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# THE MORMON JESUS CHRIST

## THE GODHEAD (PART 1)

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*TRUTH TO MORMONS MINISTRY*

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the first of a three-part series on the Christology of the Mormon Church. In this article we will explore the first nine of twenty-nine identified differences between Mormonism and historical and biblical Christianity.

The first *Article of Faith* contained in the scriptures of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* says, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup> Mormons often cite this affirmation as proof that they are members of authentic Christianity.

What the real question should be, however, what does the Mormon Church believe about Jesus. Who is He? Most Mormons will ardently disagree that they believe in a different Jesus, but what has Church leadership actually said?

Fifteenth Mormon President and Prophet Gordon B. Hinkley explained on more than one occasion that the Mormon Church believes in a different Jesus. One such admission was printed in a Mormon Church owned newspaper, the *Deseret News*, citing a speech made by Hinkley during a trip to Europe:

In bearing testimony of Jesus Christ, President Hinkley spoke of those outside the Church who say Latter-day Saints 'do not believe in the traditional Christ.' 'No, I don't. The traditional Christ of whom they speak is not the Christ of whom I speak.'<sup>2</sup>

Hinkley again confirmed this distinction during an address given to LDS faithful on April 7, 2002, during the 172<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Conference of the Mormon Church. We read the following in the Church owned *Ensign* magazine:

As a Church we have critics, many of them. They say we do not believe in the traditional Christ of Christianity. There is some substance to what they say. Our faith, our knowledge is not based on ancient tradition, the creeds which came of a finite understanding and out of the almost infinite discussions of men trying to arrive at a definition of the risen Christ. Our faith, our knowledge comes of the witness of a prophet in this dispensation...<sup>3</sup>

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1 *Pearl of Great Price*, p. 60

2 Gordon B. Hinkley, *LDS Church News* section, June 20, 1998, p. 7

3 Gordon B. Hinkley, *Ensign* magazine, May 2002, Vol. 32, No. 5, pp. 90-91

In his well respected book, Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie distinguished his Jesus from the fake Christ worshiped by the rest of Christianity:

And virtually all the millions of apostate Christendom have abased themselves before the mythical throne of a mythical Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Mormon Seventy Bernard P. Brockbank denied the traditional Christ as well:

It is true that many of the Christian churches worship a different Jesus Christ than is worshipped by the Mormons or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>5</sup>

I remember being confounded as a Mormon when hearing Christians say that Mormonism believed in a false Jesus. After all, how could “anti-Mormons” say that when Latter-day Saints taught about Him, read about Him from the Bible, and prayed in His name? Our official Church title presented the very name of Jesus Christ. Even the *Book of Mormon* contained the subtitle “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” While I knew we believed some different things about Jesus, I still thought that the Christ of Mormonism was in more ways than not, the same Christ worshipped by “apostate” Christianity.

However, once I set out to prove several “anti-Mormon” ministries wrong with regard to their portrayal of LDS beliefs, I found that their quotations were indeed accurate, and the context was fairly presented. I soon began to see some glaring differences and inconsistencies that began to nag my conscience.

The issue is not whether or not Mormonism believes in Christ. The more essential question is, In which Christ does Mormonism believe? The following table shows 29 differences between the Mormon and Christian Jesus Christ. It is my position now, as a Christian, that the differences are many and are irreconcilable with true Christianity.

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4 Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 269

5 Bernard P. Brockbank, “The Living Christ”, *Ensign* magazine, May 1977 ed., pp. 26-27

### Distinctives Summary of Jesus Christ

The Jesus of Mormonism		The Jesus of Christianity
1	A god among many	The one and only true God
2	A created being	Personally uncreated
3	Our literal big brother	Not our big brother
4	Brother of the Devil	Created the Devil
5	Not virgin born	Virgin born
6	A biological son of god	Not a biological Son of God
7	Once a sinner needing salvation	Never needed salvation
8	A god by achievement	Has always been God
9	Not omnipotent	Is omnipotent
10	Not omniscient	Is omniscient
11	Not immutable	Is immutable
12	Internally inconsistent	Is internally Consistent
13	Creator of Earth with man's help	Created without man's help
14	Born in Jerusalem	Born in Bethlehem
15	A married Jesus	Is not married
16	A practicing polygamist	Is not a polygamist
17	Biological father of mortal children	Has no biological children
18	Atoned for sin by sweating in Gethsemane	Atoned for sin on the cross of calvary
19	One of countless saviors	Only Savior for all people anywhere
20	Three days of crucifixion darkness	Three hours of crucifixion darkness
21	Visited America after his resurrection	Did not go continent hopping
22	Visited Earth multiple times	Will come again in the Second Coming
23	Returning to Missouri	Returning to Jerusalem
24	Does not accept prayers directly	Accepts prayers directly
25	Refuses our worship	Accepts our worship
26	Blood cleanses from some sins	Blood cleanses from all sins
27	Requires works for eternal life	Requires faith for eternal life
28	Didn't save the thief on the cross	Saved the thief on the cross
29	Promises "fire protection" for tithers	Will rapture His children to safety

## Distinctive No. 1 — A God among many

The Jesus Christ of Mormonism is but one of three separate Gods forming the LDS Godhead and one of literally innumerable Gods throughout the universe. Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained:

Three separate personages—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—comprise the Godhead. As each of these persons is a God, it is evident, from this standpoint alone, that a plurality of Gods exists. . . . But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus gods.<sup>6</sup>

## Biblical Position

The Christian Jesus is the one self-existent God. While Christ is a separate Personage within the triune Godhead—and is therefore distinct from God the Father or God the Holy Ghost—the true Jesus still remains in essence (or being) the one and only true God. Briefly, this critical point is validated in the Bible through two points of revelation:

### 1. Christ is God

Mormonism denies that Christ is *the* God, but affirms that He is *a* God. The Bible, however, refers to Christ numerous times not as *a* God, but simply as “God”.<sup>7</sup> While it is true that Jesus never explicitly used the three words “I am God,” biblical support for His Deity is nonetheless evident. Let’s look at a few of these examples:

Isaiah 7:14

...Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Christ’s name *Immanuel* literally means “God with us” in Hebrew.<sup>8</sup> Immanuel is not a God, but simply *God with us*. The monotheistic Jewish culture would have accepted this at face value. Jesus inferred His Deity many times, such as when He identified Himself as the very God in the Old Testament who revealed Himself to Moses:

<sup>6</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., pp. 576-577, italics in the original

<sup>7</sup> Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Jn. 1:1,14; 5:18; 8:58; 20:28; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8

<sup>8</sup> Strong’s Concordance, word # 6005

John 8:58

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

As the "I am," Jesus in essence said "I am God." Not "I was with God," not "I am a God," but He simply proclaimed to be God. Christian scholar Charles C. Ryrie highlighted this fact:

This is more than limited existence before Abraham was born because He said "I am." "I was" might indicated that He existed for several centuries before Abraham, but I am (*eimi*) states eternity.<sup>9</sup>

John 20:28

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

None of these KJV citations were "corrected" by Joseph Smith's *Inspired Bible Version*. Note that Jesus did not correct Thomas for his choice of words in John 20:28. If Christ was not *the* very God, then He indeed would have been obligated to correct Thomas immediately if He were not to be accused of blasphemy. The Ten Commandments strictly forbid Christians from having any other gods before the one and only true God. If Christ were not *the* God then Thomas was in violation of worshiping other gods also.

## 2. There is Only One True God

The Bible is clear that there is only one true God.<sup>10</sup> If Christ is God, and there's only one God, then the true Christ is the one and only true God. One doctrine of the Christian faith that recognizes the true and full Deity of Christ is known as the *incarnation*.

### The Incarnate Christ

The term *incarnation* is a theological term for the one and only God becoming flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ. This same Jesus became fully human while still remaining fully God and completely sinless (2 Cor. 5:21).

It is important to note that this term does not mean that God the Father became incarnate in Christ or that the Holy Spirit became incarnate in Christ. This would be inconsistent with Bible revelation since each Person of the Godhead is a distinct member of the triune Godhead. The

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<sup>9</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 275

<sup>10</sup> Deut. 4:35, 39; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1 Kings 8:60; 1 Chron. 17:20; Is. 37:20; 43:10; 44:6,8; 45:5-6,14,21-22; 46:9; 48:12; 45:5-6, Jas. 2:19

Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit. The Son is not the Father or the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son. Each are distinct centers of consciousness, each distinct forms of personal existence, yet each are the same indivisible and singularly existent God. As the Bible teaches therefore, it wasn't the Father or Holy Ghost who became man, but God the Son (Jn. 1:1, 14).

While the term *incarnation* is not found in the Bible, the doctrine is plainly supported:

John 1:1, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld the glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

1 Timothy 3:16

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Neither of these KJV citations were "corrected" by Joseph Smith in his *Inspired Bible Version*.

### "Incarnation" Redefined

While the term is rarely used in Mormonism, the meaning of "incarnate" has nonetheless been redefined to comply with unique LDS teaching. Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie gives a short, one paragraph explanation in his book under the title *INCARNATE GOD*:

Christ is the Incarnate God. That is, he is the Lord Omnipotent, a God "from all eternity to all eternity," and yet he came down from heaven and dwelt "in a tabernacle of clay..."<sup>11</sup>

Thus in Mormonism it wasn't *the* God, but a God that became incarnate. The seemingly innocuous letter "a" in McConkie's definition completely changes the Christian meaning of the incarnation. Since the Bible does not agree with Mormonism's definition of the incarnation, Joseph Smith Jr. also made that problem go away by simply changing what the Bible says in John 1:1, stating that the "gospel was the word" and the "word was with the Son..." Small "w."

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<sup>11</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 378



\* \* \* **LDS Rebuttals** \* \* \*

**LDS Rebuttal 1:** *"If Jesus is the one and only God, then why did He say that the Father was greater than he? How can this describe the same person?"*

John 14:28

...I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Indeed, Christ referred to His Father numerous times and explained that the doctrines He taught were not His, but those of the Father.<sup>12</sup> Does this really prove that Christ must be a separate, autonomous God from the Heavenly Father? After all, how can one who is lesser than another be the same person?

The first error LDS often make is assuming that Christians believe that God the Father and Jesus are the same Person. This misrepresentation makes the statement of Christ in John 14 appear illogical, and indeed it would be if the Christian position was as LDS often portray it. No one but a schizophrenic or egomaniac would claim that he was greater than himself. But the Jesus of the Christian faith, when properly presented, was not deranged or illogical since He is not the same Person as God the Father. Both Christ and God the Father are two separate Persons of the Godhead, yet still existing as the indivisible and singularly existent God. Therefore, although Christ proclaimed the Father as greater than He, He was not denying His full Deity as the singularly existent God.

Secondly, LDS point to the submission or subordination of Christ in this passage and infer that this equates to a *personal* inferiority. Scripture does not support this however. Since Christ is still the one true God, Jesus is equal to the Father in all things, even though there is clearly subordination between the First and Second Persons of the Godhead. This subordination, however, is a *functional* or *positional* subordination—not an ontological one (Christ's essence, being, or nature).

