

AND, MAN MADE GOD 1
IN HIS OWN IMAGE 2

THE MISBEGOTTEN MORMON DOCTRINE OF 3
DEITY 4

Bill Grover 5

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CONTENTS

1

| | | |
|------------------------------|----|---|
| Introduction | 1 | 2 |
| God the Father | 17 | 3 |
| God the Son..... | 41 | 4 |
| God the Holy Spirit..... | 79 | 5 |
| God's Unity and Trinity..... | 93 | 6 |

INTRODUCTION

1

Ten Reasons

2

A Mormon lady, whom I'm sure is a good and kind person, has compiled a list of ten reasons telling us why we all should become Mormons.¹

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(1). She says "Jesus Christ is the center of the Mormon faith."

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But He is also the center of the faith of Roman Catholics and the evangelical Protestant denominations. The issue should not be whether the word "Christ" is part of a religion's name or is prominent in a religion's literature but whether one's doctrines faithfully teach the Jesus of the Bible. Calling their faith "The Church of Jesus Christ" is not proof that it teaches the truth about Jesus. Note, for example, that the Mormon religion states that Christ was a "spirit child" in heaven.² But where does the Bible say that? This illustrates that Mormons teach doctrines about our Lord Jesus which are not found in the Bible. Yes, a "Christ" may be the center of the Mormon religion, but the question is, "is that the same Christ of the Scriptures?"

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(2). She says "God still speaks to the world through a prophet."

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But even if there are modern prophets, New Testament prophets very clearly did not control the Christian church's doctrine as Joe Smith does for Mormons. Instead, they predicted

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1 natural events as a famine (Acts 11:28) or Paul's arrest (Acts
2 21:10) or exhorted believers (Acts 15:32). The notion that a
3 modern prophet named Smith should arise to supremely dic-
4 tate tenets which the church must abide by scrapes against
5 the apostolic requirement that prophets are to subordinate
6 themselves to the teachings of Paul. (1 Corinthians 14:37) That
7 is, to the Bible! It was the original apostles who were promised
8 inerrancy (John 16:13) not a 19th century "prophet."

9 (3). She says "The Book of Mormon is more evidence of Christ."

10 But of more evidence of what in particular about Christ? In
11 reviewing the teachings about Jesus in books as 1 & 2 Nephi,
12 Jacob, Mosiah, and Ether, theologically speaking, I do not see
13 helpful additions to our knowledge of the Person of our Lord
14 over what the Bible, itself, teaches. Are we to believe that it
15 was God's will to hide important information from faithful be-
16 lievers for centuries which was only to be later discovered by
17 Joe Smith? I think not!

18 (4). She says, "We have no paid clergy."

19 But why is this thought to be biblical? Has she not read the
20 apostle's teaching in 1 Timothy 5:17, 18?

21 Let the elders who rule well be counted wor-
22 thy of double honor, especially those who la-
23 bor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture
24 says 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads
25 out the grain, and 'the laborer is worthy of his
26 wages.'

(5). She says, “We have the biggest missionary program.” 1
2

And, I can believe that. Just today in my neighborhood I saw 3
two young Mormon missionaries going door to door. But I once 4
asked another of these, “Have you read Joseph Smith’s transla- 5
tion of the Bible? What textual evidence in your view-- like 6
ancient copies of the Bible and so forth--supports Smith’s ad- 7
dition of many verses to the King James Version and his omis- 8
sion of others?” It was clear that the Mormon missionaries had 9
no idea of what I was talking about; they had neither read 10
Joe’s translation nor could they defend their prophet on this 11
matter even if they had been aware of “The Inspired Version.” 12
And, I think that the persons in my neighborhood to whom 13
Mormons witness know even less about the Smith’s teachings. 14
Ignorance is an opening. So, if you are a Mormon reading this, 15
can you justify Joe’s additions and omissions to the Bible in 16
his “Inspired Version” like Genesis 50: 30,33 and his removing 17
Mark 13:33 from his translation? If you cannot, should this not 18
cause you to question your belief in Smith’s capabilities? 19

(6). She says, “We know death does not separate families.” 20

I take this as a reference to the Mormon doctrine of celestial 21
marriage wherein the family unit continues if the married 22
individuals keep all the terms and conditions of the Mormon 23
priesthood; they become married for eternity.³ However, 24
that this is not a teaching found in the Bible is evident by 25
Scriptures as Romans 7:2 where if the spouse of a married 26
person dies, the other is free to remarry. Paul does not quali- 27
fy by adding, “Of course, **if** they are married for eternity, she 28

1 must not remarry.” Note that the inspired apostle nowhere in
2 his writings says anything about the possibility of marriage
3 for eternity, and it is not a tenet affirmed in any other bibli-
4 cal text either. It is purely a Mormon invention. But one will
5 realize the lure of eternal marriage for those thinking about
6 becoming Mormons. Mormons use the love of one’s spouse to
7 get converts.

8 (7). She says, “We have temples.”

9 Okay, but where in the New Testament are there Christian
10 temples as places of worship or places where Christian rites
11 are performed? There are no such Christian temples in the
12 Bible. These temples too are Mormon inventions. But what
13 advantages are temples to Mormons? Why, only in Mormon
14 temples can marriage for eternity or even water baptism take
15 place.⁴ Just imagine, you can only be baptized in a temple.
16 But where is that taught in the Bible? It is not. In the New
17 Testament baptism occurred on places like the road to Gaza
18 (Acts 8:38) or a house (Acts 10:48); it is not said that it occurred
19 in “temples.” So, where is the biblical justification to limit it to
20 taking place in Mormon temples?

21 (8). She says, “We have authority from God through a prophet.”

22 But as noted above, in the Bible the prophet is not given au-
23 thority over the church. That status does belong to Paul (1
24 Corinthians 14:37), and, of course, to other New Testament
25 apostles. And, so it is the teachings of Paul which are to be un-
26 derstood and followed, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words
27 which you have heard from me.” (2 Timothy 1:13). In contrast,

the words of prophets are instead open to critical evaluation. 1
“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.” (1 2
Corinthians 14:29). The sayings of prophets should be judged 3
according to Paul. But while I have read the writings of many 4
Mormons, I have yet to see in them any examples of Joseph 5
Smith’s teachings being judged. This is another example of 6
Mormons not following the Bible. Instead, read the words of a 7
Mormon hymn to the most wonderful Joe: 8

Praise to the man who communed with 9
Jehovah, 10
Jesus anointed that prophet and seer, 11
Blessed to open the last dispensation, 12
Kings shall extoll him and nations revere. 13
Hail to the Prophet ascended to heaven, 14
Traitors and tyrants now fight him in vain 15
Mingling with Gods, he can plan for his 16
brethren, 17
Death cannot conquer the hero again. (Gospel 18
Principles, 358, 359). 19

(9). She says, “We are not perfect but we have the same goals.” 20

And, that is a nice confession. But it is hopeful that not many 21
Mormons have the same goal as did their prophet. Their lustful 22
prophet Joe speaks through God who commands and threat- 23
ens Joe’s wife, Emma, to let Joe have more wives (Doctrines 24
and Covenants 132:52-56.) This despite the Bible’s command 25
that church leaders are to have only one wife (1 Timothy 3:2)! 26
And recall our Savior’s reference to only one woman for one 27
man in marriage (Matthew 19:5). Note again 1 Corinthians 6:10: 28

1 only one wife! But does any Mormon ever criticize prophet Joe
2 for his lust? Not that I can see. If you are a Mormon, explain
3 why you think it is OK for Joe to ignore 1 Timothy 3:2.

4 (10.) She says, "We can have happiness forever."

5 Well, let's qualify that. In my view living eternally outside
6 of God's presence is not a formula for happiness. But acquir-
7 ing eternal life in Mormonism-- living in God's presence for-
8 ever (unlike simple immortality which, even for unbeliev-
9 ers, is free⁵)--requires obedience. And whom must Mormons
10 obey? Plainly, it is the living prophet whose teachings must
11 be followed completely⁶ in Mormonism not the teachings of
12 the Bible. So, if Joe the great and inerrant prophet, demands
13 that Emma receive Joe's new brides, we just must accept that.
14 Ummm yep! God said it! Joe said God said it! And, Joe is nev-
15 er, ever wrong! And, if I don't believe Joe, have I not lost my
16 chance for exaltation? In my view such choices as that are not
17 conducive to happiness.

18 Criterion for Determining Theological Mistakes

19 Every response I've made to the ten reasons advanced by this
20 good Mormon woman contains

21 an allusion to the Bible. Why? It is because the Bible is to be
22 the standard by which we judge

23 religious teaching:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable 1
for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in 2
righteousness, that the man of God might be complete, thor- 3
oughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17 my 4
emphasis) 5

And, one needs to remember that Paul added 6
his teachings to that standard in 2 Timothy 1:13, 7
("Hold fast the pattern of sound words which 8
you have heard from me"), and that the other 9
apostles in John 16:13 would be guided into "all 10
truth" as well. But nowhere in the Bible does it 11
ever foretell the inspiration and authority of 12
Joseph Smith except of course in Joe's incred- 13
ibly vain and silly additions to Genesis 50 in his 14
"inspired" translation.⁷ Joe wrote himself into 15
the Bible! Has there ever been such conceit by 16
any man? And, so when I entitle this book "Mis- 17
takes in the Mormon Doctrine of Deity" I will 18
be evaluating Mormon teaching by the Bible, 19
that is, by the real Bible not Joe's. 20

Importance of the Doctrine of God 21

I have already expressed my disagreement with several 22
Mormon doctrines, and below I will explain more why I dis- 23
agree with their teaching about the Bible. But the doctrine of 24
God must be considered paramount to anyone who holds faith 25
in a supreme Being. Belief in the nature of the one God which 26
includes the divinity of Jesus Christ is what distinguishes 27

1 Christianity from other religions. So, for example, Baptists im-
2 merse but Presbyterians think effusion is fine. Yet, both have
3 very similar views about God. Calvinists believe in limitations
4 on man's will to choose God. But Arminians teach prevenient
5 grace. Yet, both affirm that the three Persons in God exist as
6 one Being in one undivided essence. Pentecostals speak in
7 tongues. But most other Protestants do not. Yet both believe
8 the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comprise one God. It is the doc-
9 trine of God, therefore, which unites evangelicals. Mormons,
10 however, have veered off from that belief, and that is why I
11 write.

12 Reorganized Church

13 I should qualify that the subject of this book is the Latter-Day
14 Saints who under Brigham Young became established in Utah.
15 I do not refer to the "Reorganized Church" with headquarters
16 in Missouri. The latter, while claiming to follow the teachings
17 of Joseph Smith refute some major doctrinal positions held by
18 the LDS regarding God. First, the Reorganized Church denies
19 the plurality of God; it teaches that there is only one God not
20 three or many. Second, unlike the Utah branch which says that
21 God changes as He once was a man, the Reorganized Church
22 denies the mutability of God. Third, while Brigham Young can
23 be understood as teaching that Adam is our God, the Missouri
24 church disputes that as being heresy. These sentiments can be
25 found in Ralston's work "*Fundamental Differences*."⁸

26 Status of Joseph Smith and Mormon Presidents

In my opinion the handicapping disadvantage of Mormon 1
writers in biblical interpretation is that they are constrained 2
to make their hermeneutics concur fully with the teachings 3
of the supposedly inerrant teachings of Joe Smith and, later 4
Mormon prophets and church presidents. The pedestals these 5
“prophets” are placed upon in LDS doctrine reeks of discon- 6
formity to biblical principles. As said above, the Bible knows 7
nothing about New Testament prophets dictating doctrines 8
or rules to the church, and the lists of church special callings 9
or offices as in Ephesians 4:7-12 make no mention of “church 10
presidents.” 11

Yet, despite the inability to garner any support for their sup- 12
posedly inspired prophets and presidents from the Bible, the 13
LDS endow these church leaders with an authority never to 14
be questioned. This is evident, for example, in the following 15
remarkable and wholly unbiblical direct quotation: 16

We have a prophet living on earth today. This 17
prophet is the president of The Church of Jesus 18
Christ of latter- Day Saints. He has the right to 19
revelation for the entire Church. He holds the 20
“keys of the kingdom” meaning that he has the 21
right to control the administration of the ordi- 22
nances (see Matthew 16:19). No person except 23
the chosen prophet and president can receive 24
God’s will for the membership of the Church. 25
We should do those things the prophets tell us 26
to do.⁹ 27

1 So, what is the rationale for clothing Joe with such author-
2 ity? The bold, unmitigated evidence is in The Doctrines
3 and Covenants which Elder-Apostle John Taylor, authored:
4 “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done
5 more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world
6 than any other man that lived in it.”¹⁰ What, more than Moses?
7 Oh yeah! What, more than Paul? Oh yeah! What, more than
8 the apostle John? Oh yeah! Joe is supreme even over the au-
9 thors of the Bible.

10 Therefore, I have no conviction that my logic herein will mo-
11 tivate a devoted Mormon to question his or her faith by my
12 exposition of the Bible. Mormons believe that Joe Smith is
13 greater than even the authors of Scripture. The Mormons and
14 I simply have a different standard for determining truth.

15 **Mormon Lip Service to the Bible**

16 But I am not saying that Mormons entirely disregard the Bible.
17 The King James Version is considered one of the four Mormon
18 scriptures along with the book of Mormon, Doctrines and
19 Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. However, the Bible
20 is not regarded as inerrant. Instead, the wording and content
21 of the Bible is considered unreliable. This is evident in Joe’s
22 adding and eliminating whole verses from the text and chang-
23 ing wording within verses. For example, Joe added verses 33,
24 36 to Genesis 50 in an attempt to authenticate his coming as
25 the prophet. Also, Joe removed 13:32 from Mark likely due to
26 his errant belief that Christ has only one nature which has all
27 knowledge . Further, Joe changes words in verses to force the

Bible to conform to his theology as in his translation of John 4:24. "God is spirit" becomes "God promised His Spirit"! One can view these changes to the Bible in Joe's "Inspired Version."¹¹ In all, Joe made 3,410 changes to the Scriptures!¹² Clearly, in Mormonism, Joseph Smith's opinions are more to be trusted than the Bible itself.

