third' entrance of Idumia and sanctified millions! – Who knows?

*The pattern of this world, and of its peopling and progress is the same as it has always and will be. This planet will become a new earth, men and women are complete only when together and when they become kings and queens. The earth will reach an exalted state, and return to its original orbit around Kolob.*

## Significance of the Article

The article is significant as the first publicly available teaching of Adam's divine status, seven years prior to Brigham Young's sermon on the subject in April 1852. If Phelps (or whoever the author was) learnt this doctrine from Joseph Smith then it is a second witness to those others who also claimed to have been taught the same concept by the Prophet.

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1 John 5:19.

2 Revelations 21:1.

3 Doctrine & Covenants 128:15; Hebrews 11:40.

4 1 Corinthians 11:11.

The symbolic story primarily deals with –

“The Head”	The GrandFather of MilAuleph & Father of “The Son”
“The Son”	The Father of MilAuleph
MalAuleph	God the Father of our Spirits / Michael / Adam
His Son	Jesus

There are several indications that MilAuleph is both Adam and God the Father –

### **MilAuleph**

#### As Adam

1.4 He would come to earth as the head of the first. dispensation.

1.6 He named everything upon the earth.

1.7 He was an archangel.  
He would live upon the earth 1000 years.  
He would ‘fall’ that man might be

2.5 He was not complete without his wife.

#### As God the Father of our Spirits

1.5 Eternities prior to this earth He lived in mortality.  
He had watched his elder brothers do the same before him.

1.6 He arranged and prepared everything upon the earth.

1.7 His wife was a queen of heaven.

2.4 His spirit children witnessed the creation.

“Seven Holy Ones” or Dispensational Heads are mentioned –

Symbolic Name	Day	Dispensation	Historical Name
MilAuleph	Sunday	1 <sup>st</sup> – 4000 BC	Adam / Michael
MilBeth	Monday	2nd	Enoch
MilGimal	Tuesday	3rd	Noah / Gabriel
MilDauleth	Wednesday	4 ~2000 BC	Abraham
MilHah	Thursday	5th	Moses
MilVah	Friday	6th – Meridian / 30 AD	Jesus Christ
MilZah	Saturday	7 <sup>th</sup> – Last / 1830 AD	Joseph Smith

Three existences or experiences are also mentioned –

First Estate	Second Estate	Third Estate
Spirit Child	Mortal	Resurrected / Exalted Being

## **Authorship**

Although we do not know for certain who the author of this article was he did conclude it with the name “Joseph’s Speckled Bird” which seems to be a reference to a verse in Jeremiah<sup>1</sup>, in which a speckled bird (representing the Biblical author’s heritage) is attacked by other birds and beasts. This may refer to the persecution that was still intense at the time the article was written, perhaps to such persecution arising from some if they understood the article, or perhaps the “speckled” nature of the person who wrote the article.

This last interpretation would be the one most suitable if William W. Phelps was the author. Phelps is the one most often suggested by scholars as having written it for several reasons: 1) he was assistant editor at the time, 2) it uses phraseology very similar to that of Phelps as can be especially seen a few passages of the funeral sermon he gave for

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1 Jeremiah 12:9.

Joseph Smith, and 3) his life in the Gospel could be considered as speckled, as he had apostatized in the past before coming back into full fellowship. However, a word print analysis made by B.Y.U. concluded that he was not the author.<sup>1</sup>

Orson Pratt has also been suggested as our “speckled bird”, although there are two other candidates that no-one else has considered, but seem equally possible: 1) Parley Pratt, who had more of history of symbolic writings than his brother, and 2) John Taylor, who used the phrase “one of the queens of heaven” himself a few years later.<sup>2</sup> If indeed Taylor is the author then this article would represent the only time he publicly (albeit anonymously) made his thoughts known on this subject.

Joseph Smith has been mentioned as a possible author, but this has several problems: 1) it was published after his death, 2) what reason would there be for not publicly acknowledging Joseph as author (if not in 1845 then why not later)? 3) the language seems very different from his own.

Perhaps historians will never discover for certain who wrote “Paracletes”, but whoever the author was the article itself shows that this doctrine was believed in and taught by at least one faithful Latter-day Saint in 1845, and it gives weight to the idea that this concept did not originate with Brigham Young. It is only through the Paraclete (Holy Ghost) that Saints in any age can know the truthfulness of these things, and we hope that readers will put this article to the Spiritual test it deserves, and see if they receive the same understanding and witness that many others have had.

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1 “Who Wrote the Book of Mormon”, *BYU Studies* 20:3. Fn 16, Page 230.

2 “Destiny of Woman”, *the Mormon*, 29 August 1857.

## **A Serious Lesson From a Joke About Mormons**

A good indication that we are not taking ourselves too seriously is that we remain able to laugh at our own shortcomings. When I read the following poem on the Mormon newsgroup on the Internet I found it both funny and sad, because I realized that the author - although obviously antagonistic towards the Church - had correctly observed the different attitudes amongst members towards the abandonment of early Mormon doctrine, which has led to most Latter-day Saints having contradictory opinions on such issues, with each of them firmly believing they have the correct view:

“How many Mormons does it take to change a lightbulb?  
At least six: One to change the lightbulb;  
One to deny that there was any change made;  
One to say that we shouldn’t focus on the change only  
the need for light;  
One to say we don’t teach that the light bulb needed  
changing in the first place;  
One to say that the changer was acting for himself and  
not as an official changer;  
And one to say, ‘Who cares who changed the bulb, don’t  
you feel the burning of the light?’”

Whilst we may take great pride in being members of the Lord's Church, we must admit that as a people we are not exempt from many of the problems and attitudes that exist throughout the society we live in, bringing up some of these failings makes some feel uneasy – but recognizing our problems is part of being honest with ourselves – not blasphemy.

There are difficult issues in Mormon theology that many members are unwilling to face up to, and all too willing to gloss over with such uninformed statements as those illustrated in the above joke. Those trying to avoid study or discussion on deep doctrines with excuses that do not explain the issues at hand, seem to fall perfectly into our comedian's six stereotypes:

*The Concessionary Mormon:* There are those who take the path

of least resistance, who clamor for popularity or concede to pressure and make a change in the first place. They suppose perhaps that the persecution they may encounter is worse than the condemnation they will receive for giving up a true principle, or that a good relationship with the world will do more for the Church than unpopularly sticking with a divine law of God.

*The Ultra-Orthodox:* Another type of Latter-day Saint denies that Mormonism has ever changed; perhaps they are aware of the scriptural statements and ones made by early Church leaders that the Gospel, its laws, doctrine, and ordinances do not alter.