An example of the positional relationship of Christ with God can be seen in the Christian home. Biblically speaking, the husband has been given the position of leadership in the home and in the church. At the same time this in no way infers that the husband is better in nature than the

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12 Matt. 7:21; 10:32, Lk. 22:29; 23:46, Jn. 5:36-37; 8:49; 12:49; 20:17, Eph. 3:15; Jn. 7:16

wife, or that the wife is inferior or lesser than the husband. So is the case with Christ and the Father. There can be no leap of logic made from a submissive Christ to an inferior Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Now as to Christ's functional or positional subordination to the Father, Jesus had two natures during His earthly ministry. He was fully God while at the same time fully man. As such, Jesus was never denying that He was fully God, nor was He confirming that the Father was more powerful, but He was acknowledging His lower position to the Father in His capacity as a man. As a man, Jesus was voluntarily subject to the same laws of God that we are. As a man and our exemplar, Christ was teaching us our similar position with the Father. As a man, when Christ assumed the role of a lowly household servant and washed the feet of His disciples, He in no way affirmed an inferior or lesser position in relation to the disciples. Christ voluntarily performed this function to show us how we were to conduct ourselves both to others and to the Father.

The Bible makes it clear that Jesus—being equal with God the Father—accepted a lower position to carry out His purposes here on earth:

Philippians, Chapter 2  
(See also Hebrews 2:9)

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Author Millard J. Erickson explains the significance of the Greek word from which we derive the English word *form*:

The word translated ... "in the form of," is the Greek *morphē*. It is the word that refers to the full set of characteristics which make something that which it is, as contrasted with the word *schēma*, which is the external appearance, or façade, which does not necessarily indicate the true nature of the thing.<sup>14</sup>

The *form* of God could be likened to the "DNA" of God, figuratively speaking. The DNA identifies that which is intrinsic and essential to the nature of a person. Your DNA uniquely determines and identifies what and who you are. In like fashion, Christ—being in the form of God—didn't

13 Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-12; 3:1-4, 8-12

14 Millard J. Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity*, p. 20

divest Himself of His fully divine nature when He became incarnate, but voluntarily took upon Himself the form of man.

**LDS Rebuttal 2:** *"If Jesus is the one and only God, to whom did He pray?"*

Indeed, the Bible recounts several instances in which Christ prayed to the Heavenly Father.<sup>15</sup> This common LDS question infers once again that Christ and God the Father is the same Person. Indeed if a person prayed to himself and answered, we would call him mentally ill.

If the true position of the Christian Trinity is not misrepresented, however, there is no problem with this LDS characterization since Jesus and the Father *are not* the same Person, but are two separate Persons existing as one Being and one God. Jesus therefore did not pray to Himself and did not answer Himself. Christ was praying to the first Person of the Godhead—the Heavenly Father—just as scripture says.

Why did Jesus need to pray? Author Millard J. Erickson explains in his book:

Taking a physical body involved having a definite physical location, and this meant separation from the Father. Apparently during this time of incarnation, the Son did not have direct access to the consciousness of the Father and the Holy Spirit......It was necessary for him to pray numerous times during his earthly ministry, indicating that he apparently needed to express his thoughts and feelings to the Father.<sup>16</sup>

Beyond the practical reason for Christ needing to pray, as the God man and our perfect example of how to live, Jesus showed us that He needed to pray to His Father. When Christ took Peter, James, and John with Him to a secluded spot for prayer (John 9:28), they no doubt left that experience having a greater appreciation for what prayer was all about.

**LDS Rebuttal 3:** *"If Jesus is the one and only God, how could He say that He did not know the day or hour of His return?"*

Matthew 24:36

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Remembering again that Christ was one Person with two natures, this apparent contradiction is answerable. In regard to His human nature, Jesus did not have all knowledge. Thus in His human nature He really did not know the day or hour of His return. But in His divine nature,

<sup>15</sup> Matt. 26:36-42; Lk. 6:12; 9:28

<sup>16</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity*, p. 60

Jesus has all knowledge since He is God. Hence in His divine nature Jesus does know when He will return and that arriving day will not catch Him by surprise.

### \* \* \* LDS Scripture Contradictions \* \* \*

Ironically, some extra-biblical Mormon scripture contradicts LDS teaching that Christ is only a God among many. The *Book of Mormon* is said by Joseph Smith Jr. to be “the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion.”<sup>17</sup> According to Mormonism the “fullness [or completeness] of the gospel” is found between the *Book of Mormon* and the Bible.<sup>18</sup> We should therefore find clear doctrine that corrects and clarifies what Mormonism says the Bible really means. Does the *Book of Mormon* therefore allow Christ to be only a God among many?

Book of Mormon, Alma 11:7

For if there be no Christ there be no God; and if there be no God we are not, for there could have been no creation. But there is a god, and he is Christ. . .

It is unfortunate that the most correct book on earth has failed to clarify what Mormonism says the Bible really means. Consider yet another *Book of Mormon* contradiction:

Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 11:17

Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.

LDS reader, can Mormonism really say that Christ is the Most High God when he's one of countless Gods? LDS often come back against Bible verses, stating that these statements are only referring to this world. However, neither the Bible nor the Book of Mormon actually says that. That should be concerning to you shouldn't it?

### **A Mormon Doctrinal Conundrum—How did the Mormon Jesus Become a God *Before* Receiving a Physical Body?**

Mormonism teaches that Jesus became a God *before* being born on earth. Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie said:

As far as man is concerned, all things center in Christ. He is the Firstborn of the Father. By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, while yet in his pre-existent state.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Book of Mormon*, Introduction

<sup>18</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants*, 42:12

<sup>19</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd. ed., p. 129

Mormon Apostle Mark E. Peterson confirmed this unique occurrence:

Christ attained Godhood in His preexistence, long before His birth into mortality.<sup>20</sup>

The problem often overlooked by Latter-day Saints is that this teaching contradicts another fundamental LDS doctrine known as *Eternal Progression*, which is the process of learning, testing, and advancement by which Mormons hope to achieve godhood themselves someday. Part of this advancement period must be performed on an earth-like planet where the presence of good and evil is present, which allows the Heavenly Father's children the opportunity to choose right over wrong and demonstrate their obedience to Him.

The conundrum Latter-day Saints find themselves in is that if their Jesus obtained personal Godhood in heaven *before* coming to earth to be our Savior, then their Christ bypassed a necessary step in the plan of Eternal Progression—that of being born and tested somewhere on an earth-like planet like ours. The flaws in this kingpin LDS doctrine is seen on three points:

### **1. The Mormon Heavenly Father needed an earthly testing period himself**

Mormonism teaches that God the Father had to follow the plan of Eternal Progression Himself through a period of earthly testing before obtaining Godhood status. Mormon Seventy Milton R. Hunter explained in his official Mormon Church sponsored book, *The Gospel through the Ages*:

The holy scriptures give an account of a great council which was held in the spirit world before man was placed on the earth....The principal purposes of the great gathering were to consider carefully the problem of the eternal progression of man...The law of growth or progression is one of the eternal laws of life. All other laws contribute to it. Our Eternal Father has attained His position of exaltation and Godhood by obedience to the great law of progression.<sup>21</sup>

Mormon prophets have continuously taught the sublime truth that God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man who passed through a school of earth life similar to that through which we are now passing. He became God—an exalted being—through obedience to the same eternal Gospel truths that we are given opportunity today to obey.<sup>22</sup>

Since the Mormon Heavenly Father had to follow the law of Eternal Progression, is it really logical to think that the Mormon Jesus did something his Heavenly Father could not do?

<sup>20</sup> Mark E. Petersen, *This is Life Eternal*, p. 29

<sup>21</sup> Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, p. 12

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 104

## 2. The Law of Eternal Progression is a fixed law

Lest some LDS rectify the Eternal Progression problem by concluding that the Heavenly Father modified His law, it should be noted that the Mormon Heavenly Father *cannot* change the law and it is therefore not modifiable for spirit children who exhibit exemplary behavior in a pre-existence estate (i.e. the Mormon Christ).

As Mormon Seventy Milton R. Hunter explained, all the Mormon Heavenly Father could do with such laws was to become “acquainted with” and apply them, thus claiming them as His own. The law of Eternal Progression on an earthly estate is listed as one of these eternally existent and fixed laws:

Anything which has an end must of necessity have a beginning; therefore, truth had no beginning. It has always existed and it shall continue to exist eternally. Wherever there have been intelligences (i.e., the ego or life of men) in any world and at any stage of progression, such fundamental principles as good, evil...choice (agency), will, faith...progression, and hundreds of similar verities have existed. They constitute the laws of God—the laws of eternal truth. Our Heavenly Parents have through aeons of time and a multitude of experiences gradually become acquainted with and applied in Their lives an untold number of these everlasting laws. As They learned these verities and how to operate them, these laws thereby became subject unto Elohim and henceforth were His laws—or, in other words, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>23</sup>

The plan proposed by God for the government of men and women in their earthly career was "based upon eternal laws that always have been and always will be operative."<sup>24</sup>

Notice that these eternal laws that God had to learn to operate are presented to man in their “earthly career,” not a pre-existent estate in Heaven. No one is exempt. Wherever there is life (intelligences) “in any world,” Eternal Progression must be followed.

## 3. Free will (Free Agency) must be available for eternal progression

In Mormonism, one has to prove or demonstrate his worthiness and obedience to God in order to earn his exaltation to the ranks of Deity. An essential component of this testing is being introduced to an environment of sin where one’s own free will (or “free agency” in LDS language) can be tested through choices of right and wrong. Since Heaven is without sin, an earthly estate is the only way in which one’s metal can be tested as worthy to gain eventual Godhood.

<sup>23</sup> Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, p. 4

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 13

The Mormon Church manual, *Gospel Principles*, explains how all must receive physical bodies on earth and be tested prior to becoming a God:

Our heavenly parents provided us with a celestial home more glorious and beautiful than any place on earth. We were happy there. Yet they knew we could not progress beyond a certain point unless we left them for a time. They wanted us to develop the godlike qualities that they have. To do this, we needed to leave our celestial home to be tested and to gain experience. We needed to choose good over evil. Our spirits needed to be clothed with physical bodies. We would need to leave our physical bodies at death and reunite with them in the Resurrection. Then we would receive immortal bodies like those of our heavenly parents. If we passed our tests, we would receive the fullness of joy that our heavenly parents have received...<sup>25</sup>

Continuing under the title of "Our Heavenly Father Presented a Plan for Us to Become like Him," we read:

Since we could not progress further in heaven, our Heavenly Father called a Grand Council to present his plan for our progression...We learned that if we followed his plan, we would become like him.<sup>26</sup>

As a supporting principle of Eternal Progression, Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie affirmed that the law of choice ("free agency") is one of those eternal laws that have always existed and is therefore not subject to manipulation by God the Father:

Agency is the ability and freedom to choose good or evil. It is an eternal principle which has existed with God from all eternity.<sup>27</sup>

McConkie doesn't mean here that God created and defined the concept of free agency. Free agency did not originate "from God," but was found "with God." To be more specific, the eternal principle of free agency was actually existent *before* the Mormon God ever became a personal being. Once the Mormon God learned this eternal Mormon principle and how to "operate it," then it was applied to His Children. The Mormon God cannot change or modify this eternal law any more than any other eternally existent law.

With this in mind, the essential ingredient of free agency was not available if the Christ of Mormonism obtained Godhood while yet in a pre-existent estate without going through a time of testing on an earth planet.