By the way, there is no textual justification for Joe's changing the Bible to suit his needs. The text (i.e., the wording) of the Bible is determined by evaluations of early copies of it in the biblical languages, by early translations, and by citations of it in the church fathers of the first several centuries. But Joe's unrestrained exaltation of himself, a vanity in him obviously adored by the Mormon establishment, enables him to, in his mind, correct the Bible. What counts is what Joe says the Bible says. The entire evidence of the ancient copies, ancient translations, and ancient citations of it must bow to the inerrancy of Joe the prophet. But why? Oh, that's right. Joe said so, and Joe is never ever wrong.

Missing Books of the Bible?

Mormons make much over the fact that books are mentioned in the Bible which are not found in the Bible. These books include "The Book of the Wars of the Lord" (Numbers 21:14), the Book of Jasher" (Joshua 10:13), "The Acts of Solomon" (1 Kings 11:41), and the Book of Iddo the Seer" (2 Chronicles 12:15). Mormons call such books "Lost Scripture."¹³ But wait! Scripture? Where does the Bible call Iddo or Jasher "Scripture"? Where are the Acts of Solomon" or "The Book of the Wars of the Lord"

1 even cited in the prophets of Israel? Where does Matthew or
2 John or Paul tell their readers to base their beliefs on such
3 books?

4 So, why would Mormons wish to claim that there are books
5 lost from the Bible? I suspect the motive to be to induce one
6 to be open to the possibility that the book of Mormon and the
7 Pearl of Great Price are additional scripture beyond the Bible.
8 But, should we think, for example, that because Paul refer-
9 enced a Greek poet (Acts 17:28), that the apostle, therefore,
10 understood this poet's writings to be scripture? Likewise, the
11 Bible can mention various books known to its original read-
12 ers, but that is no evidence that those books are inspired scrip-
13 ture. Thus, these books mentioned in the Bible do not provide
14 Mormons with any evidence to justify their belief that their
15 other sacred books are scripture.

16 **Doctrines Removed From the Bible?**

17 Another ploy to downgrade the authority of the Bible is the
18 Mormon claim that "many important points touching the sal-
19 vation of men, had been taken from the Bible or lost before it
20 was compiled."¹⁴ As JF Smith avers, "The Bible as we have it to-
21 day is very deficient."¹⁵ But again, where is the evidence for this
22 claim? There is none. Examine the ancient copies and transla-
23 tions of the Bible; these show that the Mormon assertion is
24 fallacious and ridiculous. But the Mormons need to aver this
25 in order to justify adding many unbiblical doctrines to their
26 faith. If you are a Mormon, try to give convincing proof that
27 "many important points touching the salvation of men" were

removed from the Bible. That is, provide more proof than Joe 1
asserting that. 2

Review questions on Introduction 3

1. What are three sources which show that Smith's "Inspired 4
Version" of the Bible contains mistakes? 5
2. Compare Joe Smith's role in Mormonism with the role of 6
New Testament prophets. 7
3. How does Roman 7:2 refute a Mormon doctrine? 8
4. How are locations in the Bible where baptism was done 9
contrary to Mormon practice? 10
5. Why is the Mormon argument over "lost books" of the Bible 11
not convincing? 12
6. How does 1 Timothy 3:2 condemn Joe Smith? 13
7. What Mormon doctrine does 1 Corinthians 14:37 refute? 14
8. How does the Mormon "Reorganized Church" of Missouri 15
disagree with the LDS of Utah over the doctrine of God? 16
9. What is the significance of the number 3,410? 17
10. Name some doctrines over which evangelicals differ and 18
tell how evangelicals nevertheless, agree on the doctrine of 19
God. 20

End notes for Introduction

1

2 1. ldsliving.com/10-reasons-you-should-be-a-Mormon. (ac-
3 cessed April 2021)

4 2. Bruce R. McConkie. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*
5 vol 3. (Salt Lake: Bookcraft,1973), 25.

6 3. Bruce R. McConkie. *Mormon Doctrine*. (Salt Lake: Bookcraft,
7 1879), 117.

8 4. *Gospel Principles* (Salt Lake: published by the Church of
9 Jesus Christ of Latter- Day Saints, 1997), 256.

10 5. McConkie. *Mormon Doctrine*, 623, 624.

11 6. *Gospel Principles*, 49.

12 7. Genesis 50:30, 33 in Joseph Smith's New Translation of the
13 Bible. These verses say that a great prophet will come whose
14 name is Joseph and whose father's name is Joseph.

15 8. Russel F. Ralston. *Fundamental Differences*. (Independence,
16 Mo.;; Herald House, 1960), 18-86.

17 9. *Gospel Principles*, 49.

18 10. *Doctrines and Covenants* 135:3.

19 11. *Joseph Smith's New Translation* (Independence, Mo.: Herald
20 House, 1970), 115, 451.

12. David J. Ridges. *Mormon Beliefs and Doctrines Made Easier*. 1
(Springville, Utah, 2007), 253. 2
13. Richard R. Hopkins. *Biblical Mormonism*. (Bountiful, Utah: 3
Horizon Publishers, 1994), 249. 4
14. Robert L. Millet, ed. *LDS Beliefs* (Salt Lake: Deseret, 2011), 5
68. 6
15. Joseph Fielding Smith. *The Way to Perfection*. (Salt Lake: 7
Deseret, 1956), 55. 8

GOD THE FATHER

The Father only is *Elohim*?

Mormon theology teaches that while some exalted humans can become Gods, and being Gods in Mormonism means having “all the power in heaven and on earth,”¹ there are only three Gods in the “Godhead”: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost who are distinct, separate Beings.² I think that one of the most unprovable assertions of Mormonism, biblically speaking, is that the name *Elohim* in the Old Testament refers in particular to the Father whereas the name *Jehovah* is that of the Son. As McConkie insists, “*Elohim* is the exalted name-title of God the eternal Father.” And, why must we believe that? Oh, because of a “Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and the Twelve.”³ And, as we’ve seen above, these are never to be questioned. Mormon prophets, the reader will remember, are never ever to be doubted.

However, recalling that the New King James Version translates *Elohim* as “God” and *Jehovah* as “LORD,” it does not require much reading in the Old Testament to discern that the two are one and the same Being:

1 The LORD God made the earth” (Genesis 2:4);
2 “sacrifice unto the LORD our God” (Exodus 5:3);
3 “I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 18:4); “The
4 LORD my God” (Numbers 23:18); “The LORD
5 He is God” (Deuteronomy 4:35); “the name of
6 the LORD thy God” (Joshua 9:9); “O LORD God
7 remember me” (Judges 16:28)and so forth all
8 through the Old Testament!

9 In the Bible *Jehovah* (LORD) is *Elohim*! Rejecting teaching
10 is a solid example of how Mormons deceive their people by
11 misrepresenting the clear doctrines of the Scriptures. The
12 Mormon goal is to argue for there being multiple Gods by un-
13 biblically distinguishing between *Elohim* and *Jehovah*. Again,
14 I do not imagine that my lucid data will convince any Mormon
15 to question his or her “inerrant” prophets. As soon as one is
16 convinced that Mormon prophets cannot be challenged, then
17 it makes no difference what the Bible, itself, actually says.

18 **The Father is Spatial?**

19 Look at what the Bible teaches about the divine omnipresence.
20 “Whither shall I flee from Thy, presence” (Psalm 139:7). “Am I a
21 God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off?” (Jeremiah
22 23:23). “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” (Jeremiah 23:24) “The
23 heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee.
24 (1 Kings 8:27) In Him we live and move and have our being.”
25 (Acts 17:28) “That He might fill all things.” (Ephesians 4:10). The
26 reader will please note that these Scriptures do not say that it
27 is merely God’s power or influence which is everywhere. The

Bible says that God, Himself, is everywhere. How else could 1
He, Himself, fill heaven and earth? 2

By the way, the Hebrew word for “fill” (*mala*) as in Jeremiah 3
23:24 is used to indicate that the thing itself is filling not its 4
power or influence: Genesis 42:25, “fill their sacks with grain.” 5
The grain itself is filling. 1 Kings 18:33, “fill four water pots 6
with water.” The water itself is filling. Proverbs 1:13, “fill our 7
houses with spoil.” The spoil itself is filling. In these examples, 8
it is the thing itself that is filling not its influence. So, when 9
Jeremiah 23:23 states that God fills (*mala*) heaven and earth, I 10
take this to mean that God, Himself, is filling—not merely His 11
power. So, why would Mormons deny this? Oh, that’s right, 12
Joe Smith said that God is spatial as He is a big man. And, Joe 13
is never, ever wrong! 14

One should also remember our Lord’s own promise, “I am with 15
you always.” How could this be true were He not omnipres- 16
ent? Jesus’ disciples today are found everywhere on earth. 17
And, Jesus is with each one of them wherever they are. So, 18
how could our Lord in His divine nature be spatially limited? 19
As one so much greater in erudition and accomplishment than 20
I, by the grace given him, once wrote, “Jesus Christ came down 21
to earth without ever leaving heaven.” 22

And this omnipresence is true of the Father as well. For the 23
inspired John has recorded that the Father, Himself, will make 24
His home with us. (John 14:23). Believers are the temples of 25
God. (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17) But how could God be spatially 26
confined to one place, if He is with and dwells in believers all 27
over the world? 28

1 And, that is why I am dissatisfied with Ludlow's explanation.
2 Ludlow opines,

3 Since Latter-day Saints believe that God the Fa-
4 ther and God the Son are gloriously embodied
5 Persons, they do not believe them to be bodily
6 omnipresent. They do affirm rather that their
7 power is immanent "in all and through all
8 things." ⁴

9 But why should Ludlow teach this depleted dogma of God's
10 perfection? Ah yes, it is because his inerrant prophet Joe has
11 asserted that "God ...is an exalted man."⁵ So, if God the Father is
12 a man, He must not be omnipresent. Likewise, most wonder-
13 ful prophet number two, Brigham Young, declared that God
14 the Father has a body with parts the same as you or I have."⁶
15 So, one might ask, how do Mormons explain Numbers 23:19,
16 "God is not a man." Oh, that verse must mean that God is not
17 an earthly man because He is exalted. But the verse does not
18 include such a qualification does it! The Bible says that God is
19 not a man, but Mormon prophets say God is a man. Which will
20 you believe?

21 But, wait Bill, how do you explain verses which describe God
22 as having body parts?

23 **The Father has body parts?**

24 God "makes the clouds His chariot." (Psalm 104:3) So how
25 should we interpret this verse? Should we envision that our

God while seated on a cloud is floating around the world in 1
the sky sort of like Santa Clause in his chariot who is pulled by 2
reindeer all through the atmosphere? Shall we imagine a God 3
with all of our body parts-- remember Young above-- luxuri- 4
ously reclining on white clouds while calmly drifting around 5
the world and thus keeping track of His creatures? I think that 6
most of us would rather understand Psalm 104:3 as indicating 7
the greatness of God (see verse 1:“O Lord my God, you are very 8
great”) not the humanness of God which is riding about from 9
place to place. But in Mormonism, the distinction between 10
what is human and what is God is blurred. “Gods and humans 11
are the same species of being, but at different stages of devel- 12
opment.” (Thus says Robinson in Ludlow, 197) 13

So, in my opinion, Psalm 104:3 is instead to be understood as 14
an anthropomorphism which is a literary figure wherein hu- 15
man qualities to are ascribed to God. And, when Exodus 15:8 16
states, “With the blast of your nostrils the waters were gath- 17
ered together,” I doubt that Moses wishes his readers to picture 18
God bending over and vigorously blowing immense, power- 19
ful winds though His nose. It is not proof that God has a nose. 20
And when Exodus 9:3 says “the hand of the LORD will be on 21
your cattle,” I do not believe that God wanders around touch- 22
ing every person’s cows. It is not proof that God has hands. 23
And when Isaiah 66:1 describes the earth as God’s footstool, 24
that is not proof either that God has gigantic feet. But how can 25
we understand God being omnipresent if He is visible? 26

27

The Father is visible?

1

2 The Bible says that God has been seen. For example, Jacob is
3 said to have wrestled with God “until the breaking of day” and
4 God could not prevail over Jacob. Jacob was stronger or more
5 skilled? Perhaps Jacob was highly trained in mixed martial
6 arts? Or, did the omnipotent God perhaps get too tired to con-
7 tinue? Afterward, Jacob said, “I have seen God face to face.”
8 (Genesis 32) The description of this event has an unusual fea-
9 ture. God could not out wrestle Jacob?! This is surprising given
10 that God is thought to possess unlimited power. “God has all
11 power.” (Ether 3:4) Could it be that this appearance of God in
12 weakness was not God as He really is?

13 Another who is said to have seen God is Moses, “The LORD
14 spoke to Moses face to face.” (Exodus 33:11) But then in the very
15 same Book and in the very same chapter, God states to Moses,
16 “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me and live.”
17 (33:20). Instead, verse 23 tells us that Moses saw God’s “back.”
18 It seems that in some manner God has been visible, but could
19 such occurrences be best understood as human-like personi-
20 fications of God not God as He really is. Therefore, given such
21 confusing narratives, I search for some definitive word about
22 whether God in His very Person and true nature can be seen.
23 It is not my belief that the Bible contradicts itself.

24 And I believe I have found it in 1 John 4:12, “No one has seen
25 God at any time.” This statement is by an apostle who was
26 said by our Lord to be one of the recipients of “all truth.” (John
27 16:13) John would surely have been aware of the several Old
28 Testament references which in some manner depict seeing

God. So, I think I am correct that here the apostle means seeing God as God really is. 1 John 4:12 seems to be uncompromising in its exclusion of anyone seeing God truly as He is. But Mormons have an answer to this text too.