*The Lawyer:* This character will try to divert attention away from the issue if it puts them or their beliefs in a negative light, or if it means otherwise facing up to an unpleasant issue. Perhaps they will clothe the doctrine in ambiguity, or say that a person is unfaithful to suppose that a change occurred.

*The Apologist:* They may claim that whatever has changed was not ever part of the gospel, or that it still is relevant in principle, although not practiced. They will even go so far as questioning the inspiration of any prophet who said it was true, essential or irrevocable, and claiming this must have just been their opinion. But of course the modern leader's view is held as divine truth, despite what his predecessors said on the subject.

*The Liberal:* The liberal is a doctrinal minimalist, there is little he considers necessary or unalterable in his faith, and evidence that the Church has discarded old beliefs is only fuel for his hope that the Church may yet relinquish other beliefs he finds old fashioned in his 'enlightened' mind.

*The 'Emotional' Mormon:* As long as they feel good about something it must be right. They had a spiritual witness about one principle in the past, and so everything else must be true they believe. If someone doesn't feel the same perhaps they are unrighteous, or have studied the subject too much, and are in danger of studying themselves out of the Church. (Sadly, a common statement!)

## **PART II**

Let us take a look at one issue which is treated in these variety of manners by members who come across the issue, and their common responses. We could have chosen any of a hundred doctrines which are no longer taught as true, necessary, or have lapsed into obscurity. However, this is one which seems to excite the most controversy:

### Objections to the Adam-God Doctrine

*(which teaches that Adam is the Father of our Spirits)*

1. "It isn't true"
2. "It was never taught"
3. "It is not a current doctrine / not essential for exaltation"
4. "It is irrelevant or too deep"
5. "Its not an official doctrine, just an opinion"
6. "If you have a testimony the Church is true, you don't need to worry about anything else"

Perhaps the real question is "How many excuses does it take to change a doctrine?" Yet Bruce R. McConkie<sup>1</sup>, Paul H. Dunn<sup>2</sup>, and Prof. Rodney Turner of B.Y.U.<sup>3</sup> have all admitted that Brigham Young did indeed teach that Adam had been the Father of our Spirits. There are hundreds of accounts of sermons on the subject<sup>4</sup>, many of them taken in shorthand<sup>5</sup>, and approved by the prophet before publication.<sup>6</sup>

The Adam-God doctrine meets a very rigorous test which few other 'official' Mormon doctrines would stand up to:

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- 1 Bruce R. McConkie, Letter to Eugene England, 19 February 1981.
  - 2 Elder Dunn opined, "Yes, he did teach it," at a special meeting at Bristol Stake centre (England) in the mid 1980's. As related by several of those present (including a Bishop) to the editor.
  - 3 "A careful, detached study of his available statements, as found in the official publications of the Church, will admit of no other conclusion that the identification of Adam with God the Father by President Brigham Young as an irrefutable fact." Rodney Turner, Position of Adam in L.D.S. Theology (B.Y.U. M.A. Thesis), August 1953.
  - 4 A compilation in the possession of the author (compiled by another individual) lists 230 quotes from Church leaders and publications on the subject. The majority overwhelmingly in favor.
  - 5 See The Unknown God, Chapter 2 - A Question of Accuracy.
  - 6 See "What is the Journal of Discourses?", Truth Seeker 1:3 (April 1992).

1. It was taught in General Conference<sup>1</sup>
2. It was spoken of as a doctrine by Brigham Young<sup>2</sup>
3. It was referred to as a revelation by Brigham Young<sup>3</sup>
4. Brigham taught that those who did not believe it would be damned
5. Brigham taught that accepting it was essential to exaltation<sup>4</sup>
6. It was part of the Temple Endowment ceremony<sup>5</sup>
7. It originated with Joseph Smith, according to Brigham Young<sup>6</sup>
8. Most of the Saints believed the doctrine<sup>7</sup>
9. At least one person was excommunicated for not believing it (although a General Authority commented that the man should not have been excommunicated for his personal beliefs)<sup>8</sup>
10. One of the Apostles (Orson Pratt) risked his standing in the Quorum of Twelve for teachings contrary to the doctrine<sup>9</sup>
11. Believing it was a requirement for baptism in at least one mission of the Church<sup>10</sup>
12. It was affirmed a true doctrine by the First Presidency and Twelve on at least two occasions<sup>11</sup>

Let us not be among those who excuse away the teaching of the

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- 1 Journal of Discourse 1:50 (9 April 1852); 5:331 (7 October 1857); 7:285 (9 Oct 1859); 18:257 (8 Oct. 1876); Teachings of President Brigham Young 3:343 (8 October 1854).
  - 2 Journal of Discourses 1:51; 5:331.
  - 3 Deseret News, 18 June 1873.
  - 4 "Now, let all who may hear these doctrines, pause before they make light of them, or treat them with indifference, for they will prove their salvation or damnation." - Journal of Discourses 1:51, 9 April 1852.
  - 5 Lecture at the Veil, Unpublished Revelations 75.
  - 6 Deseret News Weekly 22:308; Wilford Woodruff Journal, 16 December 1867; Brigham Young Papers, 4 April 1860 & 14 May 1876.
  - 7 "The doctrine preached by President Young a few years back wherein he says that Adam is our God, the God we worship - that most of the people believe this. Some believe it because the President says so; others because they can find [a] testimony ..." - Abraham O. Smoot; Minutes, School of the Prophets, 18 June 1868.
  - 8 "I have heard of a man who was cut off because he would not believe that Adam was our Father and God." - Francis M. Lyman, Mill. Star 24:99-100, 15 Feb 1862.
  - 9 Gary Bergera, "The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies: Conflicts within the Quorums, 1853-1868," Dialogue 13 (Summer 1980)
  - 10 Millennial Star 16:482, June 1854. See also Wilford Woodruff Journal, 4 September 1860.
  - 11 "Adam is our father and God and no use to discuss it with Josephites or any one else." Meeting of First Presidency and Twelve, 16 December 1897.

early prophets, but follow the counsel of a member of the First Presidency made after most of the changes occurred: “The Gospel in its simplicity, is to be found in the revelations, the teachings of the prophets and early leaders of the Church. We shall make no mistake if we follow them.”<sup>1</sup>

If we don't follow such advise, perhaps it will be Satan who has the last laugh.

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1 J. Rueben Clark, *Immortality and Eternal Life*, p. 156.