<sup>25</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles*, pp. 13-14

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 14

<sup>27</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 26

Remember that Hunter mentioned other supportive eternally existent laws to the law of Eternal Progression, such as “good, evil, will, and faith.”<sup>28</sup> None of these other supporting laws and opportunities would have been available for a Mormon Christ who bypassed an earthly estate to Godhood. There is no evil in Heaven and therefore no choice to make. There is no faith in Heaven, for all can see and live with the God they serve.

While the Bible records that Satan and one third of the angels rebelled against God and were cast out from heaven, this *does not* demonstrate that free agency is an option in heaven. They were kicked out precisely because one cannot choose sin or wrong in heaven. Any pre-existent Mormon child (or the Mormon Christ for that matter) would meet the same fate if they chose wrong in heaven.

In summary, the Mormon Heavenly Father didn’t make the eternal *Law of Progression*—it was in effect before He became a God and has always been operative for all Gods before Him. He Himself had to follow it and no matter how smart or obedient His firstborn Mormon Jesus was, the Mormon Father could not have circumvented the fundamental and eternal principle of progression on an earthly estate.

If Mormon leadership is to be believed—and if LDS scripture is true—then clearly something is wrong with LDS doctrine since Latter-day Saints cannot explain how the Mormon Christ achieved Godhood in a manner that was counter to settled law throughout the ages. Objective students of Mormonism have one of two choices to make:

#### **A. If the LDS account of Jesus is true:**

Then the Mormon law of *Eternal Progression* is untrue. The Mormon Jesus *did not* need an earthly testing and trial period before obtaining Godhood. Why then should we? Clearly an earth existence isn’t necessary to learn and have one’s worthiness tested. Why couldn’t the Father have spared the life of Christ by allowing us to stay in the Mormon pre-existence until we too obtained Godhood?

#### **B. If the LDS doctrine of *Eternal Progression* is true:**

Then the Mormon Jesus *could not* really have been God when He came to earth to redeem us from our sins. Just like us, the Mormon Jesus should have required a testing period on an

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<sup>28</sup> Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, p. 4



earthly planet prior to being found worthy for exaltation to Godhood. But of course the Mormon Jesus had to somehow be a God when He came to earth since if He had not been God, then He could not have been the sinless sacrifice needed to atone for our sins.

Lastly, the significance of this doctrinal issue cannot be overemphasized, for the Mormon plan of Eternal Progression is the primal and fundamental purpose for why we are here and is the crowning work of the Mormon Heavenly Father—that of making us like Him. If the law of Eternal Progression crumbles under its own weight, so then goes the Mormon gospel. This is an issue that every Latter-day Saint must resolve.

## **Distinctive No. 2 — The Mormon Jesus is a created being**

Reading LDS scripture, a person might get the idea that the Christ of Mormonism has always existed co-eternally and uncreated with God the Father.

Book of Mormon, Mosiah 3:5

For behold...the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven...and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay...

Doctrine and Covenants 39:1  
(See also D&C 61:1; 93:21)

Hearken and listen to the voice of him who is from all eternity to all eternity, the Great I AM, even Jesus Christ.

Despite these seemingly orthodox citations from two books of LDS scripture, no Mormon believes that Christ has personally co-existed eternally with the Father. Official Mormon teaching material explains that Jesus was created or brought into being by the Heavenly Father:

The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ...<sup>29</sup>

Speaking of the creator God, Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie affirmed that:

All men, Christ included, were born as his children in pre-existence.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles*, 1997 ed., p. 11

<sup>30</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 278

## Biblical Position

The Jesus of the Christian faith is the uncaused, uncreated, eternally existent God. True Christian doctrine rejects any idea that Christ could have had a personal beginning or was ever created.

### “In the Beginning”

The Bible affirms that Christ was in the beginning and therefore could not have been created:

John, Chapter 1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God.

A Mormon pre-mortal spirit life is not the “beginning.” A spirit offspring from a Father God who has existed longer than Christ is not the “beginning.” That which is caused by a creator is not in the “beginning.”

Revelation 1:8

(See also Revelation 22:12)

I [Jesus] am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, said the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Each of these phrases intimates an existence not fixed by time. Pick any time in the past—Christ “was.” The eternal and uncreated nature of Christ is why He said of Himself, “Before Abraham was, I am” (Jn. 8:58). Not “I was,” but “I am.” For a Being in which time has no personal relevance, a simple “I Am” works through the ages.

Certainly there are *beginnings* in the Bible that mark specific events in time—this earth and physical creation being one. When we speak of a *beginning* today, we naturally assume a specific start point in time wherein something was or came to be. We must be cautious, however, not to read this same conceptual “baggage” into scripture when describing immortal beings. For the immortal and eternally existent Christ of the Bible, “in the beginning” is a metaphor for describing an infinite and eternal past—not a point in time.

Additionally, Christ could not have had a beginning when we consult the whole context of Bible revelation:

## 1. Christ has existed as long as God has

The Christian God the Father has existed “from everlasting.”<sup>31</sup> If Christ was therefore “in the beginning” with God, then Christ has existed “from everlasting” as well. If Christ has always existed from everlasting then there has never been a time for Christ to have been created. Honoring the whole context of the Bible then, Christ’s existence “in the beginning” is simply allegorical language to convey the idea that He has always existed. LDS should note that none of the KJV citations above were “corrected” by Joseph Smith in his *Inspired Bible Version*.

## 2. Christ is the Creator of all things

The Bible is clear that Christ is not created, but is Himself the Creator of all things. If Christ is the creator of all things, then He Himself cannot be a created Being:

John 1:3

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Colossians, Chapter 1:16-17

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Neither of these KJV citations were “corrected” by Joseph Smith in his *Inspired Bible Version*.

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31 Ps. 63:16; 41:13; 90:2; 93:2; 103:17; 106:48

**\* \* \* LDS Scripture Contradictions \* \* \***

Extra-biblical Mormon scripture contradicts LDS doctrine that Jesus was created or brought into being by the Father:

Book of Mormon, Helaman 14:12

...Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning...

Book of Mormon, Ether 4:7

...Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.

Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 9:15

Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning...

Doctrine and Covenants 93:21

And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn;

Clearly, multiple Mormon passages of scripture defeat the idea that Christ could ever have been created by anyone else. If LDS would apply the same standard they level against the Bible, they would admit that LDS scripture fails to say what the Bible supposedly should say before it was corrupted.

**\* \* \* LDS Rebuttals \* \* \***

**LDS Rebuttal:** *"We too believe that Christ 'was in the beginning with the Father.' Although Christ was created (born) by the Father, He still dwelt with the Father in the preexistence. Prior to this, Christ existed eternally with the Father as an intelligence."*

Let's unpack this typical semantic subterfuge shall we? How can Mormonism teach a created Christ Who has at the same time existed eternally from the beginning? It depends on what your definition of "beginning" is. Admittedly the Greek word *archē* from which we get our English word *beginning* has several applications such as an "order, time, place or rank".<sup>32</sup> The LDS worldview sees *beginning* in the Bible as merely a relative place or order along a moving event

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<sup>32</sup> Strong's Concordance, word #746

timeline. Because of this, the Mormon Christ can be personally created, yet still existent “in the beginning.” Let’s address two Mormon applications of this term from the LDS rebuttal just given:

## 1. A *Preexistent* Beginning

This idea has been articulated by one Mormon Apostle who said that “in the beginning” means simply “that all the spirit offspring of the Father [Christ included] were with him in a pre-existence.”<sup>33</sup> The event timeline then is set to a specific point, rather than from eternity. From this standpoint the Mormon Christ can be personally created, yet said to be existent from the beginning. Prior to this pre-existent first estate in Mormonism, Christ did not exist as an intelligent, personal being.

The fact is, however, that neither the Bible nor extra-Biblical Mormon scriptures cited present a context defining the beginning as a pre-existent first estate for God’s spirit children. This unique LDS meaning is read into these citations without exegetical support. Christ is simply and clearly presented in scripture as “in the beginning.”

## 2. A *Spirit Intelligence* Beginning

According to Mormonism, prior to Christ’s personal presence with the Father in a pre-existence, He was with the Father (and us) as eternal spirit matter called *intelligence* that has always existed. This *intelligence* is the “*primal element from which the spirit offspring were created...*” since the Mormon Father cannot create anything from nothing.<sup>34</sup> In this respect, the Mormon Christ is thought to be personally created, yet existent from the beginning.

It is important to note, however, that this eternal intelligence does not become personal, living, intelligent entity until it is created (or born) by God as spirit babies. As such, while the spiritual “elements” of the Mormon Christ have always existed, He personally has not existed eternally. At some point in time after the Mormon Heavenly Father came into being, the Mormon Christ was brought into being.

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<sup>33</sup> Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., pp. 76-77

<sup>34</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 387

Once again, the LDS scriptures cited in this section say “I was” in the beginning. Mormon spirit “intelligence” is not a living, conscious, personal being that could be described by a personal pronoun. Intelligence is an “it”—the raw materials needed to create a Mormon spirit.

No matter how many unique states of being Latter-day Saints attribute to their Christ, a Jesus who has existed from all eternity as God could not be a created Christ. Surely the Mormon Christ—like the created Christ of Jehovah’s Witnesses and other false religions—is not the Christ of the Christian faith.

### **Distinctive No. 3 — The Mormon Jesus is our literal big brother**

Because the Mormon Jesus is a created being, He shares a unique position with mankind in Mormon theology. Since Mormonism believes that every person ever born on earth first existed as a created spirit child of God in Heaven, Jesus and mankind are literal brothers and sisters of God the Father. The Mormon Jesus is unique from us in that He is the first of God’s children.<sup>35</sup> An official Mormon study manual affirms our common kinship with Christ:

Every person who was ever born on earth was our spirit brother or sister in heaven. The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ (see D&C 93:21), so he is literally our elder brother...<sup>36</sup>

Mormon Seventy Milton R. Hunter taught in his book, published by the Mormon Church:

Jesus is man’s spiritual brother. We dwelt with Him in the spirit world...when we became children of God, Jesus was the “first-born,” and so He is our eldest brother.<sup>37</sup>

### **Biblical Position**

The Christian Jesus is not our literal brother. Once again, if Christ is God, and if He created all things, then He *cannot* be our literal brother. Christ is the Creator; Mankind is the creature. Intentionally or not, making Christ the sibling brother of mankind unavoidably robs Him of some of His Deity and brings Christ down to man’s level.

Yes, Jesus became a man to die and pay for our sins, but as our Creator, He cannot be reduced to the same species and race as man. Christ the God-man is preeminent above all of

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<sup>35</sup> Second Mormon President and Prophet Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 26; Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 214;

<sup>36</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles*, p. 11

<sup>37</sup> Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, p. 21

His creation. We share no common bloodline with Christ, the “Son of David.” We share no common genealogical family tree with Christ, the “Root of Jesse.” This same Christ man was not cut from the same spiritual mold as we, but He *“made himself of no reputation...and was made in the likeness of men...he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death....Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name”* (Phil. 2:7-9). The very God of the ages condescended toward our helpless state and redeemed His handiwork so that His creation could dwell with Him some day in mansions eternal.

When the saved in Christ someday see Jesus in glory, we will not worship our sibling “big brother” who took away our sins, but we’ll serve the preeminent, transcendent, one of a kind Creator God who redeemed His handiwork to live with Him forever as sons and daughters of God.