You see, the Bible is mistranslated here! Joe the inerrant prophet, who by the way, was no expert in the biblical languages, corrects the Bible by adding to this verse, saying, under inspiration you understand, no one has seen God “except them who believe.”(my emphasis) The reader of my small book should be alerted to the fact that there is no evidence that John wrote the latter part of this verse as Joe’s “Inspired Version” has it. Our Lord Jesus promised that John would receive “all truth,” yet Joe the inerrant prophet feels qualified to edit John’s writing. Joe is greater than John, you see! This evidences that Mormons try to prove their doctrine by changing the Bible.

Of course, there are other related texts too. John 6:46, “Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.” But who is the One from God who has seen the Father? As our blessed Lord proclaimed of Himself, “I came forth from the Father” (John 16:48). He is the only one who has seen the Father!

In fact, the Bible elsewhere says Jesus Christ is the only one ever to have seen the Father, “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:18) How many have seen the Father? Many? Nope! A few? Nope! Joe Smith? Nope! But Joe’s “corrected” translation (Joseph Smith’s New Translation

1 of the Bible⁷) fixes John 1:18 to read, “no man hath seen God at
2 any time, except he hath borne record of the Son.” Mormons
3 change the writings of the Bible’s teaching in order to sub-
4 stantiate Joe Smith’s blatant, delusional tenets. How can any-
5 one not see the so very obvious Mormon deception?

6 **The Father is the Supreme God?**

7 Robinson, a Mormon, writes,

8 The divine Son and the Holy Spirit are subordi-
9 nate to the Father and dependent on their one-
10 ness with Him for their divinity. They cannot
11 stand alone; they are God only as they are one
12 with the Father. If their oneness with the Fa-
13 ther should cease, so would their divinity.⁸

14 By “oneness,” Robinson means not a unity in Being as he de-
15 clares, the divine Persons are “separate Beings with separate
16 and individual bodies.”⁹ It is true that some evangelicals sub-
17 scribe to the tenet of the Son’s eternal role subordination.¹⁰
18 However, no evangelical believes that the Son or the Holy
19 Spirit is of a difference essence than the Father.

20 Yes, there were those in the formative centuries of the church
21 who subordinated the Son’s Person to that of the Father due
22 to believing that the Father provided His divine nature to the
23 Son. A case in point is Origen of the third century who expos-
24 its the Greek of John 1:1 in this manner:

He (John) adds the article when the name of 1
 God refers to the uncreated cause of all things, 2
 and omits it when the Logos is named God. 3
 (Christ) is made God by His participation in His 4
 (the Father's) divinity...not possessing that in 5
 Himself, but by His being with the Father. (Ori- 6
 gin's Commentary on John II:2) 7

And so, yes, in the writing of this third century believer we 8
 have one whose doctrine appears to correlate in some way to 9
 Mormon Christology that the Son is somehow lesser in deity 10
 than is the Father because, Origen notes, the Greek article does 11
 not modify Christ in John 1:1. As I will later show, though, 12
 unlike Mormon doctrine, Origen insists that the Father and Son 13
 share the identical essence. But Origen believed that the Father 14
 was the Originator of the Son's divine essence. However, it is 15
 hermeneutically unfortunate that Origen bases his doctrine 16
 on the Son's receiving divinity on the absence of an article (i.e., 17
 "the") for in the very same book (John 20:28) the Son is called 18
 "the God of me" with the article (*ho theos mou*) and so it is with 19
 Paul (Titus 2:13). Moreover, even in John chapter one when 20
 "God" clearly refers to the Father, the noun repeatedly occurs 21
 without the article (1:6, 12, 18). 22

There are, of course, New Testament references which say 23
 that the Father is greater in some manner than the Son. But, in 24
 my view, these concern the relationships of God to creation— 25
 where each divine Person has chosen to act in unique ways— 26
 or in addition, these often relate to the human nature of Jesus 27
 not to His divinity. One of such is John 14:28, "My Father is 28

1 greater than I.” However, could we please remember that this
2 saying followed the divine Son “becoming flesh” (John 1:14).
3 It followed the eternal Christ assuming the nature of a bond
4 servant (Philippians 2:7), and it was in that nature that He
5 began to be obedient (2:8). It followed Jesus being made like
6 His brethren (Hebrews 2:9, 14). It is in Christ’s human nature,
7 therefore, that He is less than the Father in authority, I con-
8 tend, not in His deity. The ancient Greeks believed in ranking
9 their gods, and so do the modern Mormons.

10 So, in my view, as the Son as God and the Father are equal
11 in essence, how then can the Son’s obedience on earth to the
12 Father be explained? In my opinion, clearly, the obedience of
13 Jesus to God the Father occurs in Christ’s human nature only.
14 That Christ at times experienced through His humanity only
15 is indicated by His, for example, falling asleep in a boat (Mark
16 4:38) and dying. I don’t think God takes naps or dies. Therefore,
17 I think texts like John 8:29, “I always do those things that
18 please Him,” have Jesus’ human nature only as their referent
19 not His divine nature which is “equal to God” (Philippians 2:6).

20 That the New Testament alludes to the acts of Jesus, at times,
21 distinctly as one or the other nature in Christ is clearly set
22 forth further in Jesus being tired in John 4:6 but holding the
23 universe together in Colossians 1:17 or knowing everything
24 (John 16:30, 21:17) but not knowing somethings (Mark 13:32).
25 In other words, the one Person of Christ specifically experi-
26 ences and acts, at times, through just one of His natures.

27 And, in my opinion, it is in His humanity, which He assumed
28 from being born of Mary, that our Lord is role subordinate to

the Father. Mormons cannot countenance this doctrine as it 1
is contrary to their belief that Gods and humans are the same 2
race. So, they, instead teach that Christ has only one nature 3
and in that one nature He is less in essence than the Father. 4
In the fourth century the framers of the Nicene creed instead 5
enunciated the position that Son of God is “one essence (sub- 6
stance) with the Father.” That, universally, is now the evan- 7
gelical view. But is it biblical? 8

The Mormon position that the Father is different in Being 9
from the Son requires that the Son who is *Jehovah* in Mormon 10
thought is a second God besides the Father. But were the Bible 11
to teach that *Jehovah* is the only God, then Mormon theology 12
is incorrect. And, the Bible certainly does conclusively pro- 13
claim that only *Jehovah* is God: 14

Thus says the LORD (i.e., *Jehovah*) Besides Me 15
there is no God. (Isaiah 44:6) I am the LORD, and 16
there is no other; There is no God besides Me. 17
(Isaiah 45:6) (my emphasis) 18

The Mormon doctrine of God thus is shown to be contrary to 19
the teachings of Isaiah. Once again, the Bible refutes Mormon 20
doctrine. But if you are a Mormon, please prove from the Bible 21
that *Jehovah* is a different God than *Elohim*. One cannot prove 22
that, and the consequence is that Mormonism teaches an un- 23
biblical doctrine of God. 24

25

1 **The Father is not eternal as He has a Father?**

2 McConkie bloviates that his precious Joe the prophet rea-
3 soned that “God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father.”¹¹ Can
4 this teaching be reconciled with the Bible? Does the Bible
5 anywhere say that God our Father had a Father or that Christ
6 has a grandpappy God? A Mormon may respond that it mat-
7 ters not whether the Bible teaches that because the inerrant
8 prophet Joe taught it. And, ummm we know Joe is a prophet
9 because the 30th and 33rd verses, which Joe in his “inspired”
10 translation, without evidence of their originality, inserted into
11 Genesis 50 say he is a prophet. But should one instead rather
12 observe the Bible’s teaching about God, let’s note the words
13 of the Psalmist, “From everlasting to everlasting You are God.”
14 (90:2) But if God (*Elohim*) has always been God, how could He
15 have been sired by a Father?

16 **The Father is mutable?**

17 Evangelicals, therefore on the basis of Psalm 90:2 and also on
18 other biblical evidence (e.g., Isaiah 41:4 and Revelation 1:8)
19 affirm that God eternally is God. He has always been God.
20 Therefore, He does not change. Mormons, however, assert
21 that God does change. Millet, for example, informs his readers
22 that the evangelical doctrine of God’s immutability is “adapted
23 from Greek thought (my emphasis).”¹² Now, I’ve just provided
24 immediately above, verses in the Bible which say that God
25 eternally has been God. And, I now offer more general biblical
26 proof that God does not change:

Of old You laid the foundation of the earth. and 1
the heavens are the work of Your hand. ...and 2
they will be changed. But You are the same. 3
(Psalm 102: 25, 26, 27) “For I am the LORD, I do 4
not change. (Malachi 3:6) 5

Let the reader note that these biblical texts regarding God’s 6
immutability are from Hebrew Scriptures not, as Millet avows, 7
from the Greeks. 8

However, since Millet introduces the topic of supposed Greek 9
influence on evangelical theology, let’s compare ancient 10
Greek religion with modern Mormonism. As an aid for my do- 11
ing this, I will reference Richard Buxton, Professor of Greek 12
language and literature at the University of Bristol.¹³Let’s note 13
some points Buxton makes about the gods of the Greeks: 14

1. The gods of Greece were often portrayed as human like in 15
form as is demonstrated, for example, in the sculpture of Zeus 16
and Hera circa 470 B.C. located in Selinus, Italy.¹⁴ 17

And, in Mormonism, the divinities in the Godhead are also 18
human. God is simply an exalted man. 19

2. There was a plurality of deities in the Greek pantheon, in- 20
cluding among others, such as Poseidon, Demeter, Athene, 21
and Ares.¹⁵ 22

And, in Mormonism also there is also more than one God. As 23
the prophet Brigham Young expressed in his Discourses (7:33), 24
“How many Gods (his capital) there are, I do not know.” 25

1 3. To the Greeks, Zeus was the father of both gods and mortals.¹⁶

2 And, in Mormonism God the Father begets all humans as
3 “spirit children” who then may become Gods themselves. By
4 the way, again, Mormons are not adverse about capitalizing
5 the “G” in Gods when the noun has humans as its reference.
6 As evidence note Joe Smith in the King Follet Discourse, “You
7 have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves.” So, if Joe tells
8 others to learn to be Gods, one can assume that Joe considered
9 himself to be, or soon to be, a God!

10 4. To the Greeks, gods had sex with mortals. Apollo, for exam-
11 ple, bargained with Cassandra for her virginity.¹⁷

12 And, in Mormonism, as discussed below, God the Father took
13 Mary as His wife.

14 5. To the Greeks, gods can change. There is the story, for ex-
15 ample, of Ouranos undergoing bodily changes by having his
16 private parts severed.¹⁸

17 And, in Mormonism, as seen above, God the Father also
18 changes “growing up” from “spirit child” to become the chief
19 Member of the Godhead.

20 6. To the Greeks, gods have not existed from eternity. Even
21 Zeus was conceived by two titans.¹⁹

22 And, in Mormonism the Gods are also not eternal as they too
23 originated by being born as “spirit children.” Even God the
24 Father, as shown above, had a Father!

7. To the Greeks, gods are spatially confined in one location at a time. So, Typhon who warred with Zeus, dwelt in a cave in southern Asia Minor.²⁰

And, in Mormonism too the Gods are not omnipresent.

8. The Greeks gods sometimes had wives. Hera, recall, was married to Zeus.²¹

And, in Mormonism God the Father, as discussed below, has His own wife or wives.

9. To the Greeks, gods are subordinate to other gods. Even Zeus' sovereignty was limited by the influences of other divinities.²²

And, in Mormonism, God the Son is subordinate to God the Father. God is subject to God. Imagine that!

10. To the Greeks, the society of the gods were like those of human beings. Zeus was the head of the family of the Olympians.²³

And, according to Mormonism, in heaven, exalted humans who have become Gods exist in family units as does God the Father, Hiumself.

Clearly, one can see that the deities of Mormonism bear marked similarities to the gods of ancient Greece. Perhaps those, as Millet, who live in glass houses should not throw stones!

The Father has a God-wife?

1

2 In contradiction to any biblical statement or early Christian
3 church tenet which I've encountered, including those of the
4 first century apostolic fathers, thought to have been disciples
5 of the apostles, like Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp,
6 I never have come across anything remotely like the absurd
7 Mormon fiction that God the Father has a God-wife or wives.
8 Yet, that God the Father has wives is taught by Joe the "proph-
9 et's" designated teacher of Mormonism, Apostle Orson Pratt.
10 But Pratt denies that these God-wives should be worshipped:

11

But if we have a heavenly Mother as well as a
heavenly Father, is it not right that we should
worship the Mother of our spirits as well as the
Father? No; for the Father of our spirits is the
head of His household, and His wives and chil-
dren are required to yield the most perfect obe-
dience to their great Head.²⁴

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18 Nor is this unbiblical teaching of a Mother God confined to
19 just one Mormon. For Millet cites an LDS church president
20 who asserts,

21

Man, as a spirit was begotten and born of heav-
enly parents...all men and women are in the
similitude of the universal Father and Moth-
er, and are literally the sons and daughters of
deity.²⁵

22

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So, do you know how many times the Bible says that we were spirit children of a Mother God? Is it lots of times? Nope! OK, is it a few times? Nope! Just once then? Nope. The Bible never says that we have a Mother God. It is a pure Mormon fabrication. Need I give any further evidence that the Mormon doctrine of deity errs grievously? Or, if you are a Mormon, please refer me to where the Bible anywhere says there is a “Mother God.”

Yet, the teaching of our being heavenly “spirit children” before acquiring bodies permeates Mormon literature. *Doctrines of the Gospel*, for example teaches that we were spirit beings in heaven birthed by exalted parents and we dwelt for ages in that pre-mortal state. There we developed characteristics and became, or did not become worthy. We lived in a perfectly arranged society in heaven Eventually we received bodies in order to attain the goal of perfection.²⁶

The Father became Husband to Mary?