## **Jehovah – God the Father or Jesus?**

“For thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord;  
whose name is Jehovah, is a jealous God.”<sup>1</sup>

Ask the average Latter-day Saint who Jehovah is and they will tell you that it was the name of Jesus before he was born of Mary. However, if you were to ask the same question of a Church member a hundred or so years ago you would have received a very different answer. In fact an early LDS statement of beliefs began, “We believe in God the Father, who is the Great Jehovah ...”<sup>2</sup>

A study of the teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young reveals that neither of them refers to Jesus as Jehovah, but rather used the title Jehovah to refer to God the Father,<sup>3</sup> and that John Taylor even wrote a hymn about Him being such.<sup>4</sup> It may further surprise modern Mormons to find that no General Authority referred to Jesus as Jehovah until the mid-1880s,<sup>5</sup> and that up until the middle of this century LDS leaders were not united on this subject, with David O. McKay referring to “Jehovah and his Son, Jesus.”<sup>6</sup>

The word Jehovah itself is derived from the letters JHVH which appear in the Bible over 3000 times, and is represented in the Authorized (King James) Version as “LORD” or “GOD”. He was the being to whom the ancient Israelites prayed, and to whom they referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Whenever the words Lord God appear in the Old Testament it refers to Jehovah, and as to who the scriptures say Jehovah is, this article will examine the evidence and provide the answer.

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1 Exodus 34:14 JST/IV

2 Times & Seasons 3:358 (or 578?), 15 Nov 1841.

3 Joseph Smith (HC 5:127) - “Jehovah - God - Thou Eloheim - Thy Son Jesus Christ”, Brigham Young (BYA, 4 Aug 1867)

4 John Taylor (M&A 150,51 + Sacred Hymns #262) - “Jehovah, God the Father is one / Another His Eternal Son“

5 Franklin D. Richards first taught Jehovah-Jesus in Aug 1885, JD 26:300, In 1895 Wilford Woodruff put it among the mysteries, James E. Talmage popularized idea in 1915 with Jesus the Christ p. 32,38

6 David O. McKay, 1 July 1961, Church News.

## A Vague Passage and a Huge Assumption

One of the most quoted verses, which supporters of the Jesus-Jehovah theory point to as positive proof that Jesus identified himself with being Jehovah is John 5:58:

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,  
Before Abraham was, I am.”

They believe that Jesus is here identifying himself with the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who when Moses asked what His name was, said, “I am that I am.”<sup>1</sup> However, not all Biblical translators are united as to how this passage in John should be rendered, just as not all scriptural commentators are agreed as to how it should be interpreted. Goodspeed’s “American Translation” and Moffatt’s version both give the impression that Jesus was saying that he existed prior to the time of Abraham, or as the Jehovah Witnesses’ New World edition words it, “Before Abraham came into existence, I have been.”<sup>2</sup> The questions which lead to Jesus’ reply dealt with age, and not with identity. So wouldn’t it be logical to expect that his answer dealt with the length of his existence, rather than an ambiguous reference to him being their God?<sup>3</sup>

Jesus certainly did appear to prophets during the Old Testament period, but his appearances are different from those occasions on which Jehovah (God the Father) made himself manifest. The Saviour’s remarks to the Brother of Jared provide us with one such indication that his visits were distinct from those of the Lord God, for he remarked to him that “never have I showed myself unto man” before that point<sup>4</sup>. This raises the question of who was it that visited Enoch and his people over 500 years earlier? Jesus has already stated it couldn’t of been him, and yet the books of Genesis, Moses, and the Doctrine and Covenants all state that he was visited by the Lord (Jehovah).<sup>5</sup>

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1 Exodus 3:14

2 The verb 'eimi' (as in 'ego eimi' or 'I am') sometimes does “express existence as a predicate” as Robertson’s, “Grammar of the Greek New Testament” points out. The Bible in Worldwide English translates the passage, “I already was before Abraham was born.” “I am that I am” can just as legitimately translated, “I will be what I will be”

3 As he expresses in John 17:5.

4 Ether 3:15

5 Moses 7:4 - “And I saw the Lord”; D&C 107:49 - “And he saw the Lord”; See also

## Different Individuals with Similar Characteristics

There are other words applied to Jesus which some believe indicate he is Jehovah. They reason that because a title is given to Jehovah, that if the same or a similar title is applied to Jesus too, they must be one in the same. It is true that both Jesus and Jehovah are spoken of as being a Saviour and Judge for instance, but what is overlooked is that being a savior upon mount Zion is an accolade promised to all of the righteous Saints<sup>1</sup>, and that the faithful were told they would judge the twelve tribes of Israel<sup>2</sup>. Similarly the term Rock applied to Christ and to the Lord God, yet Peter is also called a ‘rock’ upon which the Church will be built<sup>3</sup>.

### Similar Titles & Roles Shared by Others

<b>Jesus</b>	<b>Jehovah</b>	<b>God - Eloheim</b>	<b>Saints</b>
...Is a Saviour <i>Acts 5:31</i> <i>1 John 4:14</i>	...Is a Saviour <i>Isa. 43:11,</i> <i>Hosea 13:4</i>	...Is a Saviour <i>2 Sam 22:3</i>	...Are Saviors <i>Obad 1:21,</i> <i>D&amp;C 103:9</i>
...Is a Redeemer <i>Helaman 5:12,</i> <i>3 Nephi 5:26</i>	...Is a Redeemer <i>Ps 78:35</i>	...Is a Redeemer <i>Isa 44:24, 54:5</i>	...Are Redeemers <i>D&amp;C 128:22</i>
...Is a Creator <i>Mosiah 3:8,</i> <i>Helaman 14:12</i>	...Is a Creator <i>Isa. 40:28</i>	...Is a Creator <i>Matt 23:6 JST</i>	...Involved in <i>Abraham 3:24</i>
...Is a Judge <i>Moro 10:34</i>	...Is a Judge <i>Moroni 10:34</i>	...Is a Judge <i>Psalms 75:7,</i> <i>82:8</i>	...Are Judges <i>1 Cor 6:2-3</i>
...Is a Rock <i>1 Cor 10:4</i>	...Is a Rock <i>Ps 78:35,</i>	...Is a Rock <i>Deut 32:18, Isa</i> <i>51:1, 2 Ne</i> <i>4:30,35, Jacob</i> <i>7:25</i>	...Is a Rock <i>Matt 16:18</i>

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Genesis 3:8; Moses 6:39 & 7:16

1 Obadiah 1:21, D&C 103:9

2 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

3 Matthew 16:18

## **In the name of the Father**

It is not the intention of this essay to lessen the importance of Jesus in anyone's estimation, his role is a unique one, and cannot be over-appreciated. He and His father are one in a way we aspire to be. But it would also be inappropriate to assume he performed acts that his father, Jehovah, is recorded as accomplishing. It is certainly true that He often acted on his Father's behalf, as he tells us himself, "I am come in my Father's name,"<sup>1</sup> and, "the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself but the Father"<sup>2</sup> As a mouthpiece for the Lord he may have repeated his words, and in quoting his Father may have said, "I the Lord God (Jehovah)". Just as the Prophet Joseph or ancient prophets would have done when revealing the word of the Lord.