#### **Distinctive No. 4 — The Mormon Jesus is a brother of the Devil**

In Mormonism, Christ is the literal sibling brother of Lucifer himself.<sup>38</sup> An official Mormon study guide says:

We needed a Savior to pay for our sins and teach us how to return to our Heavenly Father....Two of our brothers offered to help. Our oldest brother, Jesus Christ...said, “Here am I, send me”....Satan...also came, saying, “Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son...”<sup>39</sup>

No matter how evil and despised Satan is today to Latter-day Saints, at a base level, both the “son of the morning” (Satan) and the Mormon Son of God (Jesus) are equal in their origin. Both are literal sons of God, and both were at one time equal in every way until Satan went bad.

38 Twelfth Mormon President and Prophet Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, pp. 32-33

39 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles*, pp. 17-18

## Biblical Position

The Christian Jesus created the Devil. The Bible is clear that the Father's Only Begotten Son has created all things (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17). If words are to have meaning, and "all things" means all things, then Christ and Lucifer could never have been sibling brothers at the feet of a Heavenly Father. But beyond this fact, the Bible further discredits any idea of a sibling relationship between Christ and Satan considering:

### 1. Christ is the *Only* Begotten Son of God

If the true God has only one begotten Son, then He cannot have another son named Lucifer.

### 2. Angels are an entirely different being than God

There are three categories of personal beings identified in scripture: (a) God, (b) Mankind, and (c) Angels. Each of these categories of beings are altogether different in kind and share no common ancestry or origin. As such, Christ (as God the Son) and a fallen angel cannot share a common identity and cannot be the literal sexual offspring of God the Father. Sexual reproduction produces like kind.

## Distinctive No. 5 — The Mormon Jesus is not virgin born

Reading Mormon scripture, one might get the impression that the Holy Ghost caused Mary to become pregnant with the Christ child and that Mary therefore remained a virgin from her conception to the birth of Jesus:

Book of Mormon, Alma 7:10

And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.

This seemingly orthodox statement, however, does not really mean to Mormons what it appears to say to Christians. An investigator would have to consult LDS commentaries and wade through volumes of statements made by LDS church authorities to know that Alma 7:10 means just the opposite of what it says. Take for example tenth President and Prophet Mormon Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith:



They tell us the Book of Mormon states that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost. I challenge that statement. The Book of Mormon teaches no such thing! Neither does the Bible.<sup>40</sup>

LDS also have the historical wisdom of the second Mormon Prophet, Brigham Young, who explained that a literal virgin birth would be dangerous for females:

When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotton him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. And who is the Father?...Now remember from this time forth, and forever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. I will repeat a little anecdote. I was in conversation with a certain learned professor upon this subject, when I replied, to this idea--"if the Son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be very dangerous to baptize and confirm females, and give the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should beget children, to be palmed upon the Elders by the people, bringing the Elders into great difficulties."<sup>41</sup>

LDS should feel privileged to have the insight of modern-day prophets such as Brigham Young. Without his wisdom of setting it straight to learned professors, we would be imperiling every woman with instant pregnancy after baptism, if Christ were truly begotten by the Holy Ghost, just as the Bible says.

Was Brigham just sharing his personal opinion? Was he just simply wrong and LDS should dismiss his counsel? Let's see:

What man or woman on the earth, what spirit in the world can say truthfully that I ever gave a wrong word of counsel, a word of advice that could not be sanctioned by the heavens?<sup>42</sup>

I would to God that the Latter-day Saints would take the word of Brigham Young to be law! I will defy the inhabitants of the whole earth to tell one word that he ever counseled that was wrong...<sup>43</sup>

Do just as brother Brigham tells you; for he always tells you what is right...and if there is anything wrong, he will correct it and give you the truth....<sup>44</sup>

So does Mormonism believe in the virgin birth or not? The official Mormon Church position is yes. In practical terms, however, the only reasonable conclusion is no.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, p.19

<sup>41</sup> Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, pp. 51-52, April 9, 1852

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Vol. 12, p. 127

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Vol. 14, p. 226

<sup>44</sup> Heber C. Kimball, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, p. 218

As was demonstrated on the series on the Mormon Heavenly Father, early LDS authorities have described not just a natural and common birth or delivery process for Christ, but also a natural and physical conception process as well. Official Mormon oracles described the “natural action,” of their flesh and bones God, the common “laws of generation,” the “natural occurrence” of Christ’s conception, and the “literal parenthood” of God the Father Who “sired” baby Jesus. They emphasized that there was “nothing figurative” about the Fatherhood of God and that “there is no other process of creation in heaven or on the earth” other than the natural action of conception and birth.

These statements illustrating a physical union between God and Mary were proclaimed by no less authorities than Presidents and Prophets Brigham Young, Joseph Fielding Smith, Ezra Taft Benson, and Apostles Bruce R. McConkie, Orson Pratt, and Mormon Seventy Milton R. Hunter.

This is hard medicine for many Latter-day Saints to accept and may be why many rank and file LDS today reject the idea of a physical union between God and Mary. However the opinion of average LDS church membership does not overrule or invalidate comments by Mormon leadership. While most current Mormon leadership is much more general and evasive on this matter today, most do not categorically reject the possibility of a sexual union between their God and Mary. To do so would put the validity of past prophets in question.

It is not my intent to be sensationalistic or to unnecessarily offend LDS readers, but this issue must be addressed and there is just no other way to tackle this topic other than directly. This issue is not incidental, but is of great significance because whether Christ was virgin born or not determines the efficacy and sufficiency of His atonement for our sins. A Christ who was not truly virgin born is a Christ who cannot save.

### **A Virgin after Physical Relations?**

The obvious question at this point is how Mormons can say Christ was born of a virgin when leaders have consistently described an act common to the reproductive process? Like many things in Mormonism, the solution was obtained through a redefinition of the word “virgin.” Mormonism believes that Christ can still be virgin born since Mary did not have sexual relations with a mortal man, but with a flesh and bone *immortal* man, the Mormon Heavenly Father. Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie said:

For our present purposes, suffice it to say that our Lord was born of a virgin, which is fitting and proper, and also natural, since the Father of the child was an immortal Being.<sup>45</sup>

This comment by McConkie is unfortunately characteristic of the length to which Mormonism will go in an effort to appear orthodox. Not only does Mormonism re-label theological terms, but also many common every-day words of the English language.

Webster's defines a virgin as "a girl or woman who has never had sexual intercourse."<sup>46</sup> Even Mary understood this almost two millennia ago without any grade school sex-ed classes, as she questioned the angel about how she could conceive "seeing I know not a man" (Lk. 1:31-34). Exactly how McConkie can credibly argue that a women can remain a virgin when Mormonism describes a process that invalidates the word's meaning reveals an incredible aptitude to do violence to the English language in an effort to make a doctrine appear to be that which it is not.

## Biblical Position

The Christian Jesus was truly virgin born. At best, Mormonism can accurately say that the Mormon Jesus was conceived (but not born from) a virgin. The context of the Bible is not so limited in context. This miracle was accomplished because the Holy Ghost was the sole agent of conception—not a flesh and bones Father God:

Matthew 1:18

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on the wise...his mother Mary...was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Note again that Mary remained a virgin *after* the conception and while with the Christ child:

Matthew 1:23

Behold, A Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Neither of these KJV citations were "corrected" by Joseph Smith in his *Inspired Bible Version*. The only way a woman can remain a virgin while yet with child is for no physical union to have occurred with a man. The Holy Ghost—a Personage of spirit—made this event possible. The conception of Christ was therefore truly a miracle. Women do not normally spontaneously conceive.

<sup>45</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 466

<sup>46</sup> *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, Gramercy Books New York, 1996, p. 1595

How different this is to the conception of the Mormon Jesus, which though unusual, was not truly a miracle. The Mormon Mary conceived naturally in the same way every other woman has, through a physical union between a man and woman. Once that initial holy rendezvous occurred between the Mormon Father God and Mary, the title “virgin” was no longer appropriate.

When as a Mormon I began to investigate objectively claims by non-Mormon “critics,” I could no longer justify contorted definitions of what “virginity” meant by McConkie and others. Such official LDS explanations began to take on a new face for what most dispassionate observers would see them as—double-speak using verbal gymnastics to justify biblical heresy.

### Forty-six Chromosomes

Why is the virgin birth of Christ an essential issue? Even if the true God had a body of flesh and bones, why is it a grave error to believe that it would have been acceptable for God to have had a physical relationship with Mary to sire the baby Jesus?

When explaining the human nature of the Mormon Christ, one Mormon author made a point that reveals to Christians why the LDS doctrine on the virgin birth is seriously flawed. Mormon scholar Stephen E. Robinson, in his book co-authored with a Christian theologian<sup>47</sup> said:

If Jesus was truly a human being, then he had forty-six chromosomes, a double strand of twenty-three. If he was truly human, he got one strand of twenty-three chromosomes from his mother. Where did the other strand come from, if not from his Father?<sup>48</sup>

As fully God while also being fully man, Christ’s body no doubt had 46 chromosomes. But where did they come from? Robinson speaks of something that is not explicitly revealed in scripture. As a general rule it is usually not only unhelpful but potentially heretical to speculate about things not clearly revealed in God’s Word. However, it is the opinion of this author that through consulting the context of the whole Bible, it becomes evident that the DNA for the body of Christ was *created* by God and *could not* have been a shared contribution between God and Mary. Consider the following:

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<sup>47</sup> Mormon author Stephen E. Robinson does not hold the position of Seventy or above in the LDS hierarchy. However, his book has received good reviews by LDS and his views would not be disputed by the rank and file Mormon.

<sup>48</sup> Co-authors Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, p. 139.

## 1. A literal contribution of DNA by God is impossible

The simple fact of the matter is that the true Father God of the Christian faith has no personal bodily DNA or chromosomes to contribute. This is obvious to Christians, but is a point lost to many Latter-day Saints who hold a thought process held captive to the Mormon worldview that God the Father has a tangible body of flesh and bones and thus had to share His genes with Mary. When we consider that the Bible reveals a God of Spirit (Jn. 4:24), any contribution of chromosomes by God is physically impossible. This is why the Bible plainly says that Mary was "found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18). Her conception was nothing less than a miracle.

## 2. Mary's DNA was unnecessary

We know from the Bible that donor DNA is not always necessary to make a man. The inference that Christ's body had to share 23 chromosomes from Mary and 23 chromosomes from God falls apart when we ask the simple question, where did Adam get his chromosomes?

As Creator, God is clearly able to make man and the physical body without sharing chromosomes with anyone. He can make 46 chromosomes programmed to His liking. Tracing our genealogical heritage back to the first man, we are all here from DNA that ultimately was *made* by God, not shared between parents.

## 3. Mary's DNA would be unacceptable

This single point is the most serious flaw in the LDS virgin birth doctrine. For purposes of illustration, we'll assume that the Mormon God physically inseminated Mary. If Christ truly inherited 23 chromosomes from His earthly mother Mary, then He also would have inherited the sinful, Adamic nature of man through the bloodline of Mary. Referring to Adam, the Bible plainly says:

Romans, Chapter 5

Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:12,19).

Mormonism teaches that *"men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression."*<sup>49</sup> While this is technically true, because the original sin of our parents has been passed on to every generation through the sinful bloodline of Adam, we are practically responsible for our own sin, but ultimately accountable because of Adam and Eve's sin. The weak view of sin held by Mormonism misses the fact that because mankind inherits a sin nature, sin is not just wrongdoing, but *wrong being*.