Another unique teaching of Mormonism is that God the Father became husband to Mary and sired in her Jesus our Savior. Turning again to Orson Pratt, who was an original member of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, we read this unholy verbiage:

Therefore, the Father and Mother of Jesus, according to the flesh, must have been associated together in the capacity of Husband and Wife... God having created all men and women, had

1 the most perfect right to do with His own cre-
2 ation, according to His holy will and pleasure:
3 He had the lawful right to over shadow the
4 Virgin Mary in the capacity of a husband, and
5 beget a Son, although she was espoused to an-
6 other...Whether God the Father gave Mary to
7 Joseph for a time only, or instead for time and
8 eternity, we are not informed. It may be that He
9 intended after the resurrection to again take
10 her as a one of His own wives²⁷

11 This is just amazing theology: Mary may have been passed
12 from Joseph to God, then back to Joseph, then, back again, to
13 God? This is ridiculous and is sacrilege. But lest we think that
14 Pratt's heresy of God having a sexual relationship with Mary
15 goes unrepeated in Mormon literature, observe that McConkie
16 declares that "Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in
17 the same way (my emphasis) that mortal men are begotten by
18 mortal fathers."²⁸ In the same way!! The Mormon misconcep-
19 tion that God is a man nowhere is more explicitly shown than
20 in the Mormons teaching that God the Father had celestial sex
21 with Mary. Mormons set no boundaries in their attempt to
22 make God like man. They do create God in their own image.

23 **The Father is Adam?**

24 Mormons have invented a number of unbiblical teachings
25 about Adam. Adam administered the principles and ordinanc-
26 es of the Gospel and he is Michael the Arch Angel. He par-
27 ticipates in governing the kingdom of heaven. He may have

restored the power of immortality to his descendants.²⁹ None 1
of this, of course, is in or even hinted at in the Bible. But does 2
this matter to Mormons? Not at all! Adam is the presiding high 3
priest (under Christ) over the earth for all time. Adam received 4
a state and power second only to Christ. He is the head of all 5
gospel dispensations.³⁰ None of this, of course is in or is even 6
hinted at in the Bible. But does this matter to Mormons? Not 7
at all! Adam participated in the creation of the world as well.³¹ 8
That also is not in the Bible. Does this matter to Mormons? Not 9
at all! 10

However, these assertions above about Adam pale before 11
Brigham Young's "inspired" teaching. Let's recall that in 12
Mormon belief the president of the LDS "has the right to rev- 13
elation for the entire church...and, will never be allowed to 14
lead the church astray."³² But I refer the reader to John David 15
Berger's "The Adam-God Doctrine."³³ Here one is provided with 16
indisputable proof that Young taught and was understood by 17
his Mormon hearers as teaching that Adam is God. 18

In April of 1852 Young speaking to a session of the general 19
conference avowed that "Adam is our Father and God, and 20
the only God with whom we have to do." Both Hosea Stout 21
and Samuel H. Rodgers who heard Young that day, acknowl- 22
edged in writing that the (infallible) LDS president asserted 23
that doctrine. In 1870 Elder George Cannon concurred with 24
Young saying that "Father Adam is our God and Father." Also, 25
in 1870 did apostle Orson Hyde. It is true that today Mormons 26
try to argue that Young's words are misrepresented or are not 27
LDS doctrine. But, Young is deemed a prophet-president, and 28

- 1 Mormons, as said above, claim those like Young have the pow-
- 2 er of revelation for the entire church!

3 **Review questions for chapter 1**

- 4 1. Define anthropomorphism and tell how it is demonstrated
- 5 in Exodus 9:3.
- 6 2. Explain John 6:46.
- 7 3. What Mormon doctrine does 1 Kings 8:27 refute?
- 8 4. Tell three ways the gods of ancient Greece were like the
- 9 Mormon Gods.
- 10 5. How does the Bible show that *Elohim* is the same God as
- 11 *Jehovah*?
- 12 6. What have Mormons taught about Mary's "marriages"?
- 13 7. How does the Old Testament usage of the Hebrew word
- 14 *mala* contradict Mormon theology?
- 15 8. What Mormon teaching does Malachi 3:6 refute?
- 16 9. How did Joe Smith change 1 John 4:12?
- 17 10. In your opinion, what are the three most fallacious Mormon
- 18 doctrines about Adam?

End Notes on Chapter 1

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9

GOD THE SON

2

The Son has a different essence than the Father?

3

While evangelicals maintain that the unity in essence among the Persons in the Trinity is due to These Persons comprising only one God, Mormons deny that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are essentially the same Being. This LDS doctrine is necessary for their teaching of the plurality of Gods. Mormons argue that evangelicals are wrong to accept the positions of fourth and fifth century Christian belief statements (Nicene and Chalcedon) on the unity of God's being.

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Robinson explains why he and other Mormons reject the doctrine that the Persons in the Godhead are the same in essence or substance. It is because the Nicene and Chalcedon creeds which teach that doctrine are perversions, he claims, of a more primitive Christian teaching.¹ These creeds, Robinson claims, do not concur with the earlier Christian doctrine of the church which distinguishes between the essence of the Father and the essence of the Son. The Nicene Creed of 381 states that Christ is "one substance (essence) with the Father"

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1 and the Chalcedon Creed in 451 states that Christ is “consub-
2 stantial (coessential) with the Father.”² But this is rejected by
3 Mormons.

4 But do these creedal statements contradict the earlier teach-
5 ing of the Church in regard to the unity of substance existing
6 between the divine Persons? As Mormons insist that they do,
7 let Mormon apologist provide excerpts from the early church
8 fathers which teach that the divine essence of the Son differs
9 from the Father’s essence. One who has read the ante-Nicene
10 church fathers, i.e., those writing before creed of Nicaea, will be
11 aware that up to near 200 A.D. the issue of there being a com-
12 mon substance among the divine Persons was not broached in
13 their writings. Read Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Justin Martyr,
14 Irenaeus and others to see that omission. But when the na-
15 ture between the Son and the Father began to be seriously
16 discussed, the church fathers Athenagorus, Tertullian, and
17 then Origen addressed it. And, these all wrote long before the
18 Nicene Creed was framed. Let’s note what each taught about
19 the unity between the Father and the Son.

20 As I briefly comment on these three early Christians, I’d like
21 to accomplish two objectives. I wish to show that these three,
22 pre-Nicene Christian theologians taught that there is but one
23 essence between the Father and the Son as They are one and
24 the same God. And I also want to show that these early believ-
25 ers did not teach some other doctrines about God and Christ
26 which Mormonism enthusiastically proclaim today. The
27 Mormon gods clearly are not a restoration of early Christian
28 teaching.

Athenagoras in his attempt to demonstrate that Christians are not atheists had a strong motive to define the Christian God. He who died in 177 A.D. barely scratched the surface of God's Trinity in unity, but he wrote in stark contradiction to the fundamental Mormon doctrine of there being many Gods. In an age when many deities were worshipped, Athenagoras taught that there is only one God.³ (*That contradicts Mormonism!) But as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each is God⁴, yet since there is only one God, there is a unity between the Three.⁵ This church father died two hundred years before the Nicene Creed was written. But his doctrine of the three Persons in one God is certainly not in conflict with it!

Now let's look at Tertullian who died in 220 A.D. many decades before the Nicene Creed was composed. Tertullian's lengthy *Prescription Against Heretics*, which includes condemnations of modern Mormon unbiblical tenets about God, affirms the unity between the Father and the Son and that unity is evidenced by his declaration that there is "one only God" (*This contradicts Mormonism) not three or many.⁶ Tertullian, in fact, refutes common arguments used today by Mormons in their attempt to disprove the oneness of God. He rejects that "He judges among the gods" (Psalm 82:1) and "Ye are gods" (Psalm 82:6) are evidences of a plurality of Gods.⁷ (*These opinions contradict Mormonism)

And this one God, Tertullian insists, "has no human characteristics."⁸ (*This contradicts Mormonism.) God is not physical.⁹ (*This contradicts Mormonism.) The Persons who compose the Trinity furthermore, are one in substance and power.¹⁰

1 Tertullian repeatedly states that the Son and Spirit are of “the
2 Father’s own substance.”¹¹ Clearly, Tertullian’s teaching, there-
3 fore, is not contrary to the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon
4 which proclaim belief in the unity of essence between the Son
5 and the Father. Further, this ancient Christian also taught that
6 Christ exists in two natures and that each nature retains its
7 own properties preserved.¹² (*This contradicts Mormonism.)

8 Lastly, consider Origen who died in 254 long before the Nicene
9 Creed was written. Origen in his Preface to *De Principiis* ex-
10 plains that he writes in an attempt to instruct those who held
11 incorrect views about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. ¹³ He
12 states that there is only one God not three or many.¹⁴ (*This
13 contradicts Mormonism) Furthermore, Origen states that God
14 does not have a body.¹⁵ (*This contradicts Mormonism.) The
15 Son is eternally and everlastingly generated by the Father, and
16 the Father cannot be seen.¹⁶ (*This contradicts Mormonism).
17 Christ has no separation from the Father.¹⁷ There is, in fact, no
18 dissimilarity between the Son and the Father.¹⁸ The Word and
19 God share one nature. The nature of deity is common to the
20 Father and the Son.²⁰ And, Origen furthermore teaches that
21 Christ has two natures a divine and a human.²¹ (*This contra-
22 dicts Mormonism.) I believe that I have clearly shown that the
23 Mormon doctrine about God is not that of the early church.

24 **The Son has only One nature?**

25 Hopefully the reader will indulge me for interacting with
26 this topic again even though I do that elsewhere as well. The
27 Mormon understanding of Christ having one nature is central

to their doctrines of both God and man. Robinson claims, “The 1
theological proposition of two natures in Christ (is) an inven- 2
tion of the post apostolic church.”²² So, the two natures of our 3
Lord Jesus is not found in the New Testament? But before we 4
take up the issues of Christ’s natures in the Bible, let’s remind 5
ourselves of the Mormon motivation for denying that our 6
Lord exists in two natures and of what a nature constitutes. 7
Mormons would have us believe that men are the same race 8
as God. God is just an exalted man. Man can become an exalt- 9
ed God. To admit that Christ, who is God, has another nature 10
which is not God would compromise these Mormon teachings. 11

And perhaps I can suggest what I think is a “nature.” A nature is 12
not a person; it is what a person is like. Hence evangelicals are 13
not saying that Christ is two Persons. Rather, a nature includes 14
the characteristics of a person: how tall he is; how strong he 15
is, his intellectual and emotional qualities, and so forth. In my 16
view, while one’s nature affects how one interacts with the 17
forces, options, and experiences he encounters, it is the one 18
Person of Christ who acts and experiences through each of 19
His natures distinctly. That is why the Gospel accounts of His 20
life describe Christ experiencing and acting in two different 21
ways. 22

Were my thinking correct, then, in my view, a nature would 23
seem to necessarily include emotions, will, and intelligence. 24
But these do not equal a “person;” instead they describe a per- 25
son. I believe each nature in Christ possesses these faculties; 26
He has two natures since the Incarnation. And, in my opinion, 27
that Jesus Christ exists in two natures is demonstrated by His 28

1 experiencing and acting in two wholly diverse manners in the
2 Gospel accounts of His life.

3 Consider, for example, the issues of the mutability, knowledge,
4 and suffering of Jesus in regard to the two natures in Christ.
5 Let's do this by first referencing Mormon Scriptures on the
6 nature of God, then the New Testament teaching about Jesus
7 Christ, whom Mormons believe is God (in their sense of the
8 meaning of God), and by these comparisons deduce whether
9 Christ exists in two natures. So, we read in Mosiah 4:9 that God
10 has all power both in heaven and earth. But, then how could
11 Christ as God be beaten, suffer, and die (Matthew chapters 26,
12 27)? Does one who has all power die? We read in Doctrines and
13 Covenants 38:2 that God knows all things. But were this true,
14 how could Christ in His divinity grow in knowledge (Luke
15 2:40), learn (Hebrews 5:8), and not know some things (Mark
16 13:32)? We read in Mormon 9:9 that God does not change. But
17 were this true, how can the Son mature and grow in size (Luke
18 2:52)? I think that the contrast between the Gospel accounts
19 of Jesus' human limitations and experiences and the Mormon
20 scriptures on God's nature require belief in the two natures in
21 Christ: one nature God and the other man.

22 To drive this farther home, note that the New Testament
23 teaches that Christ does not change (Hebrews 1:12), is almighty
24 (Revelation 1:8), and knows everything (John 16:30; 21:17) How
25 could He not change unless He exists in two natures one of
26 which is not immutable? How could He know everything but
27 not know somethings unless He exists in two natures one of

which is not omniscient? How could He die if He is almighty 1
unless He exists in two natures one of which lacks aseity? 2

But note the clear New Testament affirmations of Christ exist- 3
ing in two natures. In John 1:1, 14; 20:28 God became flesh. But 4
He still is God. In Hebrews 1:12 and 2:17 we see that Christ who 5
cannot change in His divine nature added a second nature of 6
humanity to His Person. And, in Philippians 2:6-8 Christ who 7
continues to exist as God (“being” in verse 6 is present tense) 8
took a second nature which is human and in which He obeyed 9
and died. Clearly the New Testament teaches the two natures 10
in Christ. 11

The Son Was created? 12

Hopkins ²³ has produced a remarkably inane exposition of 13
John 1:1-3. 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word 15
was with God, and the Word was God. He was 16
in the beginning with God. All things were 17
made through Him, and without Him nothing 18
was made that was made. 19

Hopkins asserts these five things: 20

(1) Evangelical interpretation which says that Christ was at the 21
beginning with God is based on ignorance of Christ’s eternal 22
existence as an “intelligence.” Mormons, it should be recalled, 23
believe that before we all (including Christ) were born as a 24

1 "spirit children" in heaven, we first existed as "intelligences."
2 But, the Bible nowhere states that we and Christ first existed
3 as "intelligences." That is why evangelicals "are ignorant" of
4 that. In none of the scores of Books in the Bible is it ever taught
5 that we first existed as "intelligences"! Mormons can suppose
6 that for thousands of years, God kept our origin hid from those
7 who believed in Him; I cannot. "Restoring" the Gospel does not
8 mean adding to it what never was there in the first place!