An example of an angel acting on God's behalf, using his name, and speaking His words, can be seen in the book of Exodus, when Moses is on Mount Horeb,<sup>3</sup> and again in God's promises of his protection for the Israelites on their way to the promised land:

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name [is] in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.<sup>4</sup>

## **Jehovah's servant = Jesus' role**

Earlier in this article we touched upon how Jesus acted upon Jehovah's behalf, had come in his name and repeated his words. Continuing with that theme, it is interesting to look at the way Jehovah spoke of Jesus. In the ancient prophetic book of Isaiah, the Lord speaks of a time when a special "servant" will come forward:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom

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1 John 5:43

2 John 14:10

3 Exodus 3:1-6, and to Abraham in Genesis 22:11+

4 Exodus 23:20-22

my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.<sup>1</sup>

Who is this servant Jehovah speaks of? The Gospel writer Matthew, quotes this passage to show that He was speaking of non other than Jesus, and that in him the prophecy revealed to Isaiah had been fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> So here we have the first of many occasions in which Jehovah, foretells of the coming of Jesus, whom he also calls His Son in the book of Psalms,<sup>3</sup> whom Paul identifies as being Christ.<sup>4</sup>

## **Jehovah was the Recipient of Prayers & Object of Worship**

Most telling of all is the way in which Jesus refers to Jehovah. Whilst the New Testament does not use the word “Jehovah” itself, there are some occasions on which Jesus and others paraphrase Old Testament passages referring to Him. At one point Jesus even tells his followers, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”,<sup>5</sup> quoting the ancient commandment they would have been familiar with from childhood. As they would have been schooled in Hebrew, they would have also undoubtedly known that the original text in Deuteronomy says it is “Jehovah” (JHVH) that they should serve. In fact we know from the scriptural record that all of the Jews and their Israelite cousins would have prayed to the being they considered to be their heavenly Father, Jehovah. This leads us to the quote that prefaced the first part of this article:

For thou shalt worship no other god; for the Lord, whose name is Jehovah, is a jealous God.<sup>6</sup>

This version is slightly different than we have it in our King James version, where it says that His name is “jealous”, an obvious mistranslation which Joseph Smith corrected in his inspired revision of the passage. Other Biblical passages also teach this, such as Zechariah 8:22 that tells the Israelites “to pray before the LORD [Jehovah].”

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1 Isaiah 42:1

2 Matthew 12:17-18

3 Psalms 2:7

4 See Hebrews 1:5

5 Matthew 4:10

6 JST Exodus 34:14

## **Old Testament Descriptions of Jehovah**

Since it is the Old Testament which refers to Jehovah the most, and since Jehovah is considered the God of the ancient Israelites who lived before the appearance of Christ, the books of scripture which cover that period are undoubtedly the best source for discovering about the character and identity of Jehovah.

In fact the ancient scriptures speak of those who walked and talked with Jehovah, prophets who knew of Him from firsthand experience. Did they describe him as the spirit Jesus would have been, as a member of the Godhead, or as a unique Son of a heavenly Father?

## **A Divine Personage with a Physical Body**

Moses, in his record, writes that “the Lord spake unto” him “face to face” and “mouth to mouth,” and saw his “back parts”<sup>1</sup> Was this just the image of a face he speaks of? Perhaps, but how would we explain the fact that Jehovah also “delivered unto” him “two tables of stone written with the finger of God;”? How does a spiritual being physically write and lift stone tablets?

This alone may not be enough for some to establish that Jehovah was an embodied and exalted being, but there is one role He the Old Testament prophets say He fulfilled which Jesus did not and could not: That is, being the Father of our spirits.

## **Jehovah was the Father of our Spirits**

The scriptures speak for themselves on this issue. They talk of “the LORD [Jehovah], the God of the spirits of all flesh,”<sup>2</sup> that we “are the children of the LORD [Jehovah]”<sup>3</sup> and that He “giveth breath unto the people” upon the earth “and spirit to them that walketh therein”<sup>4</sup> as He “formeth the spirit of man within Him.”<sup>5</sup>

In one of the most quoted verses about the pre-existence it is

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1 Exodus 33:11, 23, Numbers 12:8

2 Numbers 27:16

3 Deuteronomy 14:1

4 Isaiah 42:5

5 Zechariah 12:1

Jehovah who says, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee;”<sup>1</sup> Jesus, although special amongst God’s children, was not the Father of our spirits, but Jehovah was. What other conclusion can we come to, except that Jesus was not Jehovah!

Jesus did indeed come in His Father’s name, and has acted on His behalf, so it is easy to see why some have supposed Jesus and Jehovah are the same person. In the early days of the Church the apostles - although sometimes referring God the Father as Jehovah - probably never saw the need to explain this doctrine, as the rest or the Christian world equated the Almighty with Jehovah already. As time went on this perhaps lead to ambiguity, with some General Authorities applying the title both to the Saviour and God, and then later other leaders used it exclusively to speak of Christ. The teachings of the scriptures, have not changed over time however.

### **What Jehovah Was & Jesus Wasn’t**

<b>Jesus</b>	<b>Jehovah (LORD / GOD)</b>
...Didn't have a physical body	...Did have a physical body <i>Exo 24:11, 33:11, Deut 9:10</i>
...No one should pray to	...Israelites prayed to “Pray before the Lord [Jehovah]” <i>Zech 8:22</i>
...Wasn't head of Gods	...Was head of Gods “The Lord [Jehovah] God of the Gods” <i>Josh 22:22, Deut 6:4-5</i>
...Wasn't Father of spirits	...Was the Father of our spirits “The Lord [Jehovah] which formeth the spirit of man within him” <i>Zech 12:1, Jer 1:4-5, Isa 42:5, Deut 14:1</i>
...Didn't appear to anyone before the brother of Jared <i>Ether 3:15</i>	...Appeared to Enoch 500 years earlier <i>Gen 3:8, Moses 6:39, Moses 7:4</i>

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1 Jeremiah 1:5

## **Jesus – the Savior of Other Worlds?**

It has become a common belief amongst many Latter-day Saints that the atonement of Jesus extends to other earths like ours. This teaching is common in wards throughout the world, and is mentioned in books about the Savior by several by modern Mormon authors. But is this a revealed doctrine or just a popular theory, and what have the scriptures and prophets had to say on this subject?

The earliest proponent of this idea seems to have been Joseph Fielding Smith, who taught - prior to being Church President - that “Jesus Christ was sent here instead of some other world, for in some other world they would not have crucified Him, and His presence was needed here because of the extreme wickedness of the inhabitants of this earth.”<sup>1</sup>

Was this just his opinion or was he revealing a hitherto hidden truth? It must be remembered that at the time he was neither Church President, nor speaking in General Conference, nor did he claim any inspiration for his views. A closer review of his words might help us to understand why he said what he did.