Psalm 50:21

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

With this important principle in mind, a Christ born from a physical chromosomal contribution from the Adamic bloodline of Mary would have been a Christ born with a sinful nature and therefore not qualified to atone for our sins. Had an egg from Mary been used, her sinful bloodline would have tainted the bloodline of Jesus. The God of the Christian faith worked around this impasse by providing a sinless God man with a pure and uncontaminated bloodline—a bloodline necessarily different from that of His earthly and sinful Mother.

The baby carried in a mother's womb has its own independent circulatory system. The Mother's blood does not pass through the placenta into the baby's blood. The only way Christ could be born the sinless lamb for our sins was for God to bypass the ordinary method of conception and conceive Jesus from a virgin with the genetics made by God and God alone.

The absolute necessity for a pure and sinless sacrifice was foreshadowed through types (examples) in the Old Testament, where only perfect animals without blemish or defect could be offered as the annual sacrifice for sin in the temple. These perfect and untainted animals were types of the forthcoming virgin-born Christ who would make a more perfect, sinless, and permanent sacrifice for all through His sinless life.

### \* \* \* LDS Rebuttals \* \* \*

How can LDS read the same Bible accounts of the virgin birth as Christians do, affirming that they believe what it says but extracting a very different meaning? The conception account in Luke is sometimes used by LDS to show that the Heavenly Father conceived Jesus rather than the Holy Ghost:

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<sup>49</sup> *Pearl of Great Price*, 2nd Article of Faith, p. 60

Luke 1:35

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

**LDS Rebuttal 1:** *"Note that two personages of the Godhead were involved in the conception of Mary. The "Holy Ghost," and the "Highest," which must be the Father since He is preeminent over the Son and the Holy Ghost.*

Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt made this distinction in a statement made in October 1853:

The angel said unto the Virgin Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."...It seems from this relation that the Holy Ghost accompanied "the Highest" when He overshadowed the Virgin Mary and begat Jesus; and from this circumstance some have supposed that the body of Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost without the instrumentality of the immediate presence of the Father. There is no doubt that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary to sanctify her, and make her holy, and prepare her to endure the glorious presence of "the Highest," that when "He" should "overshadow" her she might conceive, being filled with the Holy Ghost; hence the angel said, as recorded in Matthew, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost," that is, the Holy Ghost gave her strength to abide the presence of the Father without being consumed; but it was the personage of the Father who begat the body of Jesus...<sup>50</sup>

According to Pratt then, the Holy Ghost was on the scene, but He didn't cause Mary to conceive. He was in a supportive role only. Since we know elsewhere from scripture that no man can see God and live (Ex. 33:20), the Holy Ghost of Mormonism merely prevented Mary's hair from catching on fire and her body from being reduced to a pile of carbon charcoal, while the flesh and bones Father God of Mormonism enjoined a mortal for purposes of impregnation.

While LDS may attempt to split the "Holy Ghost" and the "Highest" in this passage into two separate beings, such interpolative method reveals an LDS thought process held captive by a Godhead consisting of three separate Gods. Note, however, that the only Person of the Godhead specifically said to have shown up was the *Holy Ghost*, not a flesh and bones Heavenly Father. A careful look at the descriptors used in this account ("power" and "overshadow") conveys characteristics and actions of a non-tangible Being, not a flesh and bones God.

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<sup>50</sup> Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, Vol.1, No.10, p.158

**LDS Rebuttal 2:** *"How could Christ refer to His 'Father' if the Holy Ghost was responsible for His conception?"*

To Bible believer's, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one co-equal God. As such, the Holy Ghost can be the "Highest" and the Christ child can be of the Holy Ghost, while also being the Son of the Father. Trying to split up Luke 1:35 into more than one Deity is biblically unsupportable. This rebuttal would not be an issue if Mormonism accepted the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Many LDS are closed-minded to non-LDS attempts to illustrate the obvious since other "believers" are considered apostate and Mormon authorities considered infallible when speaking for God. So with this in mind, let's hear from a Mormon Apostle as he describes why a correct view of the virgin birth is essential:

Modernistic teachings denying the *virgin birth* are utterly and completely apostate and false.<sup>51</sup>

Of course McConkie considers this characterization applicable only to non-Mormons. If, however, inquiring Latter-day Saints will objectively consider that Mormonism's denial of a Holy Ghost conception is synonymous with denial of the virgin birth, then perhaps the grim reality will come more sharply into focus—Mormon leadership themselves are clearly conveyors of a faith system that is "apostate and false."

**Distinctive No. 6 — The Mormon Jesus is a biological son of God**

Because the Mormon Christ is not truly virgin born but was conceived from a literal union with the Heavenly Father and Mary, LDS view His Sonship literally. In Mormonism, use of such words as "literally," "offspring," "Father," "Son," "parent," and "begotten" reflect the belief that Christ is the *biological offspring* of a Father and Mother Deity.

Another unique LDS doctrine is the belief that prior to His birth on earth, Christ had another literal conception in heaven, literally born as a spirit baby, this time by a Father and Mother Deity. Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained:

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51 Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 822, italics in the original



The designation *Father* is to be taken literally; it signifies that the Supreme Being is the literal Parent or Father of the spirits of all men....All men, Christ included, were born as his children in pre-existence.<sup>52</sup>

Another Mormon Apostle illustrated the literal spirit Sonship of the Mormon Jesus by explaining how the wives of the Mormon Heavenly Father likely have a similar gestation period to women here on earth. Apostle Orson Pratt said in March of 1853:

The law, regulating the formation of the embryo spirit, may, as it regards time, differ considerably from the period required for the formation of the infant tabernacle of flesh....But as heavenly things are, in many respects, typical of earthly, it is altogether probable that the period required for the formation of the infant spirit, is of the same length as that required in this world for the organization of the infant tabernacle.<sup>53</sup>

To be clear, LDS leadership does not explicitly state that the spirit of Jesus (and our spirits for that matter) were created through intercourse. However, most LDS will admit at least to those within LDS circles that these spirits are literally conceived, with “heavenly things...typical of earthy.”

The fact that Mormon doctrine teaches the imperative for Mormon males to acquire many wives (either here or in the hereafter) infers a literal spiritual birth process as well. Mormon male Gods need their wives to create spirit babies and are unable to simply created them on their own. The wives of each Mormon male God can look forward to an eternity of child rearing to populate the planets of her Husband.

## Biblical Position

The Jesus of the Christian faith is not a biological son of God. The term "Son of God" is a title of Deity—not a designation of biological origin. The true Christ is not a literal, biological offspring of God the Father and is therefore not a literal Son of God. LDS erroneously read a literal offspring meaning into the word “Son” through transferring meaning from words used today that did not carry the same meaning in the culture of Bible authors.

Before we explore why the true Christ cannot be a literal offspring Son of the Father, consider from the Bible those who are called *sons*—even *sons of God*—with no literal, biological association:

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 278, italics in the original.

<sup>53</sup> Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 38-39

### **1. Adam is a *Son of God***

Even though Adam was made from the dust of the earth and not literally sired from an offspring God, he is known as a “son of God” (Lk. 3:38).

### **2. We are *Sons of God***

Christians “become the sons of God” when through faith we accept Christ as our Savior and become spiritually born again (Jn. 1:12; 1 Jn. 3:2). There is no literal Father/son association inferred by this relationship.

### **3. Nations can be called *Sons and Daughters of God***

As primarily Jews and His chosen people, God corporately called the nation of Israel His “sons” and “daughters” (Is. 43:6). There obviously is no literal association here.

### **4. Angels are called the *Sons of God***

We know from the Bible that angles are created beings and not literal sons of God, yet angels are still referred to as sons (Job 1:6; 38:7). The angels are “sons” in the sense that they were living beings brought into existence by the Creator God.

With each of these examples it should be evident that being a *son* in the Bible does not immediately imply a literal, biological association as the offspring of a paternal father and mother.

## **Why Jesus Cannot be a Literal “Son of God”**

To help understand the true nature of Christ’s relationship with the Father, it will be helpful to discuss some key terms or titles in the following segments. In our present culture it’s natural to view this identification as descriptive of a literal parent/child relationship, whether through biological connection or through adoption. However this relationship *is not* what Bible authors were communicating. Consulting the whole context of the Bible, Christ cannot be a literal Son of God the Father for at least four reasons:

## 1. A spirit Father God cannot produce a literal, biological Son

As previously explained, the true Father God is an incorporeal spirit (without body) and therefore cannot be a literal Father of the flesh and bone Christ.<sup>54</sup> If the Father cannot be a literal “Father,” then the Son cannot be a literal “Son.”

This point is significant in that Mormonism ridicules the “apostate Christian world” for believing in a spirit God “without body, parts, or passions,” and prides itself in having a view of the Godhead that is logical and understandable. Yet this same body of scoffers has no problem with embracing the logical inconsistency just presented, even while a Mormon Apostle has described the probable gestation period of *spirit* babies within the bodies of *tangible* Mormon Goddesses. This Mormon-induced conundrum should be but another sign that something is wrong in the LDS gospel.

## 2. Christ is the Son of the Father—Not the Holy Ghost

Matthew 1:20 clearly identifies the conception of Christ as “of the Holy Ghost,” and not of the Heavenly Father. If Sonship were literal, then Christ would be the Son of the Holy Ghost, not the Father. Yet it is the Heavenly Father in scripture who refers to His Only Begotten Son, not the Holy Ghost. Clearly a literal flesh and blood connection is not what the Son of God means.

## 3. Christ the Son has always Been God

The true Christ revealed in the Bible is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and therefore could never have been a literal offspring Son of the Father. For example, the gospel of John identifies Jesus as “the Word,” and “the Word was God” (Jn. 1:1, 14). If Christ has always existed as the Second Person of the triune Godhead with the Father and the Holy Ghost, then there could never have been a time that Jesus could have *become* the Son.

## 4. Christ has always been the Son

There is sufficient Bible evidence to demonstrate an eternally existent Father/Son relationship *prior* to the incarnation of Christ. The Old Testament says “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?...who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and *what is*

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<sup>54</sup> Jer. 23:24; Is. 31:3; Jn. 4:24; Col. 1:15

*his son's name....*" (Proverbs 30:4, emphasis added). Note that even before there was a baby Jesus, there was a Son of God in Heaven.

We read numerous times in the New Testament that God didn't send someone who would *become* His Son, but rather, He *sent* His Son to *become a man*. John, for example, tells us that "God *sent* not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."<sup>55</sup> If it was God's Son that the Father sent to earth, then Christ was the Son before His incarnation. Mormons miss this point since they believe Christ to be a literal spirit Son of God prior to the incarnation. However as previous point number three demonstrated, this is not possible for a Christ who has always existed co-eternally with the Father.

Another indication that the Sonship of Christ had nothing to do with parental lineage is in the type (or foreshadowing) of Christ seen through king Melchisedec, who was said to be "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God..." (Heb. 7:3). As to the *human nature* of Christ, He indeed did have a mother, a genealogy, a birthday and a time of death. However, this passage very accurately conveys Christ's *divine nature* as the Second Person of the Godhead. Jesus has no literal parents, no bloodline genealogy or family tree to follow, no time of birth or death, for His Sonship is an eternal one, having existed always with God the Father.

### **Biblically, How is Christ the "Son" of God?**

In the Christian faith, Christ is the *Son of God* not because of His incarnation, but because of His *relationship* with the Father—more specifically—His *equality* with God the Father. His Sonship then, is a functional identity rather than a literal one. Functionally, what did the title *Son of God* convey to man in the Jewish culture? It was nothing less than a claim to full Deity.