9 (2) The passage is saying that Christ being created as "a spirit
10 child" was the beginning of God's creative acts. But, the Bible
11 nowhere states that Christ was ever a "spirit child." Does that
12 fact matter to Mormons? Ummm not at all!

13 (3) The passage means that Christ was with God after Christ
14 was created. But, the Bible instead states that Christ exists
15 from eternity. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning
16 and the End." (Revelation 1:8).

17 (4) Christ was God because He was raised to that status. But,
18 the Bible knows nothing about Christ ever not being God. He
19 was God before anything was created. "You Lord in the begin-
20 ning" (Hebrews 1:10).

21 (5) All things were created after Christ was created. But, the
22 Bible instead insists that Christ is before all things and that He
23 created all things. "By Him all things were created...For He is
24 before all things." (Colossians 1:16, 17) Mormons reject the clear
25 teachings of the Bible to insist of their unbiblical Christology.

The Son is the firstborn spirit child?

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Hopkins²⁴ argues this from the Greek compound adjective *prōtotokos* as found in Colossians 1:15. Hopkins opines that as this word is from two Greek roots which in themselves mean first (*prō*) and born (*tokos*), therefore any interpretation that Christ is not the Father's "first born" is in error. But it is poor interpretation to limit our understanding of words to root meanings. Take the term "apostle" for example. It is cognate to *apostellō* which means "I send." Yet, "apostle" as used in the New Testament generally means much more than merely being sent. It includes the ideas of being given power in church leadership and authority in guiding doctrinal development. Or, take the English word "good bye" which is a contraction of the Anglo-Saxon "God be with you." But most people saying "good bye" are not referencing God. Therefore, in my opinion, Hopkin's lexical awareness is tainted by his urgent desire to defend Mormon Christology.

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Let's note that D.A. Carson, Ph.D. Cambridge University, warns against requiring that root meanings must determine word meanings.²⁵ Also, Arndt and Gingrich, eminent scholars of New Testament Greek deny that the word "first born" in New Testament Greek necessarily includes the idea of being born ²⁶ as do also Michaelis²⁷ and Bartels.²⁸ Note that it is not because these experts are not Mormons that they express these opinions. While the New Testament does speak of Jesus being the first born of Mary (Matthew 1:25), the term is also used to denote other experiences besides being born: "Jesus Christ.... the first born (*prōtotokos*) from the dead." (Revelation

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1 1:5). Jesus was not birthed by death. Christ, instead, is the
2 first resurrected individual. He has, in that manner, i.e., being
3 the first one, pre- eminence among those who are to be later
4 resurrected.

5 So, given that the Greek term may reference being born of
6 a parent or instead being pre- eminent, how should we un-
7 derstand Colossians 1:15: “He is...the first born”? Well, look
8 at the context. Christ is over all creation (15). All things were
9 created for Him. (16). He is before all things. (17) He is head of
10 the church. (18) In Him God’s fullness dwells. (19) The passage,
11 therefore, is not talking about Christ being born; it is talking
12 about Christ being pre-eminent!

13 But I have wondered if the Mormon doctrine of Christ being the
14 first born “spirit child” was not influenced by the Reformation
15 era and later Protestant Christian teaching of “eternal genera-
16 tion,” with which many evangelicals today concur. The Belgic
17 Confession of Faith of 1561 states “the only begotten Son of
18 God, begotten from eternity.”²⁹ The Westminster Confession
19 of Faith of 1647 states that “The Son is eternally begotten of
20 the Father.”³⁰ The Second Helvetic Confession of 1566 states
21 that Christ “was begotten...before all eternity”³¹ And, The
22 Articles of Religion of the Reformed Episcopal Church in
23 America written in 1875 states that “The Son (was) begotten
24 by the Father from everlasting.”³² Did Joe, the prophet or his
25 followers know of the teaching of such creeds? Did they twist
26 creedal meaning to fit their new doctrine of Christ being born
27 as a “spirit child”?

By the way, as these creeds are not those of churches which 1
subscribe to God being physical. By saying Christ as God was 2
“begotten” these belief statements clearly are not implying 3
that the physical Father sired the physical Son in a physical 4
Mother God. What is meant by the Son’s eternally being be- 5
gotten is that the Father eternally supplies the Son’s Person 6
and/or His divinity with the essence of God. 7

These creedal confessions are much different than the 8
Mormon doctrine. They do not say that a mother God cooper- 9
ated with God the Father in the heavenly birthing of the Son. 10
They do not say that God the Son was created by His heavenly 11
birth. They do not say that Christ was a “spirit child.” They do 12
not say that He as a spirit child became a God by His obedience 13
to the Gospel in heaven. Rather, they say that the Son Person 14
or divinity is eternally, timelessly, generated by the Father, as 15
God, from the Father’s own essence, and the manner of His 16
generation is not explicitly defined since the Bible itself does 17
not define it. As said, many modern evangelicals accept this 18
doctrine but many others do not. Some of us do not see it as 19
a biblical teaching. We are not required to conform our be- 20
liefs to such creeds or to a 19th century, supposedly infallible 21
prophet either. 22

The Son is Satan’s brother? 23

Hopkins³³-- who because he believes that we all, including 24
Christ and every individual, were heavenly “spirit children” 25
of God the Father-- thinks Job 1:6 means that Satan too was 26
a heavenly “spirit child” of God. Therefore, Satan is brother to 27

1 both Christ and to us. Besides Job 1:6 Hopkins also thinks that
2 John 20:17 and Romans 8:29, are further solid proofs that we
3 all were pre-existent as heavenly spirit children. Let's inter-
4 act with these biblical arguments individually. Were these
5 three texts not evidence for the Mormon doctrine of "spirit
6 children," then Hopkin's attempt to prove his belief that Satan
7 is brother to Jesus is false. His doctrine is based on both our
8 Lord and Satan being born of the Father as heavenly "spirit
9 children."

10 But first let's briefly review this LDS teaching of "spirit chil-
11 dren." Mormons believe that God the Father and a Mother God
12 birthed us as the sons and daughters of deity. From the time
13 of our spiritual birth, we lived in heaven for an infinite du-
14 ration before receiving bodies, and there we by "agency" (i.e.,
15 free will) experienced probation, schooling, and progression.
16 Satan was one of these heavenly "spirit children" but he re-
17 belled against the Father. But others of these "spirit children"
18 were more intelligent, obedient, and noble and these were re-
19 warded for their obedience by being foreordained to greatness
20 upon becoming flesh.³⁴ This doctrine obviously makes our
21 present state and redemption the result not of God's grace but
22 on the extent of our pre-existent goodness in pre-mortality.

23 So, with this background, should we not inquire as to how
24 much of this Mormon teaching is indicated by the three biblical
25 texts which Hopkins employs in an effort to prove that Satan
26 is Jesus' brother? If these do not evidence our, and Satan's, pre-
27 existence as heavenly "spirit children" who obeyed or did not

obey God the Father, then Hopkins has failed to defend his position. 1
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(1) "spirit children" in Job 1:6? 3

Now there was a day when the sons of God 4
came to present themselves before the LORD, 5
and Satan also came among them. 6

It has been the common Jewish understanding that these 7
"sons of God" are angels. For example, see Josephus in 8
Antiquities, Apocryphon which is a Dead sea Scroll, and the 9
Septuagint translation of the Hebrew into Greek which in 10
Job 1:6 reads, "*hoi aggeloi tou theou*" that is, "the angels of God." 11
And, Mormons agree that Satan can be understood as being 12
an angel.³⁵ But, angels are nowhere said in the Bible to have 13
been born of God the Father or to have been "spirit children." 14
Angels rather would be included among the "principalities or 15
powers" which were created through Christ. (Colossians 1:16) 16
If the Son of God were responsible for their creation, then He 17
is not a sibling to them. Thus, Job 1:6 is not evidence that Satan 18
is Jesus' brother. 19

(2) "spirit children" in John 20:17? 20

Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have 21
not ascended to My Father; but go to My breth- 22
ren and say to them, I am ascending to My Fa- 23
ther and your Father, and to My God and your 24
God." 25

1 However, "being like His brethren" meant Christ becoming
2 human (Hebrews 2:14, 17) not being a "spirit child" in heaven
3 with them. And, those who obey God on earth are Christ's
4 brethren not those who were obedient "spirit children" in
5 heaven. (Mark 3:33) John 20:17 does not indicate that we all
6 were born of God in heaven where we lived for a long dura-
7 tion and obeyed or did not obey. The text furthermore says
8 nothing about Satan's origin. Therefore, John 20:17 fails to evi-
9 dence that Satan is Jesus' brother.

10 (3) Romans 8:29 and "spirit children."

11 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to
12 be conformed to the image of His Son, that He
13 might be the first born among many brethren.

14 However, this text does not stipulate that God foreknew these
15 because He became acquainted with them in their heavenly
16 sojourn as "spirit children." What Mormons leave out of their
17 attempt to substantiate their doctrine of pre-mortality is the
18 biblical teaching of the prescience of God. God declares "the
19 end from the beginning" and "from ancient times things that
20 are not yet done." For He has spoken it and will bring it to
21 pass; He has purposed it and will also it (Isaiah 46:10, 11). The
22 foreknowledge of God is not based on what He has learned
23 about our heavenly goodness but on what He has decreed. He
24 knows ahead of time what will occur because He has planned,
25 that is predestined, all things (Ephesians 1:11) Observe that no
26 reference to Satan being a heavenly "spirit child" born of God
27 the Father is alluded to in Romans 8:29. So again, Hopkins' ar-
28 gument fails because his doctrine plainly is not biblical.

The Son, after His being born a spirit child 1
eventually became a God? 2

Millet ³⁶ asserts that “As a premortal spirit, Jehovah (i.e., Christ) 3
grew in knowledge and power to the point where he became 4
‘like unto God.’ ” To evidence this, Millet refers his readers to 5
the Mormon Scriptures D&C, Moses, Mosiah, and 3 Nephi. But 6
he cites no verse from the Bible as proof. Likewise, another 7
Mormon theologian, McConkie, avers that Christ by devotion 8
to the truth achieved intelligence which ranked Him as a God 9
while yet in His pre-existent state. ³⁷ Neither does this writ- 10
ter supply his readers with any biblical text which says that 11
Christ was a heavenly “spirit child” who became a God. I do 12
not see how anyone could deny that some Mormon teachings 13
about our Lord Jesus Christ simply are not found in the Bible. 14

But, is there anything in the Bible which contradicts that 15
Christ began as a “spirit child” and developed properties and 16
powers which transformed Him into a God? First note, as 17
above, that Christ is never called a “spirit child” who learned. 18
Second, the Bible states that Christ always was God. John 1:1, 19
“In the beginning...the Word was God.” Third, Christ’s divinity 20
does not change, Hebrews 1:12, “You are the same.” That sug- 21
gests that He did not slowly grow into Godhood. These biblical 22
evidences are a clear contradiction to the Mormon doctrine of 23
the pre-existent Christ progressing into a God. 24

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1 **The Son as God is subject to the Father?**

2 It is Mormon doctrine that the Father is the “supreme God.”³⁸ I
3 take this to mean that since those in the Godhead are thought
4 by Mormons to be separate Beings,³⁹ that in Mormon theol-
5 ogy both the Father’s authority and also His nature are greater
6 than that of the Son. Christ is seen as subordinate in role by
7 Mormons because they also believe that He is a different God
8 and is the Father’s “spirit son.” Some evangelicals as well teach
9 the eternal role subordination of the Son, but none aver His
10 essential subordination.

11 A number of New Testament texts have been used to indicate
12 that the Son is eternally under the Father’s authority. But do
13 such Scriptures really teach that? Let’s look at some. But first
14 note that a recurring theme in my interpretations is that I be-
15 lieve that Christ exists in two natures, human and divine, that
16 Christ experiences and acts differently in each nature, and
17 that the meaning of some of these verses pivots on deciding
18 which nature is the referent in the text.

19 John 5 :18, 19.

20 Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most
21 assuredly I say to you, the Son can do noth-
22 ing of Himself, but what He sees the Father
23 do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in
24 like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and
25 shows Him all things that He Himself does; and
26 He will show Him greater works than these
27 that you may marvel.

I am aware of three different understandings of this text. One 1
is that God the Son only has delegated authority from the 2
Father. Were one believing that God is the boss of God, then 3
that interpretation could be deemed acceptable. A second 4
view is that only Christ's human nature is the referent. That 5
the Father will later show the Son more works, may put a tem- 6
poral meaning on the passage which better alludes to the Son 7
incarnate. That the Son will learn more from the Father in the 8
future also could be an evidence that Jesus's humanity is the 9
subject since in His deity He knows everything from eternity. 10

The third view is that the unity between the Persons in God 11
makes the exclusive and divided activity of one of the Persons 12
impossible. That is thought to be why the Son as God can do 13
nothing by Himself. What the Father does, the Son also does. 14
Were this understanding of the text correct, then John 5:18, 15
19 is actually an evidence of the equality of the Son with the 16
Father. It also is evidence of the unity of the Father and the 17
Son. We can recall, for example, that all Three are involved 18
in both creation and salvation. One might reply, "Well did not 19
only the Son die for our sins?" But, it may be countered that 20
Christ's dying was confined to His humanity as divinity can- 21
not die because it cannot change. As even Mormon 9:19 says, 22
God "changeth not; if so He would cease to be God." Dying 23
would be a changing, right? But God the Son agreed, it seems 24
("He humbled Himself," Philippians 2:8) , to become man for 25
our salvation. Of the three views, it would seem that the sec- 26
ond, that Jesus' humanity is the referent, is best supported by 27
the context which informs that the Son as man learns from 28
the Father in time. 29

1 John 6:38

2 For I have come down from Heaven, not to do
3 My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

4 One issue in interpreting this verse is whether each "Person"
5 in God has a distinct divine faculty of will. Evangelicals are
6 not in agreement regarding this question. And, arguments for
7 either position are not, in my view, overwhelmingly convinc-
8 ing although the unity of the divine nature, to me, suggests a
9 oneness of will. But the second issue is whether "My own will"
10 refers to Jesus' divine will or His human will. Yes, He came
11 down from heaven as God, but then, after becoming flesh,
12 perhaps then only as man He obeyed the Father.