The idea that this world was the only one wicked enough to crucify Jesus seems to have been taken from two different verses of scripture. One from the Joseph Smith translation of the Bible, and the other from the Book of Mormon -

In the first of these the Lord tells Enoch that “among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren.”<sup>2</sup> It does not mention the Savior, and it is unclear whether God is speaking of the workmanship of his hands related to this earth, or whether he is including other earths he had populated in the past.

The second, written several thousand years later, does relate to Jesus, and prophecies that he “should come among the Jews, among those who are the more wicked part of the world;” speaking specifically about one tribe and one period of time on our earth, at which point “there [was] none other nation on earth that would crucify their God.”<sup>3</sup>

If we misquoted and combined these passages together we could

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1 Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., *The Signs of the Times*, Lesson 1, 14 Oct 1942.

2 Moses 7:36.

3 2 Nephi 10:3.

perhaps give the impression that this was the only earth wicked enough to crucify a Savior, yet neither passage teaches this. We may consider then that Brother Smith, who was speaking to a small audience and not the whole Church, may have misremembered these verses, and was merely expressing a personal opinion based on that.

This might have been the end of this concept if it were not for Brother Smith's son-in-law, Bruce R. McConkie. Perhaps presuming that his father-in-law was teaching a divine doctrine, Elder McConkie expanded upon this idea in his book *Mormon Doctrine*. However, he used a new argument in favor of this teaching and expanded its extent to the whole universe.

To Bruce R. McConkie it seemed that any atonement that didn't cover every earth was less than infinite, and he believed that when the ancient prophets spoke of an "infinite atonement"<sup>1</sup> that this must have been what they meant.

"When the prophets speak of an infinite atonement, they mean just that. Its effects cover all men, the earth itself and all forms of life thereon, and reach out into the endless expanses of eternity. ... the atonement of Christ, being literally and truly infinite, applies to an infinite number of earths."<sup>2</sup>

However the Lord tells us Himself that when the word "eternal" is applied to Him it is only figurative as it refers to a period of time:

"Endless is my name, wherefore eternal punishment is God's punishment, endless punishment is God's punishment."<sup>3</sup>

Hence endless punishment does not last for an endless period of time, but it does come from an being who is - in some sense - endless.

Likewise "there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal"<sup>4</sup>, with infinite power, who traverses and comprehends infinity, therefore anything he does is infinite in its origins and effects, but this does not mean it encompasses everything that is now, ever was or ever will be

Christ's atonement was infinite in the sense that God is infinite - he will always be our God, Christ will always be our Savior, and their

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1 2 Nephi 9:7, 25:16 & Alma 34:12.

2 Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, Atonement of Christ.

3 Doctrine and Covenants 19:10-12.

4 Doctrine and Covenants 20:17

works and sacrifices will have continue throughout eternity and endless space. It was not that act of a finite mortal, but an infinite God.

“it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice ... that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal.”<sup>1</sup>

If we were to believe that Jesus atoned for everyone who ever lived on every earth then this would mean that he atoned for His own heavenly Father, and for endless planets, whose history he has not been part of. Besides this logical problem, there are several doctrinal problems with the idea that Jesus was the Savior of other worlds, which we will examine -

- 1) It is not substantiated directly by revelation – there has been no word of the Lord saying it is so.
- 2) It is an idea which contradicts other established doctrines.
- 3) It contradicts teachings made by several prophets and presidents of the Church.

Let us look a these points in detail -

1) If Jesus was the Savior of other worlds why do the scriptures not say so?

One passage of scripture has been cited by proponents of this theory as being evidence for it -

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father – That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.”<sup>2</sup>

Some assume from this that *all* worlds were created by Christ, and all of their inhabitants were made sons and daughters of God through Him. Why could not it be referring to the worlds within our solar

1 Alma 34:10,14.

2 Doctrine and Covenants 76:23-24.

system, and the only world we know that is inhabited amongst those worlds - our earth?

It could also be theorized that the other planets in our solar system may yet hold human life in the form of the eventual telestial and terrestrial kingdoms. For if the Lord, as he tells Isaiah, “created ... not in vain” the earth, but “formed it to be inhabited”<sup>1</sup> could this not also be said about the other planets that orbit the same Sun.

2) The idea that Jesus performed an atonement for other earths contradicts other established scriptural doctrines

i. The scriptures repeatedly state the Christ is the Savior of *this* world -

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” (1 John 4:14<sup>2</sup>)

ii. That he would take away the sins of *this* world -

“I do know that Christ shall come among the children of men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it.” (Alma 34:8<sup>3</sup>)

iii. That he is the redeemer of *this* world -

“I am Alpha and Omega, Christ the Lord; yea, even I am he, the beginning and the end, the Redeemer of the world.” (D&C 19:1<sup>4</sup>)

iv. That he atoned for Adam's children -

“he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam.” (2 Nephi 9:21<sup>5</sup>)

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1 Isaiah 45:18.

2 See John 4:42, 1 Nephi 10:4, 13:40, D&C 42:1, 43:34, 66:1.

3 See Alma 5:48, 36:17, 39:15, D&C 35:2, 42:1.

4 See Helaman 13:6.

5 See 1 Corinthians 15:22, Mosiah 3:16, Mormon 3:20, 9:12.

The last of these points is perhaps the strongest, as if he atoned for Adam's fall and its effects and for Adam's children, then why would he be responsible for other children of other Gods on other planets, whose son or brother he is not?

3) The view that Jesus saved those on other earths contradicts the teachings of the prophets -

Those trying to substantiate this pseudo-doctrine point to an 1843 poem titled "the Vision" that has since been attributed to Joseph Smith.

“He's the Savior and only begotten of God;  
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that career in the heavens so broad.  
Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last.  
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons  
By the very same truths and the very same powers.”<sup>1</sup>

There are several problems, however, with the idea that Joseph Smith authored all 312 lines of this poem. Mormon scholar Michael Hicks argues that it is the work of William W. Phelps, writing as if he were Joseph Smith poetically paraphrasing his 1836 Kirtland vision.<sup>2</sup>

Let us for arguments sake assume that Joseph did write or agree with the poem. It doesn't say that all worlds ever made were made by Christ, but only the worlds that 'career' (or orbit) in our heavens were – presumably the solar system.<sup>3</sup>

Notably it says that the inhabitants of such worlds were begotten

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1 Times and Seasons 4/6 (1 February 1843): 83, stanzas 19-20.

2 “Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the Poetic Paraphrase of The Vision”, *Journal of Mormon History* 20/2 (1994): 63–84.