Theologian Charles C. Ryrie explains:

Though the phrase "son of" can mean "offspring of," it also carries the meaning "of the order of." Thus in the Old Testament "sons of the prophets" meant of the order of prophets (1 Kings 20:35), and "sons of the singers" meant of the order of the singers (Neh. 12:28). The designation "Son of God" when used of our Lord means of the order of God and is a strong and clear claim to full Deity.<sup>56</sup>

The Pharisees in fact recognized this claim to undiminished Deity when they attempted to stone Jesus for claiming to be the Son of God:

<sup>55</sup> Jn. 3:17. See also Mk. 12:6; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 1:2, 8; 1 Jn. 4:14

<sup>56</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 217

## John, Chapter 5

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Author Millard J. Erickson explains this unique relationship shared only between the Father God and Christ:

...we must ask about the real meaning of the terms "Father" and "Son." The assumption commonly made...is that these terms indicate subordination and derivation of being of a Son from a Father. This is a natural assumption for us, living almost twenty centuries after the writing, and in a very different culture, for this is what Father and Son mean in our experience. This was not necessarily so in that Hebrew culture, however. Warfield claims that the word "son" for the Jews referred less to derivation from the father and more to the likeness of the son to the father. Thus, as applied to a member of the Trinity in relationship to another, it would be an indication not primarily of subordination but of equality.<sup>57</sup>

J. Oliver Buswell explained the Father/Son titles in the Jewish culture:

In Jewish usage the term Son of . . . did not generally imply any subordination, but rather equality and identity of nature....The name "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36) doubtless means, "The Encourager." "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17) probably means, "Thunderous Men." "Son of man," especially as applied to Christ in Daniel 7:13 and constantly in the New Testament, essentially means "The Representative Man." Thus for Christ to say, "I am the Son of God" (John 10:36) was understood by His contemporaries as identifying Himself as God, equal with the Father, in an unqualified sense.<sup>58</sup>

All but lost in today's culture is the fact that names in early biblical times meant so much more than they do today. Names were chosen not because they sounded good, or because they wanted to continue the father's name. Names were chosen because they described a quality or purpose in a person's life. Since names in the Jewish culture were as much vehicles for identifying a quality or characteristic as they were a legal entity, it is interesting to note that the Son of God wasn't the preferred designation that Christ used for Himself. According to Charles C. Ryrie:

His favorite designation of Himself was "Son of Man" (more than eighty times). This name linked Him to the earth and to His mission on earth. It focused on His lowliness and humanity (Matt. 8:20); on His suffering and death (Luke 19:10)....He was also the

57 Millard J. Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity*, Three Crucial Questions, p.89

58 J. Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 1, p. 105

Son of David, a title that linked Him to His ancestor David and to the royal promises to be fulfilled ultimately by Messiah.<sup>59</sup>

### Christ, the “Only Begotten Son”

Another title related to Christ is the “only begotten” Son of God.<sup>60</sup> In the Greek, “begotten” comes from the word *monogenēs*; *Mono*, meaning “only” and *genes* meaning “begotten.”<sup>61</sup> Strong’s Concordance defines the word as “only-born, i.e., sole; or only (begotten child).”

Because of the Mormon worldview of a flesh and bones God, much meaning is read into the word “begotten.” In his book, under the section entitled “*Only Begotten Son*,” Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie taught that *begotten* is to be understood literally:

These name-titles all signify that our Lord is the only Son of the Father in the flesh. Each of the words is to be understood literally. Only means *only*; Begotten means *begotten*; and Son means *son*. Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers.<sup>62</sup>

LDS sometimes point to the genealogy of Christ from the “begats” in the gospel according to Matthew to prove that Christ is the literal Son of God the Father (Matt. 1:1-17). Certainly these generations were the result of literal biological children by earthly fathers and mothers. Because Matthew never says that Jesus was begat by Joseph, can we infer that He was literally begotten by the Heavenly Father? Christian scholar Charles C. Ryrie addresses this very issue:

Matthew carefully guarded the fact of the Virgin Birth in the genealogical table of our Lord (Matt. 1:16). He recorded that Joseph was the husband of Mary, but that it was by Mary only that Jesus was born. The pronoun “by whom” is feminine singular, indicating clearly that Jesus was born of Mary only and not of Mary and Joseph.<sup>63</sup>

The usual standard in early Bible times was to list the Father in genealogy accounts since the term “begat” was normally associated with the male. If God were really the literal, biological Father of Jesus, then He would naturally have been listed in the “begats” rather than Mary. Instead, the feminine singular used in Christ’s genealogy affirms that He was not born from a flesh and bones father of any kind.

59 Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p.287

60 Jn. 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 Jn. 4:9

61 *Strong’s Concordance*, word #3439

62 Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., pp. 546-547, italics in the original.

63 Charles R. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 279

It might be helpful at this point to note that just as with the words *Father/Son*, the term *begotten* does not always carry a literal, biological offspring context as evidenced by the fact that the Bible uses *begotten* of God for born-again Christians, even though we are the biological offspring of human parents, not Deity:

1 John 5:18

We know that whosoever is born [monogenes or “begotten”] of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

1 John 5:1

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born [monogenes or “begotten”] of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

While LDS believe that all people are literally born as spirit children of God in a pre-existent life in Heaven, note that “begotten” is used in a current context in 1 John and describes a conditional relationship (“whosoever is,” “but he that is,” “whosoever believeth,” etc.), not an existing relationship from a pre-earthly existence. We are “begotten” on this life when we’re saved, without any context suggesting that we are literal offspring of God in a prior life.

Additionally, if *begotten* truly meant a literal siring of Christ by the Heavenly Father, then God could not have called Jesus His “Only Begotten Son,” since Mormonism teaches that He has countless other literally begotten sons in a pre-existent estate. An official Mormon teaching manual tries to solve this problem and preserve the uniqueness of Christ by once again applying a novel interpretation to the term “Only Begotten Son” of God:

Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal father. That is why he is called the Only Begotten Son.<sup>64</sup>

Of course neither the Bible or LDS scripture defines *Only Begotten* as a relationship between an immortal Father and a mortal mother. This meaning is poured into LDS scripture to solve the numerical problem of proclaiming a literal Only Begotten Son (Christ) existing among countless other literally begotten sons (Mormons).

So what is the Christian interpretation of “Only Begotten” of God? Just as the title “Son” is understood metaphorically to describe the unique nature and relationship Christ shares with the Heavenly Father, “only begotten” describes not a physical offspring but speaks to the unique

64 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles*, p. 64

nature of Christ. Christian cult and apologetics expert Walter Martin confirmed that Christian experts in the Greek language commonly accept this interpretation:

...the most authoritative lexicons and grammar books, not to mention numerous scholarly works, all render “monogenes” as “only or unique ‘the only member of a kin or kind, hence generally only,’” (Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon*, Vol. 2, page 1144). Moulton and Milligan in their *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, pages 416 and 417, render “monogenes” as “one of a kind, only, unique...”<sup>65</sup>

How is Jesus unique as the Only Begotten Son? We’ll consider three reasons:

### **1. Uniquely (Only Begotten) in His virgin birth**

The true Christ child was unique in His conception, as Mary knew no man to conceive and was thus still a virgin when she gave birth.

### **2. Uniquely (Only Begotten) as the only Person *born as a Son of God***

The true Christ was unique in that many men have been born in the flesh, but none besides Christ were born *already* a Son of God in the flesh. This is a foreign concept in Mormonism where all men are born as sons of God due to the unique LDS belief that all people are born as spirit children in Heaven before coming to earth. Mormonism has the cart before the horse, however.

The Bible clearly explains that no man besides Christ has ever been born *already* a son or daughter in the flesh. Being born into a Christian family does not make you a son or daughter of God at birth. We all become sons and daughters of God spiritually, only after we are born again by accepting salvation. The Bible says “*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*” (Jn. 1:12). And again, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*” (Rom. 8:14).

### **3. Uniquely (Only Begotten) as not only the Son of God, but as *God the Son***

The Christ child was unique in that He was the only man born as a “God man.” The Christ of the Christian faith was not only a God, but He was the very God—the one and only.<sup>66</sup> Mormons miss this point since they reject the trinity.

<sup>65</sup> Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, pp. 114-115

<sup>66</sup> Jn. 1:1, 14; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 1:19-20; 2:9



## Christ, the “Firstborn”

Another relevant title of Christ is that He is the “Firstborn Son” of the Father. Mormons, as well as Jehovah’s Witnesses, point to Colossians to support the idea that Christ was created, since He is “the firstborn of every creature.”

### \* \* \* LDS Proof Text \* \* \*

Colossians 1:15

Who [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.

In Mormonism, this passage proves that Christ is the first and oldest child born of the Heavenly Father. Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained what this means to Mormons:

Christ is the *Firstborn*, meaning that he was the first Spirit Child born to God the Father in pre-existence....He is also the *Firstborn from the Dead*, which signifies that he was the first person resurrected....<sup>67</sup>

These ideas are unbiblical based on the whole context of Bible.

## 1. The context of Colossians 1:15 disallows a created Christ

While Jehovah’s Witnesses have altered verses 16-17 to make verse 15 support their unbiblical teaching, Latter-day Saints most often simply fail to quote the following verses. Verse 16 adds that “*For by him [Christ] were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth.*” If Christ truly created all things, then He could not have been born or created Himself.

Verse 17 further clarifies that “*he [Christ] is before all things, and by him all things consist.*” Clearly, if Christ has existed before all things, then the Apostle Paul could not have been intimating that Jesus was the first spirit baby born to the Mormon Heavenly Father.

## 2. “Firstborn” doesn’t always refer to “first in order,” or birth

As previously quoted, McConkie refers to Christ as the “firstborn from the dead.” The Bible affirms this title as well. (Col. 1:18) However, was Christ actually the first person in history to be bodily resurrected, as McConkie claims? Clearly not. The Bible records those who were dead and brought back to life from the dead. This fact clearly shows that “firstborn” can mean something other than the order or origin, or a person’s birth “seniority number.”

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<sup>67</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 281, italics in the original.

So what does the Bible mean when using this title for Christ? The title “firstborn” is referring to “first in preeminence over creation,” not “first in order or sequence.” Said another way, the firstborn title of Christ has nothing to do with His origin, but with His position with the Father and all of creation.

Before moving on, we would do well to always ensure we find the proper context when referring to any of the titles of Christ. In addition to the titles already discussed in this section, Christian apologist Walter Martin addressed some of the many metaphorical titles given to Christ:

...Jesus was not a door (John 10:9), a shepherd (John 10:11), a vine (John 15:1), a roadway (John 14:6), a loaf of bread (John 6:51), and other metaphorical expressions any more than “our God is a consuming fire” means that Jehovah should be construed as a blast furnace or a volcanic cone.<sup>68</sup>

LDS would do well to see that the “Sonship,” “Only Begotten,” and “Firstborn” titles of Jesus Christ are likewise to be taken metaphorically to describe the position and attributes of Christ. While the title “firstborn” can mean the first born child in a family, any application toward a literal birthright understanding must be tempered against the whole council of Bible teaching. To the Christian, the “firstborn of every creature” has nothing to do with Christ’s position among a family of siblings, nor of His literal “birth” from the resurrection grave, but has everything to do with His preeminence in creation, and His position with God the Father.