13 But what is the evidence that in Christ there is a human facul-
14 ty of will? It seems clearly taught in Luke 22:42, "Father, if it is
15 Your will take this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but
16 Yours be done." In the context, our Lord required strengthen-
17 ing by an angel and was "in agony." In my opinion, the divine
18 faculty of will in Christ would not fear death, could not be in
19 agony, and would not require strengthening by an angel. Only
20 a human will would.

21 So, if Luke 22:42 is a sound reason to believe that Christ has
22 a human will, in addition to a divine will as He also is God,
23 then which will is the referent in John 6:38? Perhaps a clue
24 is found in John 6:54 where flesh and blood are ascribed to
25 Jesus. Of course, this would be unconvincing to Mormons
26 as they believe that God is physical. But, John 1:14 instead

teaches that the Son, who was not flesh before, became flesh in the incarnation.

As said elsewhere, in my opinion, the “flesh” (i.e., the nature of man) was added to the Person of the Son; the Son’s divine nature did not change. Perhaps John 6:54, then, should suggest to us that “will” in 6:36 refers to Jesus’ human will. Adding credence to this interpretation is Philippians 2:8 where it is taught that it was in His human nature that Jesus became obedient: “And being found in the appearance of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient” (that is, He was not before obedient).

John 14:28

You have heard Me say to you, “I am going away and coming back to you.” If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said “I’m going to the Father,” for My Father is greater than I.

If one interprets this verse to mean that the Father is greater than the Son as God, then, in what way is the Son as God to be considered inferior? Chapter four will take this question up again, and there specifics are given. But if the Father is eternal, almighty, omniscient, and immutable, and the Son is also all of these, then how is the Father greater? Please consider these questions in chapter four where it is argued that as the Persons in the Trinity have the same attributes, They, therefore, are the same. God.

1 1 Corinthians 11:3

2 But I want you to know that the head of every
3 man is Christ, the head of a woman is man, and
4 the head of Christ is God.

5 It is likely that *kephalē* (“head”) refers to authority over not
6 the origin of.⁴⁰ If so, the verse is clearly stating that God is au-
7 thority over Christ. But what is meant by “Christ”? Must the
8 term have the deity of Christ as its referent? But Jesus who
9 in these following references is called “Christ,” specifically is
10 said to have been born (Luke 2:11), have died (1 Peter 1:32), and
11 have been resurrected (Acts 2:31). Such experiences must be
12 only ascribed to Jesus’ human nature. It likely then follows
13 that 1 Corinthians 11:3 can mean that God is sovereign over
14 the human nature of Christ not the divine nature. Of course,
15 Mormons wrongly teach that Christ has only one nature.

16 1 Corinthians 15:28

17 Now when all things are made subject to Him,
18 then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him
19 who put all things under Him, that God may be
20 all in all.

21 But how can “Son” in 15:28 be understood as referring to the
22 nature of God when 15:21 calls Christ “a man”? It is as “man”
23 that the Son is subservient to the Father. He obeyed God as
24 man. (Philippians 2:8).

25

Galatians 4:4,5

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But when the fullness of time had come, God
sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born un-
der the law to redeem those who were under
the law, that we might receive the adoption of
sons.

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So, yes God the Father sent the Son. But the text stipulates that
it was the Son born of Mary, that is, it was Christ as man, who
was sent. Only as man could the Son die to redeem those under
the law. So, it is questionable that this verse teaches an eternal
relationship of one Person in God over Another. Nevertheless,
I have no issues with believing that in the economic, tempo-
ral relationships of God to creation and also to salvation, God
the Father has the role of directing the activities of the Son
and the temporal activities of the Holy Spirit as well (e.g., John
14:16).

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What I question is that the Father was, in eternity past, the
authority over the Son as God, since in my opinion, that would
only be likely possible for the Persons of God to be different in
being. Besides, in my view, as we read in Philippians 2:8 that
the Son "humbled Himself," (that is, He was not humbled by the
Father), I see grounds for believing that there was no personal
quality in the Son's divinity to be submissive. I think that in
ontological relationships, that is, God in Himself, the Persons
in God may relate in different ways than They do in their eco-
nomic roles in time. Consider, for example, that in John 1:1 the
Son is identified as being God but there is no remark about the
Son being different in authority than God.

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1 Philippians 2:6

2 Who being in the form of God did not consider
3 it robbery (Greek=*harpagmos*) to be (the) equal
4 to God.

5 Okay, I have to be a little complex here. It has been argued
6 that “form” in Philippians 2:6 refers to God’s nature and “equal”
7 refers to God’s sovereignty, and that because there is an article
8 (the) before the infinitive (to be) in the Greek, that functions as
9 a wedge between nature and equality which has the force of
10 separating the two. While the Son is in God’s nature, He is not
11 God’s equal in authority is the claim. However, the force of the
12 articular infinitive (the to be) here is much debated, and if the
13 Greek *harpagmos* can be shown to indicate something that the
14 Christ already possessed, then the meaning would be that the
15 Son is both in God’s nature and has God’s authority.

16 And this is shown to be the case as Roy Hoover’s Harvard
17 Th.D. dissertation (reviewed in Harvard Theological Review,
18 56 (1971) 95-119) evidences by demonstrating when and how
19 *harpagmos* is used idiomatically. The Son was God’s equal, but
20 chose not to use this equality to advance Himself is Hoover’s
21 conclusion. So, in Philippians 2:6 the Son in His deity (in God’s
22 nature) is equal in authority to the Father.

23 Hebrews 1:2

24 Has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,
25 whom He has appointed heir of all things,
26 through whom He also made the worlds.

Since the Father created through the Son, it has been argued, 1
this evidences that the Son is inferior in role than the Father. 2
But must one deduce that from the divine activity in creation? 3
Could it not with more understanding be opined that if the 4
Father created through the Son that the Son has an equal role 5
in creation? Were the Son of a lesser rank and the Father of 6
a greater rank, then why is it even left a possibility that the 7
Father relies on the Son to carry out the work of creation? 8
Why would the Father need to create through the Son? Why 9
not create without the Son? Could it be that the Father relies 10
on the Son just as the Son does on the Father? Note that the 11
very next verse informs that the Son upholds all things by 12
His power. It is not even suggested there that the Son gets that 13
power from the Father. 14

Hebrews 5:8 15

Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedi- 16
ence by the things He suffered. 17

Two items in this brief text make it clear that it was not the 18
deity of the Son which is the referent. First, the Son learned, 19
but as God the Son is omniscient. Second the Son suffered. But 20
only as man can Christ suffer. Besides, the preceding verse al- 21
ludes to the Son "in the days of His flesh." Therefore, Hebrews 22
5:8 cannot rightly be understood as convincing proof of the 23
eternal role subordination of the Son. 24

The Son when incarnating was emptied of deity? 25

1 Millet⁴¹ asserts that Paul teaches that Christ “emptied Himself
2 of His Godhood that He might live and minister among mor-
3 tals. Millet’s reference is Philippians 2:6, where *heauton*
4 *ekenōsen* can be translated as “emptied Himself.” However,
5 there are several reasons to reject this Mormon interpretation.
6 First as shown above even Mormon Scriptures declare God to
7 be changeless. Note also Moroni 8:18, “God is not a changeable
8 Being” and Doctrines and Covenants 20:17, God is “the same
9 unchangeable God.”

10 Second, in verse 6 “being” in God’s form is present tense. That
11 is, even after the emptying, Christ continues to be in God’s
12 form. Third, the phrase “emptied Himself” has no object. It
13 does not say that He emptied Himself of anything neither di-
14 vinity nor the powers of divinity. Instead, what the apostle
15 means by the emptying of Jesus is the adding of a human na-
16 ture to the Person of our Lord, “taking the form of a bond ser-
17 vant” (2:7). His taking humanity was His emptying. But as God
18 is changeless He did not divest Himself of deity.

19 **The Son is the Only begotten in the flesh?**

20 I am going to argue that Christ is the Father’s only heavenly
21 Son but not by a birthing. I think it likely that “Son of” denotes
22 deity not origination (John 5:18). Christ is not one of many
23 heavenly “spirit children.” Part of my conjecture is based on
24 the meaning of the Greek word often translated “only begot-
25 ten.” I will argue that the Greek *monogenēs* does not even mean
26 a birthing, and that the adjective more likely refers to Christ’s
27 divinity not to His being born of Mary.

Christ is the unique Son of God because He is the only Son who is God! However, Ludlow's anthology in reference to John 3:16 avers that Christ is "the only begotten in the flesh" and His body was "the offspring of a mortal mother and an eternal Father."⁴² `Yes, the adjective *monogenēs* which only John applies to Christ in five places (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; and 1 John 4:9) is often rendered "only begotten" as it is in the NKJV. But other translations as the NEV translate the compound adjective with the meaning of "only," indicating "uniqueness," without the idea of a birthing. So, is John's point that Christ is the birthed Son or instead that He is the unique Son?

While we disagree over whether God the Father became husband to Mary and acted in that capacity with her (see chapter 1), both evangelicals and Mormons believe that Jesus is God's Son. So, what is there to argue about in regard to *monogenēs*? It is over whether John uses the adjective to indicate the Son's birthing from Mary. Mormons regularly insist that John's references (as in John 3:16) refer to Christ's being the only begotten of the Father in the flesh.⁴³

But why would Mormons insist on that meaning? Could it be because they teach that the Father bore innumerable "spirit children" in heaven and that Christ is just one of these? Also, the Mormon teaching of exalted humans bearing innumerable "spirit children" becomes defunct were Christ, Himself, not the first born of the Father in heaven. So, being only begotten must refer, Mormons may reason, to His being born of Mary because we all, Christ too, are Christ's heavenly brethren born

1 of the Father in pre-mortality, they say. Mormons therefore
2 reason, “only begotten” must refer to Jesus’ mortal birth.

3 But are those five places where John applies *monogenēs* to
4 Christ using the adjective to indicate that Christ was physi-
5 cally born or that He is unique due to His being the Father’s
6 only eternal Son and is God Himself? What is John’s mean-
7 ing? What’s the difference, again? If the latter (uniqueness) is
8 John’s meaning, it opens up the idea that Christ is not just one
9 of many “spirit children” of the Father. That, of course, would
10 contradict the Mormon teaching of our pre-mortality.

11 We all know that John was a Jew, and we should know too
12 that the first century church in the main used as their Bible
13 the Old Testament translated into Greek (the Septuagint or
14 LXX). And, the LXX uses *monogenēs* four times in the ca-
15 nonical Books and three times in the Apocryphal books. Let’s
16 look at these seven occasions. Let’s ask whether their usage
17 of the adjective shows that being born is meant (we all were
18 physically born after all) or being unique? The translations are
19 mostly those of Brenton.⁴⁴

20 Judges 11:34 “She was his only (*monogenēs*) child; he had not
21 another son or daughter.” Clearly, the point here is that she
22 was unique not that she was born.

23 Psalm 21:21 (22:20): “Deliver my soul from the sword my only
24 begotten (*monogenēs*) from the power of the dog.” The soul is
25 not born however, so the meaning is that his soul is unique
26 since the writer has only one.

- Psalm 24:16. "I am an only (*monogenēs*) child and poor." Again, 1
the idea is not being born but rather being alone. 2
- Psalm 34:17: "Deliver my soul from their mischief, my only- 3
begotten (*monogenēs*) one from the lions." He has only one soul 4
so it is unique. 5
- Tobit 3:17: "I am the only (*monogenēs*) (that is, in reference to a 6
"daughter") of my father, neither has he any other child." The 7
girl was unique having no siblings. 8
- Tobit 8:17: "The only begotten (*monogeneis*) of their fathers." 9
The children referenced were their fathers' only offspring. 10
- Wisdom of Solomon 7:22: For in her (Wisdom) is an under- 11
standing spirit, holy, one only 12
monogenēs." Wisdom is unique not born. 13
- Let's also observe Luke's use of the adjective: In 7:12 the only 14
son of his mother had died; In 8:42, the only daughter of a fa- 15
ther was dying; in 9:28 also the father's son was an only child. 16
Luke is not saying that these were born! So, why labor over 17
John's meaning as suggested by Luke's and the Septuagint's 18
usage? I do it to argue that the Son's being the only one of His 19
kind did not begin when He became man. John is saying that 20
Christ is unique not that He was born. In fact, there is rea- 21
son to believe that John in 1:18 is saying that the Son is the 22
monogenēs in His deity! 23

1 Let's be reminded that Mormons are not opposed to modify-
2 ing the King James Bible to justify their doctrines. So, when
3 Joe Smith produced his "Inspired Translation" he completely
4 omitted Mark 13:32⁴⁵ probably because that verse suggested
5 that the omniscient, one-natured Christ of Mormonism was
6 ignorant of somethings. Mormons disavow that Christ has
7 two intellects one divine and one human. But while there is
8 no evidence suggesting that Mark 13:32 is not original, there
9 is strong evidence that John 1:18 is not originally as the NKJV
10 represents it, i.e., "The only begotten Son."