3 Perhaps referring to this George Q. Cannon taught that “under certain unknown conditions the benefits of the Saviour’s atonement extend to our entire solar system.” (Abraham H. Cannon, 23 June 1889) Benjamin F. Johnson said that “[Joseph Smith] gave us to understand that there were twelve kingdoms, or planets, revolving around our solar system, to which the Lord gave equal division of His time or ministry;” (Autobiography of Benjamin F. Johnson) and John Taylor in 1845 wrote of “successive visits of the Lord to twelve different kingdoms.” (Editorial, *Times & Seasons*, 1845)

children by the very same truths and powers – not necessarily the same being, but by a being – whoever that might be – with the same truths and powers. Whoever their Savior is, he must be the same as ours in qualities, abilities and purpose.

## **Conclusion**

It was revealed by Joseph Smith that we were witnesses in our pre-mortal lives to our Savior’s appointment and personally approved of it.

“At the first organization in heaven we were all present, and saw the Savior chosen and appointed and the plan of salvation made, and we sanctioned it.”<sup>1</sup>

Do we suppose that other spirit children from other worlds would not have the same opportunity?

Perhaps no prophet has spoke so simply on this subject as Brigham Young has, who taught that “every earth has its Redeemer”<sup>2</sup> and “there never was any world created and people nor never would be but what would be redeemed by the shedding of the blood of the Saviour of that world.”<sup>3</sup>

In his remarks he left no room for his words to be reconciled with those who believe that Jesus is the Savior of other earths. *Every* earth has *its own* redeemer and savior, no exceptions, and no ambiguity.

No matter how much we might admire Bruce R. McConkie's scholarship in other areas, no matter how popular this idea has become, if it contradicts the scriptures and the prophets there is no doubt that it is wrong and can be discarded. However, knowing the truth we are obligated to not allow such misunderstandings to go uncorrected.

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 181.

2 Sermon of Brigham Young, 12 May 1867.

3 Sermon of Brigham Young, 10 Jul 1870.

## **Jesus the Creator?**

Several passages of scripture make it clear that Jesus played some part in the creation (or organization) of the earth.<sup>1</sup> However, during the last 100 years it has become a popular idea amongst many latter-day Saints that Jesus Christ was its primary creator, and that he fashioned the physical world we live upon, if not all the planets in our solar system. Yet many verses of scripture seem to challenge this view. How do we reconcile this?

### **God the Father or Jesus as Primary Creator?**

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”<sup>2</sup> Thus states the first verse of holy writ accepted by the Jewish, Christian and Muslim world. To most of them it is beyond dispute that this verse is referring to God the Father. Likewise, Jesus in the Joseph Smith translation of the gospel of Matthew tell us to “call no-one your creator, but your Father in heaven”<sup>3</sup>, and from the first verse in Genesis to the book of Revelation it speaks of “God ... that made heaven and earth and the sea”<sup>4</sup> Likewise, in the Book of Mormon we are told that “God ... hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are.”<sup>5</sup> This would seem to indicate that God the Father is the creator of the earth and everything upon it, including us.

### **A spiritual creation?**

What part then did Jesus play in the creation? Prior to his earthly advent Jesus was a spiritual being<sup>6</sup>, whereas God the Father had “a body of flesh and bones.”<sup>7</sup> This gives us a clue as to his part in the organization of the Earth. The book of Genesis tells us that God created “the plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it

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1 Mosiah 3:8, Helaman 14:12, 3 Nephi 9:15, Doctrine & Covenants 14:9.

2 Genesis 1:1.

3 JST Matthew 23:6.

4 Revelations 14:7.

5 2 Nephi 2:14.

6 Ether 3:16.

7 Doctrine & Covenants 130:22.

grew.”<sup>1</sup> Every physical element has a spiritual counterpart,<sup>2</sup> just as our spirits preceded the creation of our bodies, so too did all things have a spiritual creation first as Moses explains, “the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. ... spiritually were they created and made according to my word.”<sup>3</sup>

Jesus is often referred to as the Word of God<sup>4</sup>, and just as there was a God of flesh and bones who presided over the physical creation, there too was a spiritual divine being, Jesus, who took part in the spiritual creation that preceded it. This Jesus Himself testifies to in a revelation to Joseph Smith: “Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, ... For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal – First spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work;”<sup>5</sup>

### **Others involved in creation?**

The idea that more than one being was involved in creation goes back again to the first chapter of the Bible, when “God [the Gods]<sup>6</sup> said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;”<sup>7</sup> Which was clarified in Joseph Smith’s Inspired Version to read “I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;”<sup>8</sup>

Ultimately though there were others who took part in this creation as God revealed to Abraham in vision:

“the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of

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1 Genesis 2:5.

2 Doctrine & Covenants 131:7.

3 Moses 3:5,7.

4 John 1:1,14.

5 Doctrine & Covenants 29:1,31-32.

6 Hebrew: Eloheim – literally translated “Gods”.

7 Genesis 1:26.

8 Moses 2:26.

them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

And there stood one among them that was like unto God [Michael]<sup>1</sup>, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps some of us were among their number. Whether we were involved in a spiritual creation, and whether that just involved planning or the organization of spiritual things, we are all spirit children of God, and recipients of the world our heavenly Father has given to us, and the atonement His Son has performed on our behalf (which has the power to re-create us).<sup>3</sup> Just as Jesus gave his Father the glory, and recognized His greater role, let us not forget God's divine role in the creation of all we know, all we are and all we can become.

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1 Hebrew ("like unto God"): Michael

2 Abraham 3:23-24, see 4:1.

3 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Mosiah 27:26.

## The Doctrine of Exaltation

When, in 1843, Joseph Smith received the revelation on Celestial Marriage we now call section 132, it not only introduced the controversial principle of plural marriage, but for the first time clearly revealed the concept of exaltation:<sup>1</sup>

“Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.”<sup>2</sup>

That revelation, however, was only known to a few at the time, and was not made public until 1852. However, the idea that our God was but one of many had already been hinted at four years earlier in the Prophet’s epistle from Liberty Jail in which he spoke of “a time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest.”<sup>3</sup> In saying this he was perhaps paraphrasing the Apostle Paul who said in his first Corinthian epistle that “there be gods many, and lords many”<sup>4</sup> He also hinted that there was more to the subject that was yet to be revealed. Yet It was not until April 1844, in the now famous King Follet sermon that Joseph publicly explained this doctrine to the Saints. Said he:

“God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and

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1 Doctrine & Covenants 132:9,17,19,22,23,26,29,37,39,49,57,63. Although the word is used in a different context in D&C 124:9.

2 Doctrine & Covenants 132:20 (see v. 37)

3 Doctrine & Covenants 121:28.

4 1 Corinthians 8:5.

all things by his power, was to make himself visible, – I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form – like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another. ...