## **Distinctive No. 7 — The Mormon Jesus was once a sinner needing salvation**

Mormonism has no problem with the concept that all Mormon Gods have sinned in the past, prior to becoming Gods, while working out their own personal salvation. The Christ of Mormonism is no different and certainly has sinned in the past before being exalted to Deity, but what about *after* becoming a God?

Mormon scripture, as well as Church authorities, present Christ as a God before His earthly arrival, meaning that He was therefore the only person on earth who never sinned.<sup>69</sup> Other LDS teaching raises serious concern, however, that the Mormon Christ could truly have been a God and completely sinless when He walked planet Earth.

<sup>68</sup> Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 208

<sup>69</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants* 45:4; Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., pp. 129, 736

In a speech given before a semi-annual general conference and reprinted in the Mormon Church owned magazine, the *Ensign*, Mormon Apostle Russell M. Nelson affirmed that Jesus “attained perfection *following* his resurrection...”<sup>70</sup> (emphasis added).

Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explained how Jesus still had some unfinished business to complete with regard to His personal salvation when He dwelt on earth:

After reigning as the Lord Omnipotent, Christ “yet had to gain a mortal and then an immortal body....Note it please, the Lord Jesus worked out his own salvation while in this mortal probation....”<sup>71</sup>

Jesus kept the commandments of his Father and thereby worked out his own salvation, and also set an example as to the way and the means whereby all men may be saved.<sup>72</sup>

Mormon Prophet Spencer W. Kimball said:

However good a person’s works, he could not be saved had Jesus not died for his and everyone else’s sins.<sup>73</sup>

Baptism is required for salvation in Mormonism<sup>74</sup> and was therefore one of the essential works Jesus needed to complete if He was to be obedient. Mormon Seventy Milton R. Hunter explained:

Although John recognized Jesus as a perfect man, the Master made it clear that it was absolutely necessary for even the Son of God to be baptized. He—like the least of us—must obey every law of the Gospel if He was to receive all the blessings predicated on obedience.<sup>75</sup>

The relevant question here is, “What is baptism for in Mormonism?” An official Mormon Church teacher’s manual says that “we must be baptized for the *remission of our sins*,” and that “Our *sins* are washed away when we are baptized”<sup>76</sup> (emphasis added).

For Christians, believer’s baptism is an identifying act of obedience to symbolize a new Christian’s association with Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection. Even Mormonism recognizes the symbolic nature of baptism, but LDS also believe that baptism literally washes away sin.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the LDS baptism is applicable to sinners, not Saviors.

70 Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, November 1995 ed., p. 87, italics in the original

71 Bruce R. McConkie, *Our Relationship With the Lord*, pp. 8-9

72 Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, Vol.4, p.434

73 Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 207

74 *Pearl of Great Price*, Article of Faith No. 3 and 4

75 Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages*, p. 200

76 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles*, pp. 131-132

77 *Ibid.*, p. 132

## Biblical Position

The Christian Jesus has never needed salvation. The essential Christian doctrine is revealed from scripture in several ways:

### 1. Jesus is God

The true Jesus is a God in the fullest extent of the term.<sup>78</sup> If words are to have meaning in Mormonism, then true Gods do not need personal salvation, in any sense of the word.

### 2. Jesus never changes

The Bible is clear that Jesus has always been the same:

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

A Christ that has never changed is a Christ who could never have gone from sinner to saint at any point in time. While it is true that Jesus became a man at His incarnation, and in that sense was different than He was before His birth into mortality, Christ still remained 100 percent God at the same time. As such, none of His Deity was diminished as He retained *all* of the qualities that define a God, including a sinless life. Such Persons do not need salvation.

### 3. Jesus had to be a sinless sacrifice

It is only because Christ was fully God (and therefore completely sinless) that the Heavenly Father accepted His sacrifice in our place. The Bible says *“For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”* (2 Cor. 5:21).

Why did the true Jesus need to be baptized? The Bible says that Christ was baptized “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15). Details on what this righteousness are not given, but there is certainly no mention of salvation. The idea of a salvation component would be incongruent with one who claimed to be God. While Christ was likely baptized to provide us an example and to validate John the Baptist’s ministry, one thing is for certain, the true Christ was never a sinner.

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<sup>78</sup> Jn. 1:1, 14; Jn. 8:58; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16

## Salvation is for Sinners

To be sure, modern-day Mormons will ardently oppose any idea that Christ was a sinner while He walked this terrestrial orb. However, because Mormonism has accepted an unbiblical concept of the Godhead, sin, and salvation, their teaching for a sinless God working out His salvation is inconsistent, self-defeating, and wishful thinking.

The inevitable conclusion drawn from Mormon teaching is that the Mormon Christ could not truly have been a God if He did not have full possession of the qualities of Deity, or if He needed to do *anything* to work out His salvation. Salvation is for sinners, not Saviors. Perfection is not something gained in its entirety by Gods *after* their resurrection, but is something needed in its fullness to be a God in the first place. Baptism is not a law that a God must obey to receive blessing, but is a testimony from the perfect man to fallen man—modeling the death, burial, and resurrection that all would soon see, and that all must personally identify with through the death of the old man and acceptance of the new life given by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Book of Mormon exclaims that “Ye cannot be saved in your sins.”<sup>79</sup> We can discuss indefinitely to what extent the Mormon Christ was lacking in full qualities of Deity, but anyone who has to do anything for their salvation, even 0.001%, is not truly a God and is therefore not truly sinless. Such a man would not provide assurance of an acceptable substitutionary sacrifice for our sins.

### \* \* \* LDS Rebuttals \* \* \*

**LDS Rebuttal:** *“The context for Jesus working out His ‘salvation’ is not one of a sinful being achieving personal salvation, but of an obedient Christ who set an example for us.”*

Surely Christ was the example of how a Christian should live. However, you will note in McConkie’s comment that Christ “worked out his own salvation, and also set an example...” (emphasis added). Both purposes are presented independently.

Yes Christ set an example, but the whole of Mormon teaching also requires that Christ’s work carry a much more practical application as well. The Mormon Christ—a spirit child of God like

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<sup>79</sup> *Book of Mormon*, Alma 11:37

us—was not exempt from having to do everything that LDS have to do in order to become like the Heavenly Father.

### **Distinctive No. 8— The Mormon Jesus is a god by achievement**

Because the Mormon Christ hasn't always been a God, he had to earn His status of Deity just like the Mormon Heavenly Father did. Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie explains:

He is the Firstborn of the Father. By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent...<sup>80</sup>

Mormon Seventy Milton R. Hunter said:

Jesus became a God and reached his great state of understanding through consistent effort and continuous obedience to all the Gospel truths and universal laws.<sup>81</sup>

### **Biblical Position**

The Christian Jesus has always been the one and only God.<sup>82</sup>

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...

We read that Jesus was the *Word* from the beginning. This same Word (Christ) was God, not just a God. There is no room for advancement here.

John 8:58

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

As the "I am," Jesus in essence said, "I am God". Not "I was," for this would not necessarily convey the eternality of His Godhood. Not "I am a God," for this would not rule out the possibility of becoming a God at some point in history. Instead, Christ simply proclaimed to be God. If Jesus is truly God, then He has always been God. If He has always been God, then He has done nothing at any time to become God.

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<sup>80</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 129

<sup>81</sup> Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, p.51. See also *Doctrine and Covenants*, 130:1

<sup>82</sup> Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Jn. 5:18; 20:28; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13

## Distinctive No. 9 — The Mormon Jesus is not omnipotent

Mormon scripture affirms an omnipotent Christ.<sup>83</sup> This belief has been corroborated by church leadership, such as Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie:

Christ if the *Lord Omnipotent*...meaning that as Lord of all he has all power.<sup>84</sup>

Since the Christ of Mormonism hasn't always been a God, but had to earn His status of Deity, at what time did He become omnipotent? The acquisition of all power occurred at different points depending on what Mormon source you consult. Mormon scripture says that Christ received a fullness of power during His earthly ministry after completing His *baptism*:

Doctrine and Covenants, Section 93

12 And I, John, saw that he received not of the fullness at first, but received grace for grace; 13 And he received not of the fullness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fullness; 14 And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fullness at the first. 15 And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son. 16 And I, John, bear record that he received a fullness of the glory of the Father; 17 And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him.

Some LDS may try to latch onto the “fullness of the glory of the Father,” thinking that this proves Christ was lacking no personal omnipotence. However, verse 17 clarifies that it was “power,” not just the Father’s presence that Christ was lacking.

A different answer is given by Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, who taught that Christ didn't receive fullness of power and knowledge until after His *resurrection*:

In this life he [Christ] received not of the fullness at the first, but went from grace to grace until, in the final triumph of the resurrection, he gained the fullness of all things; and all power was given him both in heaven and on earth.<sup>85</sup>

Christ is the Exemplar; he went from grace to grace until finally after the resurrection he gained the fullness of all things, including the fullness of truth, knowledge, and power.<sup>86</sup>

Whichever account you wish to believe, the Mormon Christ clearly was not truly omnipotent until some point after arriving on planet Earth. Notwithstanding the evidence of a less than

<sup>83</sup> *Book of Mormon*, Mosiah 3:5, 17-18,21; 5:2,15

<sup>84</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 453, italics in original

<sup>85</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 129

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300

omnipotent Jesus *prior* to His bodily resurrection, assurance of a fully omnipotent Christ today, *after* His resurrection, is also less than assured for the following reasons:

## 1. First Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. described qualities of a limited Christ

Smith characterized a Mormon Jesus whose kingdom grows even today, allowing Him to move up the ladder and take the place that the Father once held as the Father Himself moves up the scale:

...when I get my kingdom, I shall present it to my Father, so that he may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory. He will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take his place, and thereby become exalted myself. So that Jesus treads in the tracks of his Father, and inherits what God did before; and God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all his children.<sup>87</sup>

The idea that a truly omnipotent Jesus would gain anything that He did not have or control before is self-defeating. With each step up the progression ladder, the Mormon Christ clearly obtains some measure of exaltation that He didn't previously have.

## 2. The abilities of the Mormon Christ demonstrate a limited deity

If the word *omnipotence* in Mormonism is to have any meaning, then the Christ of Mormonism must not demonstrate any characteristics that contradict this title. Consider some self-defeating examples:

### A. The Mormon Christ cannot be omnipotent because he couldn't prevent a total Church apostasy

The Christ of the Bible clearly and emphatically declared that *"I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* (Matt. 16:18). Yet according to Mormon doctrine, this is a promise that Christ did not keep. The Christ of Mormonism assured His early Church that He had the power to keep them from the enemy and destroyer, yet for some 1700 years—spanning from the second century to the reinstatement of the true Mormon Church in 1820—Hell indeed prevailed since Mormon teaches that all churches slipped into apostasy soon after the death of the original Twelve Apostles. Does this affirm an omnipotent Lord?

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87 Joseph Smith Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, pp. 347-348



The apostles in Jerusalem weren't the only people to receive a broken promise. After His post-crucifixion resurrection and ascension, the Mormon Christ appeared in America in A.D. 34 to build his Church among the early American inhabitants and once again assured them that the very gates of Hell would have no effect upon the church, or those who built upon His rock:

Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 11:39

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

Mormon history records that the survival of Christ's church wasn't assured in America either, for every church on earth had gone apostate soon after Christ's departure. Another promise not kept. Do the facts of Mormon history back up LDS affirmations of a truly omnipotent Christ?