11 It more likely originally read, "The only God," (See The New
12 English Translation for example) Christ is the unique God as
13 He is one in essence with the Father and the Spirit. The two
14 earliest copies of John we have (Papyrus 66 and Papyrus P75)
15 say "monogenēs (that is, in my opinion, the unique) God."⁴⁶ And
16 there is no apparent reason to suggest why a scribe would
17 change "Son" to "God" given that elsewhere in John the adject-
18 tive describes "Son." So, Christ is God's unique Son in His eter-
19 nality not in His humanity with the effect that He was not
20 the "first born," child in heaven as Mormons teach. He is, in-
21 stead, the only child (i.e., "Son") of heaven, and, yes, of course,
22 in His Incarnation, He still continues as God's Son. Neither
23 His Person nor His past can change. John, in my opinion calls
24 Christ *monogenēs* to indicate our Lord's unique relationship to
25 God not to inform us that He was born.

26

The Son had to work out His own salvation?

1

I find the Mormon McConkie's position to be both biblically 2
untenable and offensive to the majesty of Christ. McConkie 3
feels so strongly about his teaching that he must repeat it. He 4
first states, "Christ, Himself, first worked out His own salva- 5
tion,"⁴⁷ and later he elaborates a bit saying, (Christ) also had to 6
work out His own salvation, to serve in mortality, to humble 7
Himself before the Father, to keep the commandments, to en- 8
dure to the end.⁴⁸ Did our Lord Jesus humble Himself and keep 9
God's commandments? Yes. But did He do these things to save 10
Himself? No. Observe the reason given in Hebrews 5:8, 9, 11

Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedi- 12
ence by the things He suffered. And having 13
been perfected, He became the author of eter- 14
nal salvation to all who obey Him. 15

Christ did not become perfect in order to save Himself for 16
He, Himself, needed no redemption. Christ asked the Father 17
to forgive others but never asked for forgiveness for Himself. 18
Christ knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). He was tempted, but 19
never sinned as a result (Hebrews 4:15). And, in fact, He never 20
committed any sin (1 Peter 2:22). Yes, it is offensive to the bibli- 21
cal portrayal of the perfection of our Lord Jesus for Mormons 22
to teach that Christ needed to work out His own salvation. 23

24

The Son did know the time of His return?

1
2 The Mormon disregard for the teaching of the Bible is clearly
3 evidenced in the manner in which they subordinate the Bible's
4 teaching to their preconceived doctrines. Since Mormons
5 deny that Christ exists in both a divine and a human nature
6 (since God and man are the same race), and a nature would in-
7 clude intelligence, Mormons wish to erase the teaching about
8 Christ in Mark 13:32,

9 But of that day and hour (i.e., the time of His
10 second coming) no one knows, not even the an-
11 gels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

12 McConkie explains, "These words are deleted from the Inspired
13 Version; Jesus, of course, since He knows all things, knows the
14 exact time of His return." And, what is that tenet to be erased
15 so as not to conflict with Mormon "erudition"? It is that in His
16 humanity Christ does not know some things (Mark 13:32) but
17 in His deity, He knows everything (John 16:30; 21:17). That is
18 because Christ exists in two natures each having its own in-
19 telligence. So, where a Bible verse teaches a doctrine which
20 contradicts Mormon theology, Mormons just remove that of-
21 fensive verse!

The Son has wives?

22
23 We should remind ourselves of the Mormon doctrine of exal-
24 tation. It refers to living evermore

in heavenly family units as husbands and wives and bearing children.⁴⁹ But wait. The resurrected Christ also experiences exaltation because He is a saved being.⁵⁰ How then can Christ now exalted live in such a family unit without having a wife or wives to bear His heavenly offspring? The Mormon Orson Pratt, who was designated to teach the doctrines of the Mormon religion by Joe, himself, comes to rescue us from this dilemma. Pratt reasons that Jesus must bear His own heavenly brood just as His Father does. So, Pratt suggests that as Jesus is said to love certain holy women (John 11:5), ergo, they likely were His wives who will bear Christ's spirit children after they are resurrected. (So, would that make Christ their daddy and God the Father their grand daddy?)

Pratt refers his readers to Psalm 45:8,9 saying that this text proves that Jesus is husband to individual women.⁵¹ But the women Christ loved—in my opinion not in a sexual way—were neither daughters of kings or one of them a “queen”! So clearly, the text is not meant to be taken literally. It is rather that many nations (i.e., “kings daughters) will have individuals converted to our Lord and that the “queen” in Psalm 45 is the Church which is Jesus' only bride (John 3: 29; Ephesians 5:23-26). Nor do the Gospels ever say that Jesus ever married a woman. Again, Mormons fabricate doctrines not in the New Testament and then claim to be restoring the Gospel by doing that.

The Son after death was exalted receiving again the deity which He had given up?

1 Mormons teach that after Christ gave up His divinity and
2 the powers thereof when incarnating, He “went from grace
3 to grace” until He eventually after the resurrection “gained
4 the fulness of all things; and all power was given to Him in
5 heaven and on earth.”⁵² A difficulty with this interpretation
6 is that in His earthly existence He is said to remain in the na-
7 ture of God. “Being” in Philippians 2:6 is in the present tense
8 (*huparchōn*). The customary and ongoing Greek present tense
9 indicates “an ongoing state,” and the gnomic present means
10 much the same⁵³ Therefore, Christ never relinquished His de-
11 ity or powers when becoming man. Furthermore, even after
12 His Incarnation and before His resurrection, Christ remained
13 God (John 20:28).

14 **Review Questions Chapter 2**

- 15 1. What in the Gospels shows that Christ was not emptied of
16 deity when incarnating?
- 17 2. How are Christ’s two natures demonstrated in the Gospels?
- 18 3. What do the earliest Greek copies of John 1:18 inform us
19 about the Greek *monogenēs*?
- 20 4. How does Philippians 2 teach that Christ never was emptied
21 of deity?
- 22 5. Why would Mormons insist that Christ being “only begot-
23 ten” refers to His body born of Mary?

6. What in the New Testament shows that Christ did not need personal redemption? 1
2
7. What in the New Testament tells us that Christ did not marry women? 3
4
8. What did Hoover's ThD. dissertation show? 5
9. How might Judges 11:34 contradict Mormon doctrine? 6
10. What are some issues in John 6:38? 7

End Notes Chapter 2

1

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| 18. I.II.12. | 4 |
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17

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Joseph Smith once bloviated that he knew more “than all the world put together” because he had the Holy Spirit in him. Others preaching salvation, he said, are “unlearned in the things of God and have not the gift of the Holy Ghost.”¹ Yet it will require a great deal of imaginative apologetics to align LDS teaching about the Holy Spirit with the doctrine of the Bible. I will comment on two issues.

The Holy Spirit is the Father’s “spirit child”?

First, Mormons assert that the Holy Spirit is the “spirit son” of the Father. ² It will be remembered that Mormons believe that we all (and the Holy Spirit is one of the “all”) were begotten as “spirit children” and lived in heaven with God.³ These spirit children were not equal in intelligence or faithfulness and some were wicked in their pre-mortality. Jesus Christ was the first born of these spirit children,⁴and the Holy Spirit would have been perhaps the second according to Mormon thought? So, the Holy Spirit had a beginning.

1 Or, did He? Hebrews 9:14 informs that the Holy Spirit is eter-
2 nal. Yes, I know Mormons teach that we all exited as eternal
3 intelligences. But the verse does not say that the Spirit eter-
4 nally existed merely as an intelligence. Hebrews 9:14 states
5 that the Spirit, Himself, is eternal. How could that have been
6 made clearer? Nor, does the Bible anywhere state that any-
7 one else existed eternally as an “intelligence.” It should be ex-
8 pected that Mormons respond to Hebrews 9:14 without allu-
9 sions to doctrines not found in the Bible to explain away their
10 faulty exegesis.

11 **The Holy Spirit is spatial and is in the form of a man?**

12 Another LDS error is their teaching that the Holy Spirit is spa-
13 tially limited and is in the form of a man. The Mormon study
14 guide of LDS doctrine *Gospel Principles*⁵ explains:

15 The Holy Ghost... is a spirit that has the form
16 and likeness of a man. He can only be in one
17 place at a time, but His influence can be every-
18 where at the same time.

19 But do biblical texts which allude to the Holy Spirit suggest
20 that He is in human form, that His Person is limited to being in
21 one place at a time, and therefore that only His influence can
22 be everywhere? In no particular order I list 20 Bible references
23 below which are not in harmony with these Mormon claims.
24 There will be some repetition of ideation in these Scriptures.
25 Many more verses easily could have been included.

(1) The Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the Word. (Acts 10:44) 1
2

There appears to have been a number of people who heard 3
Peter speak that day as Cornelius had assembled “relatives 4
and close friends.” (Acts 10:24) Observe that the text states that 5
it is the Spirit Himself, not His influence, which is the subject 6
of the action. He, Himself, simultaneously fell on all of them. 7
There is no suggestion either in the passage that the Spirit fell 8
on those present one at a time. We can also note that what- 9
ever is the meaning of the Spirit “falling on,” it doesn’t fit well 10
with the concept of a spatially limited One who is in the form 11
of a man. How does One in human form “fall” on a number 12
of individuals? He cannot, so Acts 10:44 does not support the 13
Mormon doctrine. 14

(2) Be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18) 15

So, if the concept of the Holy Spirit being in the form of a spa- 16
tially limited man is held, how can the Spirit “fill” multitudes 17
of believers at the same time? It will not do to say, “Oh, this 18
means the Spirit’s influence not His Person.” For only a few 19
verses away, the apostle speaks of grieving the Spirit (4:30). 20
But, how does one grieve an influence? And, how does One 21
in human form fill others in who are also in human form? 22
He cannot. So Ephesians 5:18 does not support the Mormon 23
doctrine. 24

(3). “The Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place.” (1 Kings 25
18:12) 26

1 Are we to imagine that the Holy Spirit having the arms, as
2 one in human form would have, lifted Elijah and, having legs
3 in human form as well, very hurriedly ran Elijah about? The
4 Mormon understanding of the Holy Spirit which must adapt
5 to God being a big man becomes tediously ridiculous in view
6 of Scriptures as 1 Kings 18:12. The meaning must be more like
7 the idea that the Holy Spirit used His miraculous abilities to
8 transport Elijah to a place; the activity in the text does not en-
9 dorse the notion that the Spirit is in the form of a man. Where
10 does the Bible ever say that the Holy Spirit has arms and legs?
11 It does not, so 1 Kings 18:12 does not support Mormon doctrine.

12 (4). The Spirit of God dwells in you. (1 Corinthians 3:16).

13 It does not say “The influence of the Spirit dwells in you”! Texts
14 as this are obviously in contradiction to the LDS teaching that
15 the Holy Spirit cannot be everywhere. For how could He not
16 be everywhere if He dwells in believers who themselves are
17 everywhere? We might do well to note that the Holy Spirit is
18 called a Helper, a *paraklētos*, in John 14:16. This noun means
19 “one called in to support.”⁶ It does not mean an influence is
20 “called in to support.” Yet, if the Holy Spirit is the One actively
21 supporting Christians universally, then how can the Spirit be
22 limited to one place? He cannot, so 1 Corinthians 3:18 does not
23 support the Mormon doctrine.

24 (5.) We have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” (1
25 Corinthians 12:13)

26 The likely meaning is that believers have received the Spirit
27 by the very real experience of Spirit baptism (perhaps cross

references are John 1:33 and Acts 1:5?) and thus are united in 1
one body. Evangelicals disagree on what “Spirit baptism” is. 2
Some say it is a “second blessing” with speaking in tongues 3
as the evidence of that experience, yet, others do not believe 4
that. But the point now is why would Paul even figuratively 5
allude to innumerable believers drinking the Spirit were the 6
Spirit localized? Were Paul wishing to teach that the Holy 7
Spirit is in the form of a man, why would the apostle speak of 8
drinking Him? He would not, so 1 Corinthians 12:13 does not 9
support the Mormon doctrine. 10

(6). Led by the Spirit. (Romans 8:14). 11

Being sons of God means being led by the Spirit of God. It 12
does not say being led “by the influence of God’s Spirit”! So, 13
this verse also evidences that the Holy Spirit cannot be con- 14
fined to one location since those being led do not reside in 15
one location. The LDS insistence on the humanness of God is 16
dashed to pieces by the biblical teaching of the omnipresence 17
of God. How could the Spirit be confined to one locality if He, 18
Himself, is leading believers all over the world? He could not, 19
so Romans 8:14 does not support the Mormon doctrine. 20

(7.) “He has filled him with the Spirit of God.” Exodus 35:31 21

Bezalel was filled with the Holy Spirit enabling him to create 22
artistic works in metal, jewels, and wood. Again, it is not said 23
that it was the Spirit’s influence that filled this craftsman but 24
the Holy Spirit, Himself, filled Bezalel. Spirit filling before the 25
ascension of our Lord Jesus appears to have been limited to 26
chosen individuals. However, this cannot be rightly deemed 27

1 merely to be the influence of the Spirit, as it should be noted
2 again that the use of the Hebrew word for the verb “fill” (*mala*)
3 indicates that the thing itself is filling not the influence of a
4 thing: “fill their sacks with grain.” (Genesis 42:25) The meaning
5 is not fill the sacks with the influence of the grain. “I will fill
6 this temple with glory.” (Haggai 2:7). It is the glory itself which
7 will fill the temple! Likewise, the Holy Spirit, Himself, filled
8 Bezalel. Therefore, the Holy Spirit cannot be “in human form”
9 so, Exodus 35:31 does not support Mormon doctrine.

10 (8.) “Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by
11 the hearing of faith.” (Galatians 3:2)

12 The Mormon doctrinal book edited by Ludlow includes the
13 remark “The Holy Ghost will not dwell in the heart of an un-
14 righteous person...Should the individual thereafter cease to
15 be clean and obedient, the Holy Ghost will withdraw.” It is
16 true that the contributor in Ludlow’s book stipulates that the
17 Holy Spirit only dwells in one’s heart “in a figurative sense.”
18 Why does Ludlow qualify the Holy Spirit’s indwelling as “fig-
19 urative”? It obviously is because the Holy Spirit in Mormon
20 theology is a Man. A Man cannot indwell another man. But
21 how does an “influence” withdraw? And, were the apostle not
22 wishing to indicate that the Spirit, Himself, is received, not
23 merely His power, then why didn’t Paul make that clear? Why
24 did Paul not ask, “Did you receive the influence or power of
25 the Spirit?” But, he does not, so Galatians 3:2 does not support
26 the Mormon doctrine.