Here, then, is eternal life – to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power.”<sup>1</sup>

The Prophet Joseph also later revealed why God chose us to have this privilege:

“God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. ... [Therefore] he [used his] power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits.”<sup>2</sup>

## **Lorenzo Snow**

Joseph was not alone in having this doctrine revealed to him, before he spoke of it even in private Lorenzo Snow received a revelation on the subject, as he recounts:

“I remember an incident which occurred in Kirtland when I received my first patriarchal blessing from Father Smith. A

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1 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 346.

2 Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 354.

better man never existed, nor was there a man better-loved than he. I was introduced by my sister Eliza R., though at that time I was not a Latter-day Saint and had no idea of becoming one. He said to me: ‘Don’t worry, take it calmly and the Lord will show you, and you will want to be baptized,’ He told me another thing that greatly surprised me. He said, “You will be great, and as great as you want to be, as great as God Himself, and you will not wish to be greater.”<sup>1</sup>

About two years and a half after, in Nauvoo [in the Spring of 1840], I asked Elder Sherwood to explain a certain passage of scripture; and while he was endeavoring to give an explanation, the Spirit of God fell upon me to a marked extent, and the Lord revealed to me, just as plainly as the sun at noon-day, this principle, which I put in a couplet: “As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be.” That fulfilled Father Smith’s declaration. Nothing was ever revealed more distinctly than that was to me.<sup>2</sup>

I felt this to be a sacred communication, which I related to no one except my sister Eliza, until I reached England, when in a confidential private conversation with President Brigham Young, in Manchester, I related to him this extraordinary manifestation.”<sup>3</sup>

LeRoi Snow adds that “Soon after his return from England, in January, 1843, Lorenzo Snow related to the Prophet Joseph Smith his experience in Elder Sherwood’s home. ... The Prophet’s reply was: ‘Brother Snow, that is a true gospel doctrine, and it is a revelation from God to you.’”<sup>4</sup> After this doctrine became public knowledge Lorenzo Snow did not hesitate to teach it as an Apostle and Prophet:

“Now, how is it that God proposes to confer this mighty honor upon us and to raise us to this condition of glory and exaltation? Who are we that God should do all this for us? Why, we are just beginning to find out that we are the offspring of God, born with the same faculties and powers

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1 15 June 1901, Deseret News, p. 1.

2 20 July 1901, Journal History, p. 4.

3 Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, Ch.9, p.46-47.

4 Improvement Era, June 1919, p. 656.

as He possesses, capable of enlargement through the experience that we are now passing through in our second estate. Let me illustrate. Here is an emperor sitting upon his throne, governing and controlling his empire wisely and properly. He has an infant son that sits upon the knee of its mother. That son he proposes to one day set upon his throne, to govern and control his empire. Here is that infant, perfectly helpless, not knowing how to sustain its own life, not able to walk alone, without any knowledge; and here is this mighty emperor sitting upon his throne and governing his vast empire. Who would believe that he could raise that infant up to such a condition as to make it suitable to be placed on his throne? No one would, unless he had seen such things accomplished in his experience; seen the infant develop into boyhood, and then to manhood, possessing all the powers, faculties and possibilities of its father. Now, we are the sons and daughters of God. He has begotten us in His own image. He has given us faculties and powers that are capable of enlargement until His fulness is reached which He has promised — until we shall sit upon thrones, governing and controlling our posterity from eternity to eternity, and increasing eternally. That is the fact in regard to these matters.”<sup>1</sup>

President Snow even summarized his teachings in the form of a poem, two verses of which are as follows -

“This royal path has long been trod  
By righteous men, each now a God:  
As Abra’m, Isaac, Jacob too,  
First babes, then men to gods they grew.

The boy, like to his father grown,  
Has but attained unto his own;  
To grow to sire from state of son,  
Is not 'gainst Nature's course to run.”<sup>2</sup>

He also made it clear that this teaching applied to his sisters in

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1 3 November 1894, Deseret News Weekly, 49:610.

2 Written 11 January 1892, Improvement Era 22:660-661, June 1919.

the Gospel too -

“Women can become like our mother in heaven. You sisters, I suppose, have read that poem which my sister composed years ago, and which is sung quite frequently now in our meetings. It tells us that we not only have a Father in ‘that high and glorious place,’ but that we have a Mother too; and you will become as great as your Mother, if you are faithful.”<sup>1</sup>

## The Scriptures

Is this a doctrine the ancients were aware of? Is it taught in the scriptures? What did God Himself have to say about this? Fortunately the Lord has answered all of these questions within the pages of holy writ. Our Heavenly Father has promised us that “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed He said to us that “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.”<sup>3</sup>

Jesus reiterated this doctrine when he commanded that we “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”<sup>4</sup> Although Jesus had already reached perfection, yet He wished the Saints to all have the same relationship with His Father as he had, and to attain to the same level of perfection:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, He wanted to share the same blessings and rewards that He had qualified for with all of those who were faithful, as He promised

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- 1 20 July 1901, *Journal History*, p. 4.
  - 2 Revelations 21:7.
  - 3 Psalms 82:6.
  - 4 Matthew 5:48 (see 3 Nephi 27:27).
  - 5 John 17:20-23.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle Paul likewise advocated that “we are the children of god: and if children, then heirs; heirs of god, and joint-heirs with Christ;” and that “we may be also glorified together.”<sup>2</sup> He also admonished to share the same intent as Jesus “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”<sup>3</sup> Likewise the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that the day would come when “the saints shall be filled with his glory, and receive their inheritance and be made equal with him.”<sup>4</sup>

Although the scriptures do not teach explicitly that God was once a man<sup>5</sup>, as the preceding passages have shown us, the Bible does clearly teach the following -

- We can be joint-heirs with Christ
- We can be the sons of God
- We can have the same glory Jesus has
- We can be one with the Father as Jesus is
- We can sit on the throne with Jesus
- We can be heirs of God
- We can inherit all things – all that the Father has
- We can sit on the throne with Heavenly Father
- We can become Gods
- We can be equal with God  
(and this does not rob Him of anything)
- We can be above all things, and have all power  
(& the angels will be subject to us)

## **Brigham Young**

Joseph Smith’s successor Brigham Young not only sustained him in this doctrine but gave us additional insights into our Heavenly Father’s life before Godhood, and how He came to offer us the opportunity to become as He is:

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1 Revelations 3:21.