Considering the past track record of the Mormon Christ, all Latter-day Saints should give serious consideration to another important point. In the spring of 1820 the Mormon Christ appeared to Joseph Smith Jr. to restore the apostate church. In June of 1829 this same Jesus offered Smith and two of the three witness's assurance once again that His church was safe from apostasy, and those who built upon His rock would prevail as well:

Doctrine and Covenants 18:5  
(See also D&C 33:13)

Wherefore, if you shall build up my church, upon the foundation of my gospel and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

## Biblical Position

Can these teachings describe a truly omnipotent Jesus? The Christ of the Bible has clearly said that *"Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* (Matt. 16:18). If words mean things, then the omnipotent Christ of the Bible would not allow His New Testament churches to fall into apostasy. The Christ of the Bible added no qualifiers or conditions to the safety of His church, such as "If you shall do such and such..." or "If you will remain faithful..." He simply said that His churches would be safe. The Christ and Father God of the Bible has always ensured though the ages that there would be a faithful representation of His people upon the earth, even if that meant starting over with as few as 8 souls floating in an arc of safety over a submerged earth of wicked people (1 Pet. 3:20)!

If the "rock" that Jesus was talking about was Himself and not Peter, then His churches are eternally safe. Throughout the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the rock.<sup>88</sup> In several other passages Jesus is referred to as the "stone" or "cornerstone."<sup>89</sup> The rock was not Peter, presiding over the early Mormon Church. The rock was not Peter, the first Pope, presiding over the Catholic Church.

It is inconceivable that Jesus would have built His churches at such personal expense and then place the safety and preservation of His people upon the faith and abilities of sinful, fallen man. Satan, the god of this world, could defeat a church built upon such credentials. True Christianity, however, places their faith on the Solid Rock which cannot fail, and rests assured in the blessed promise of God's word, which says:

Ecclesiastes 3:14

I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

### \* \* \* LDS Rebuttal \* \* \*

**LDS Rebuttal:** *"Book of Mormon and D&C citations claim only that IF the people built upon the rock that the gates of hell would not prevail against THEM—not the Church."*

First, this not what the Christ of the Bible has said. His promise was unconditional. But more problematic than that for LDS, Mormon scripture teaches that three Nephite Apostles from America plus the Apostle John from Jerusalem are still living and preaching the gospel until Christ returns.<sup>90</sup> The Book of Mormon says of the Nephites from America that *"Satan could have no power over them, that he could not tempt them..."* (Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 28:39). This is a built-in guarantee that at least 3-4 apostles would build upon the rock and ensure the Church's survival.

To resolve this conflict, some LDS may conclude that the four immortal Apostles must themselves have fallen into apostasy, but this rationale is not only unsupportable by Mormon scripture but would only further illustrate the lack of omnipotence and omniscience of the Mormon Christ. Once again, the *Book of Mormon* says that Satan would have no power over the Apostles and could

<sup>88</sup> Deut. 32:4,15,18,30; 2 Sam. 23:3; Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:6-8

<sup>89</sup> Matt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4,7

<sup>90</sup> *Book of Mormon*, 3 Nephi 28:4-9,38-40; *Doctrine and Covenants* 8:1-3

not tempt them. This is a guarantee in Mormon scripture that a complete falling away of the church is impossible.

## **B. The Mormon Christ cannot be omnipotent because he is unable to create anything from nothing, nor annihilate it**

Mormon scripture describes a parallel account of the original six days of creation in the *Pearl of Great Price*, but like many things in Mormonism, it differs from the Biblical account. Some excerpts follow:

Pearl of Great Price, Abraham 3:14

...We will go down...and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

Abraham 4:1

And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth.

Abraham 4:27

So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.

Note in the first quotation that the availability of building materials was a factor for the creation-limited Mormon Gods—Christ being the principal agent—when deciding where to make the universe and everything in it. In chapters four and five of Abraham we see the action words *organized*, *formed*, and *prepared* no less than 22 times. Conspicuously absent from the creation account is perhaps the most obvious word of all...*created*. The title heading for chapter four mentions the “six days of creation,” however the action words *create* or *creation* are deliberately absent from the scripture text. This careful choice of wording reflects LDS doctrine that limits the Mormon Jesus by teaching that He *cannot* create anything (material or spiritual) from nothing. Consider the following Mormon revelations:

### **(1) A Christ unable to create physical matter from nothing**

Latter-day Saints have, in addition to the biblical Genesis, two modern restorations of ancient scriptural accounts of the Creation...This understanding differs from both scientific and traditional Christian accounts in that it affirms God’s purpose and role, while recognizing creation as organization of preexisting materials, and not as an ex-nihilo event (creation from nothing).<sup>91</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, p. 340

Mormon Apostle Bruce McConkie taught:

To create is to organize. It is an utterly false and uninspired notion to believe that the world or any other thing was created out of nothing or that any created thing can be destroyed in the sense of annihilation. "The elements are eternal."<sup>92</sup>

First Mormon President and Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. said:

Now, I ask all who hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation, say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing? The reason is, that they are unlearned in the things of God...But I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and He is within me, and comprehends more than all the world...Now, the word create came from the word *baurau*, which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos--chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning, and can have no end.<sup>93</sup>

The Christ of Mormonism was limited to working with what he could already scrounge up. On September 6, 1856, Mormon Apostle Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor to President Brigham Young, explained the matter:

...[God] did not create this earth any more than the potter created this pitcher. The potter took the rough material...and made it just in the shape you see it now. It was so with our God. The elements were already created, and he took them and shaped them into an earth; and this is the way that all things are organized.<sup>94</sup>

On April 9, 1852, second Mormon President and Prophet Brigham Young described the initial creation of the world as a farmer arranging the existing raw materials he could find to grow trees and plants of every kind. The creation-limited Christ of Mormonism even had to bring His garden seeds from another world since He could not any growing thing without the seed from a previously growing thing.

They came here, organized the raw material, and arranged in their order the herbs of the field, the trees, the apple, the peach, the plum, the pear, and every other fruit that is desirable and good for man; the seed was brought from another sphere, and planted in this earth.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 169

<sup>93</sup> Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 350-352

<sup>94</sup> Heber C. Kimball, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, p. 219

<sup>95</sup> Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, p. 50

## (2) A Christ unable to create spirits from nothing

A previous article demonstrated that the Mormon Heavenly Father cannot create spirits from nothing, but has to use “self-existent spirit element.” The Mormon Jesus can no more create from nothing than his Father can.

### Biblical Position

Can these facts describe a truly omnipotent Jesus? The implication from Mormon teaching is that both we and ultimately Jesus Himself are at the most basic level a product of the universe as pre-existent matter, rather than the universe being a creative product of Christ. This truly is not the omnipotent Christ of the Christian faith. Consider what the Bible says about the creative work of Christ:

John 1:3

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Christians accept this scripture at face value. *All things* would include any initial or primal creative elements used to make things. There is nothing in the text to restrict the word *made* to merely *form* or *organize*.

Colossians 1:16

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

All things have been created by the Christ of the Bible— both the “visible” (physical matter) and “invisible” (spirit matter). Christ, like the Father described in the previous chapter, can make something *ex nihilo*, meaning to create out of nothing.

### C. The Mormon Christ cannot be omnipotent because he is bound to operate under certain pre-existent eternal laws and principles

Like the Mormon Heavenly Father, the Christ of Mormonism must operate within certain eternal laws and principles which He did not create, did not define, and cannot to this day control. Existing prior to the Mormon Christ were such eternal realities as good, evil, love, hate, choice, will, faith, repentance, progression, and hundreds of other similar verities.

## Biblical Position

Can these facts describe a truly omnipotent Jesus? The implication of LDS teaching on this matter is that instead of certain *universal laws being subject to Christ* because He made them and defined them, the Mormon Christ *is Himself subject to universal law* in the sense that “an untold number of these everlasting laws,” defined His creation abilities. This surely does not describe a truly omnipotent Christ.

While the Jesus of Mormonism was becoming acquainted with what love is, the Bible says the true and everlasting “God is Love” ( 1 Jn. 4:8). While the Christ of Mormonism was memorizing the Periodic Table of Elements and becoming acquainted with the First Law of Thermodynamics, fission and fusion, nuclear physics, electromagnetic force, and the operative laws needed to set Saturn’s 17 moons in orbital motion without collision; the Bible says the true and everlasting Jesus simply “*established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion*” (Jer. 10:12).

There are no eternally worn and tattered textbooks on the eternal bookshelves of the true Jesus explaining trigonometry, physics, or *Quantum Theory 101 for World Builders*, for the Bible declares that in the person of the true and everlasting Jesus “*are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (Col. 2:3).

While the Christ of Mormonism likely needed to graduate the *Galactic Human Genome Research Institute* and become acquainted with double-stranded ribonucleic acid synthesis before He cobbled man together from pre-existent building matter, the true and everlasting God created man from nothing and breathed the breath of life into man’s nostrils for “*in him was life*” (Jn. 1:4).

Simply said, the laws are eternal not because the true Christ had to learn them, but because the eternal God has said they are so.

### **D. The Mormon Christ cannot be omnipotent because he exists with countless other gods**

Like the Mormon Heavenly Father, the Christ of Mormonism shares His existence with countless other true and living Mormon Gods throughout the expanses. This existence of other “omnipotent” Gods is clearly self-defeating if Deity is to be truly omnipotent:

(1) If other “omnipotent” Gods exist, then the Mormon Christ cannot be omnipotent. By definition there can only be one all-powerful Deity. Omnipotence is an unshared quality. A Mormon deity with total power limited only to a certain domains is also not all powerful. What happens if the Mormon Christ is challenged by another older, wiser, and more powerful God?

(2) The Christ of Mormonism is to some extent subject to the rule of His God, the Heavenly Father. However, a truly omnipotent God answers, obeys, or reverences no one.

(3) The Mormon Christ must share space and available resources without the spectrum of eternally existent and finite matter that cannot be created from nothing. Therefore, any other god that has used up available matter for His creations is matter not available for other Mormon gods and it is matter not under the control of the Mormon Christ. A truly omnipotent Christ is not so hindered.

## Biblical Position

The Bible affirms that Christ is omnipotent in the fullest sense of the word and gives no hint that He ever was less than all-powerful at any time:

Matthew 28:18

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Revelation 19:6

...Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

A less than omnipotent Father cannot give the Christ all power if He isn't Himself in full possession of this characteristic of Deity. Job in the Bible said about God "*I know that thou canst do every thing...*" (Job 42:2). The Psalmist said "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. 115:3).

If the word *omnipotent* in Mormonism is to have any meaning, then any god who cannot keep his church from being stolen by the Devil for seventeen centuries cannot be a truly omnipotent Christ. A Mormon Jesus who cannot create anything “from scratch,” nor annihilate it into nonexistence cannot be counted among the ranks of the omnipotent. Any god who has to manage eternally pre-existent laws that he didn't create and that are older than him is not the same omnipotent Lord revealed in the pages of the Bible. Any god who shares time and space

with countless other “omnipotent” gods gone before Him is omnipotent only insofar as no other gods or saviors decide one day to exert their omnipotent powers in opposition to the deity of this world.

In Christ

*Bill Young*

**See Part 2 to continue with distinctives 10-19**