2 Romans 8:16-17.

3 Phillipians 2:5-6.

4 Doctrine & Covenants 88:107.

5 John 5:19 does hint at this.

Our Father in Heaven “has passed the ordeals we are now passing through; he has received an experience, has suffered and enjoyed, and knows all that we know regarding the toils, sufferings, life and death of this mortality, for he has passed through the whole of it, and has received his crown and exaltation.”<sup>1</sup>

God said, “I want my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here. I once dwelt upon an earth something like this, in a mortal state. I was faithful, I received my crown and exaltation. I have the privilege of extending my work, and to its increase there will be no end. I want my children that were born to me in the spirit world to come here and take tabernacles of flesh, that their spirits may have a house, a tabernacle or a dwelling place as mine has, and where is the mystery?”<sup>2</sup>

“The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself; when we have been proved in our present capacity, and been faithful with all things He puts into our possession. We are created, we are born for the express purpose of growing up from the low estate of manhood, to become Gods like unto our Father in heaven. That is the truth about it, just as it is. The Lord has organized mankind for the express purpose of increasing in that intelligence and truth, which is with God, until he is capable of creating worlds on worlds, and becoming Gods, even the sons of God.”<sup>3</sup>

He taught that this was not just our theoretical potential, but would be a reality to those who were faithful:

“After men have got their exaltations and their crowns – have become Gods, even the sons of God – are made Kings of kings and Lords of lords, they have the power then of propagating their species in spirit; and that is the first of their operations with regard to organizing a world. Power is then given to them to organize the elements, and then

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1 Journal of Discourses 11:249; see 7:333.

2 8 June 1873, Brigham Young Addresses 6:72-75 / Deseret Weekly News 22:308-9.

3 Journal of Discourses, Vol.3, p.93.

commence the organization of tabernacles.”<sup>1</sup>

“Having fought the good fight we then shall be prepared to lay our bodies down to rest to await the morning of the resurrection when they will come forth and be reunited with the spirits, the faithful, as it is said, receiving crowns, glory, immortality and eternal lives, even a fulness with the Father ...

Then will they become Gods, even the sons of God; then will they become eternal fathers, eternal mothers, eternal sons and eternal daughters; being eternal in their organization they go from glory to glory, from power to power; they will never cease to increase and to multiply, worlds without end. When they receive their crowns, their dominions, they then will be prepared to frame earths like unto ours and to people them in the same manner as we have been brought forth by our parents, by our Father and God.”<sup>2</sup>

Many Protestants use this belief as a means of not accepting us Christians. They believe in a God that originates from nowhere, is made of nothing, is as large as the universe and as small as an atom. Because of their hostility it seems the LDS Church has begun to shy away from openly preaching this principle. Indeed when President Gordon B. Hinkley was asked “don't Mormons believe that God was once a man?” he replied - “I wouldn't say that.”<sup>3</sup> and on another occasion “I don't know that we teach it.”<sup>4</sup>

This attitude has been reflected in the newest LDS Church manuals. In the 1981 edition of the Gospel Principles it states, “Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life that God lives. ... We can become Gods like our Heavenly Father. This is exaltation.”<sup>5</sup> However, in the 1992 edition of the same book, the second to the last sentence in the paragraph says, “We can become like our Heavenly Father.” and the word “Gods” was taken out.

Whatever the views of the Church on this, Mormon

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- 1 28 August 1862, Journal of Discourses, 6:275.
  - 2 8 October 1876, Journal of Discourses 18:259.
  - 3 San Francisco Chronicle, 13 April 1997.
  - 4 Time magazine, 4 August 1997.
  - 5 Gospel Principles, 1981 ed., p. 289-290.

Fundamentalist leaders have kept this doctrine alive, as can be seen from the teachings of Joseph Musser, who is considered a prophet to thousands of Fundamentalists -

“Because we have elected to become gods; we have elected to become king of kings and lord of lords; we have elected to earn and qualify for a world like this wherein we can go on during the eternities propagating; ruling over our progeny, and letting them build earths for themselves and propagate throughout the eternities. We have elected to do like our Eternal Father did.”<sup>1</sup>

Whether in or out of the LDS Church this belief looks like it will continue amongst those who believe in the teachings of Joseph Smith and other early Mormon apostles and prophets, who are seeking to become like their Heavenly Father, so they can offer other intelligences the same chance to progress they have been given. This is a goal which may, however, take aeons to accomplish, as the Prophet Joseph pointed out:

“When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.”<sup>2</sup>

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1 Sermons of Joseph W. Musser, 31 May 1942.

2 History of the Church, 6:306-7.

## **Summary of the Doctrine of Exaltation As Taught by Latter-Day Prophets**

### *Our Heavenly Father -*

- God was once a man like us
- He lived on an earth in mortality
- He had a heavenly Father he worshipped
- He was the spirit child of that God
- He was resurrected
- He qualified to become a God

### *God's Children -*

- We are God's spirit children
- He wants us to become as He is
- If we are faithful we can become Gods
- We can organize worlds
- We can people worlds with our spirit children
- We will rule over our children as a God
- They too will have this opportunity

## Eternal Progression

“I will first set in order before these relations the true order of the kingdom of God and how families hereafter will be organized. ...

I will show you the order of the kingdom as regards my own family; one of my sons is placed here, another there, another there, and so on. Yet I should be their ruler, savior, dictator, and governor. They would have innumerable posterity but all would join in harmony with my counsel; I should console, comfort, and advise them all. You and your children will rise up and administer unto your children, and you will rule over your posterity, and they may get up into tens, hundreds, thousands, and millions. Yet all will finally join with Adam who will be the king of all; Seth comes next; Seth rules under his father and over all; so this process will never end. This is the order of the kingdom of heaven, that men should rise up as kings and priests of God. We must have posterity to rule over. I calculate, if I am blessed, that I will have an innumerable host of my own, the same as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

*(Brigham Young, 8 January 1845, Manuscript Addresses)*

“Each God, through his wife or wives, raises up a numerous family of sons and daughters; indeed, there will be no end to the increase of his own children: for each father and mother will be in a condition to multiply forever and ever. As soon as each God has begotten many millions of male and female spirits, and his Heavenly inheritance becomes too small, to comfortably accommodate his great family, he, in connection with his sons, organizes a new world, after a similar order to the one which we now inhabit, where he sends both the male and female spirits to inhabit tabernacles of flesh and bones. Thus each God forms a world for the accommodation of his own sons and daughters who are sent forth in their times and seasons, and generations to be born into the same. The inhabitants of each world are required to reverence, adore, and worship their own personal father who dwells in the Heaven which they formerly inhabited.”

*(Orson Pratt, The Seer, 37, March 1853)*

“the same as our God, who is the Father of our spirits; so you, if you are faithful to the end, will become fathers to your sons and daughters, who will be as innumerable as the sands upon the sea shore; they will be your children, and you will be their heavenly fathers, the same as our heavenly Father is Father to us, and they will belong to your kingdoms through all the vast ages of eternity, the same as we will belong to our father's kingdom.”

*(Orson Pratt, 12 November 1876, Journal of Discourses 18:296)*