27 (9.) “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.” (2
28 Corinthians 3:17)

And, where is the Spirit of the Lord? He is with the Corinthians. 1
But is He not also with the Galatians, and the Romans, and the 2
Thessalonians? Yet Paul does not say that anything less than 3
the presence of the Holy Spirit is his meaning. But despite this 4
unreserved attestation to the universal presence of the Spirit, 5
the Mormons have invented a doctrine to refute the Pauline 6
teaching of the omnipresence of the Spirit. It is called, "The 7
Light of Christ." It is defined as "a power and influence that 8
proceeds forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity 9
of space....It is in this way that the Holy Ghost makes His influ- 10
ence felt."⁸ But the reader will note that Paul is not saying that 11
it is the Spirit's power or influence only which is everywhere. 12
Paul says it is the Spirit of the Lord Himself. So, 2 Corinthians 13
3:17 does not support the Mormon doctrine. 14

(10). "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:4). 15

Observe again that Luke does not say they were filled with 16
"the power or influence of the Holy Spirit." The New Testament 17
remarks on having God's power as in 2 Corinthians 6:7, "by 18
the power of God" (see also 2 Timothy 1:8; 1 Peter 1:5). One 19
should not think that God is identical to His power. His pow- 20
er is a quality but God is the Person. The power of the Spirit 21
is alluded to in Romans 15:13. And, Romans 15:19 reads, "in 22
mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God." 23
Likewise note Acts 10:38, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth 24
with the Holy Spirit and with power." In these texts, the Spirit 25
Himself is clearly differentiated from His power or influence! 26
Consequentially, when the Holy Spirit is distinctly refer- 27
enced without mentioning His power, the allusion should be 28

1 understood as meaning the Person of the Spirit Himself not
2 merely to His influence. Therefore, Acts 2:4 does not support
3 the Mormon doctrine.

4 (11). "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...The
5 Spirit of Truth...will testify of Me." (Matthew 28:19; John 15:26).

6 The Holy Spirit will testify of Jesus in all the nations! So, how
7 is the Spirit confined to one locality at a time? Does He rush
8 from one place to another place with incredible rapidity?
9 This, exactly, is the teaching of the Mormon Hopkins.⁹ God
10 can "travel to any spot instantaneously." Just picture that! God
11 moving all over the earth in an instant. So, does hearing the
12 testifying take place instantly as well? Are the ears of millions
13 miraculously changed to receive and comprehend communi-
14 cation from God about Jesus in a split second thus enabling
15 the Spirit to move on in His journey from one place to the next
16 place of testifying? But wait a minute. Observe that Peter's
17 message in Acts 2:14-40 was not given in an instant and note
18 that the message given was by the Holy Spirit coming on him
19 (1:8). The Holy Spirit is doing the testimony, but it is not done
20 instantly. How could it be when the testimony must be heard
21 which requires time? This is why John 15:26 does not support
22 the Mormon doctrine.

23 (12). "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit." (Romans 8:16).

24 Again, it is the Person of the Holy Spirit which is said to be
25 witnessing to our spirits not merely His influence. However,
26 as we individuals (and our spirits dwelling within us) are
27 widely dispersed all over the world, it is only by the Spirit's

omnipresence that this witnessing can occur. Consequently, 1
Romans 8:16 does not support the Mormon doctrine. 2

(13). "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you 3
into all truth." (John 16:13). 4

The reader will note that this verse references the Holy Spirit 5
by a masculine pronoun (*ekeinos*). Therefore, it is not the in- 6
fluence of the Spirit which will guide the apostles; it is the 7
Himself who will do that. But this would seemingly require 8
the Spirit to not be confined to one location at a time as the 9
apostles were not restricted to one place. A spatially limited 10
Spirit could not fulfill the promise of Jesus Christ, and so John 11
16:13 does not support the Mormon doctrine. 12

(14). "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' but by the Holy Spirit." (1 13
Corinthians 12:3) 14

So, on any given Sunday in multiple localities believers are 15
confessing Jesus Christ as Lord. But they are not confessing 16
this except by the Holy Spirit. It does not say it is by merely 17
the Spirit's influence but by the Spirit Himself. But what in the 18
context indicates that Paul has the Spirit Himself in mind and 19
not the Spirit's power? Observe that in just a few verses away, 20
the apostle writes that the Spirit gives gifts as "He wills." An in- 21
fluence does not give gifts. A power does not have a will. And, 22
an influence or power is not a "He." That is why 1 Corinthians 23
12:3 does not support the Mormon doctrine. 24

(15). "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." 25
(Galatians 4:6). 26

1 The universal presence of the Holy Spirit is clearly shown by
2 this text. For how could the Spirit not be everywhere at the
3 same time if He resides in the heart of every believer? In their
4 insistence that He is spatially confined and in the form of a
5 man, the Mormons would rob us of the full blessing of salva-
6 tion by depriving of us the actual indwelling of the Spirit of
7 God. Galatians 4:6 does not support Mormon doctrine.

8 (16). "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"
9 (Acts 19:2)

10 The notion that it is receiving the Spirit's influence and not His
11 Person which was in Paul's question is shown to be incorrect
12 given the context. After being baptized in Christ's name the
13 Holy Spirit "came upon them." How does an influence come on
14 anything? The activity of the Person of the Holy Spirit often
15 indicates that it is His Person not His influence which is the
16 subject. Note, for example Isaiah 63:10: "They grieved His Holy
17 Spirit." How does one grieve an influence? Acts 19:2 does not
18 support Mormon doctrine.

19 (17). "The one and the same Spirit works all these things." (1
20 Corinthians 12:11)

21 In this verse we learn that the Holy Spirit provides charismata
22 to believers in Christ's "body" (i.e., the church) according to His
23 (the Spirit's) will. But, an influence, again, does not have a will.
24 However, the believers who comprise the Church are in many
25 locations. They are all over the world. Should we imagine that
26 the Spirit hurries around to every location wherein believers
27 reside to distribute His gifts? But why could He not from His

heavenly abode do this? It is because the context stipulates 1
that believers are baptized by the Spirit. If the Spirit resides 2
only in one place, then how can He baptize believers in many 3
places? 1 Corinthians 12:11 does not support Mormon doctrine. 4

(18). "Made alive by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3:18) 5

Again, it can be noted by texts as Luke 4:14, "Jesus returned in 6
the power of the Spirit," that the biblical writers differentiate 7
between the Spirit's power and the Spirit Himself. So, when 8
a text has as its named exclusive subject "the Spirit," without 9
reference to the Spirit's influence or power, one should take 10
this as a referent to the Holy Spirit Himself. But as those who 11
are being "made alive" are scattered about in many different 12
locations, it follows that the Spirit, Himself, is not confined to 13
one locality at a time. 1 Peter 3:18 does not support Mormon 14
doctrine. 15

(19). "The Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating 16
when He testified before hand the sufferings of Christ." 1 Peter 17
1:11 18

The Holy Spirit was in the Old Testament prophets (1:10) who 19
prophesied of Christ. But how could He be "in them" if He is 20
in the form of a man? That which is in the form of a person 21
cannot indwell many other persons. So, 1 Peter 1:11 does not 22
support Mormon doctrine. 23

(20). "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." Acts 2:17 24

1 But if the Holy Spirit is not universally present, then how can
2 He be poured out on “all flesh”? If He is in the form of a Man,
3 how is He “poured out” at all? The LDS teaching on the Person
4 of the Holy Spirit falters in view of what the Bible proclaims
5 about Him. Acts 2:17 does not support Mormon doctrine.

6 **Review Questions Chapter 3**

- 7 1. Define the Mormon teaching about the Person of the Spirit.
- 8 2. How do Genesis 42:25 and Haggai 2:7 conflict with Mormon
9 doctrine?
- 10 3. Where and how does the Bible distinguish between the
11 Person of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit?
- 12 4. What did Joe Smith say about himself that could be inter-
13 preted as a severe case of self- obsession?
- 14 5. What Mormon teaching does Hebrews 9:14 contradict and
15 why?
- 16 6. What do Mormons mean by “The Light of Christ”?
- 17 7. What are two views among evangelicals on “Spirit baptism”?
- 18 8. What Mormon teaching about the Spirit does 1 Kings 18:12
19 appear to refute?
- 20 9. How do believers confessing Jesus as Lord indicate that the
21 Spirit is not confined to one place at a time?

10. How does the Spirit being called a *paraklētos* contradict Mormon teaching? 1
2

End notes chapter 3

1

2 1. King Follet Discourse.

3 2. Daniel H. Ludlow (ed). *Jesus Christ and His Gospel*. (Salt Lake:
4 Deseret, 1992), 231.

5 3. Richard R. Hopkins. *Biblical Mormonism*. (Bountiful, Utah:
6 Horizon, 1994), 101.

7 4. David J. Ridges. *Mormon Beliefs and Doctrines Made Easier*.
8 (Springville, Utah: CFI,2007), 106.

9 5. *Gospel Principles*. (Salt Lake: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
10 Day Saints, 1997), 37.

11 6. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan. *The Vocabulary*
12 *of the Greek New Testament*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton,
13 1952), 485.

14 7. Ludlow, 231, 232.

15 8. Robert L. Millet. *LDS Beliefs*. (Salt Lake: Deseret, 2011), 393.

16 9. Hopkins, 58.

GOD'S UNITY AND TRINITY

Some definitions: By "being" and "essence" I refer to the same thing, namely the nature of God. By "Being" with a capital I refer to the one God, Himself. By "Persons" I refer to the three Members in the one Being.

True God has the qualities of God

Let's review some of the qualities or attributes of God according to the Bible. First, God is everywhere. "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You/ Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD?" (1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23). What other Being besides God in the Bible is said to be omnipresent? There is none! Second, God also knows everything. "I am God and there is none liked Me, Declaring the end from the beginning/ Known to God from eternity are all His works." (Isaiah 46:9, 10; Acts 15:18). What other Being besides God in the Bible is said to be omniscient? There is none! Third, God has all power. "I am God almighty/ Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" (Genesis 17:1/ 18:14). What other Being in the Bible is said to be omnipotent? There is none!

1 I believe that if an entity does not have these attributes
2 which God has, then that one is not really God. Yes, I know
3 that Mormons imagine that deceased, exalted humans have
4 the same powers of God “in heaven and on earth.”¹ But, what is
5 their Scriptural proof of that? I have seen no biblical evidence
6 offered in Mormon literature which shows that men become
7 all powerful. And, let the Mormons try to prove from the Bible
8 that what are sometimes called “gods” remotely resemble the
9 One who is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Yes,
10 some in the Bible are called “gods” but these have limited au-
11 thority or power under God over other individuals or instead
12 are false, non-existent, pagan deities. Mormons wish to make
13 you believe that such as these are really Gods. Mormons assert
14 that in order to attempt to convince you that the Mormon te-
15 nets of a plurality of deities and men becoming Gods are bibli-
16 cal truths. Don’t believe it. They are not biblical truths!

17 **Evangelical opinions about God**

18 Evangelicals, in contrast, believe that there is only one God but
19 that there are three eternal and equal, distinct members in the
20 one God whom we call “Persons.” These “Persons” are not sepa-
21 rate Beings but comprise only one Being which together we
22 call a “Trinity.” Are three “Persons” existing in one Being un-
23 like what we observe in all other living things including man?
24 Of course, but we believe that a triune God is what Scripture
25 teaches, and evangelicals don’t see it as biblical to create God
26 in man’s image. And, note that according to Ephesians 4:24
27 and Colossians 3:10 man existing in God’s image consists of
28 being righteous, holy, and knowledgeable, not in being like

God in the powers or components of His Being. So, we are not 1
required to say that since a human being is not three in one, 2
therefore God cannot be a Trinity in the sense that evangeli- 3
cals teach Him to be. 4

Evangelicals are committed to the belief in God's triune Being 5
because the Bible while naming three who are God speaks 6
of there being only one God: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our 7
God, the LORD is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4) Yes, I know that 8
Mormons have countered that this text means that Jehovah 9
(the Son) is only one God among the Gods and *Elohim* is an- 10
other, but it cannot be intelligently argued that *Jehovah* is a 11
different Being than *Elohim* as shown in both chapter two and 12
below. 13

Yet, it clearly is also taught in Scripture that the three Members 14
in God interact with each other. So, for want of a better term, 15
we call them "Persons." We see each of the "Persons" as an 16
eternal and equal subsistence in God who has the entirety 17
of the divine nature of God. The Father's nature is identical 18
to, not greater, than that of the Son and the Spirit. Rather, the 19
Three are equal in being. God cannot be greater than God be- 20
cause that which is less than God in essence and/or attributes 21
is not God. 22

The Father and the Son 23

It is true that some of the ways the Persons in God function 24
in interacting with the creation indicate that the Father in 25
some instances has an executive sort of position in how God 26

1 temporally relates to the world. But this is not a difference in
2 essence but a difference in role. How the Persons relate to the
3 universe is not necessarily indicative of how the Persons re-
4 late to each other within God. The Father, for example, eco-
5 nomically sent the self-humbled One (“he humbled Himself”-
6 Philippians 2:8) into the world (Galatians 4:4), but the Son of
7 God ontologically is glorious (John 1:14), is in the Father’s bo-
8 som (John1:18), and shares in the Father’s glory just as John
9 17:5 reads,

10 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with
11 Yourself, with the glory which I had with you
12 before the world was.

13 I should comment on John 17:5 though it is a bit technical.
14 “With you” is a good translation of the Greek (*para soi*). While
15 the preposition (*para*) when used with a genitive substantive
16 can mean “from” here it is used with the dative pronoun (*soi*)
17 and so indicates only a nearness.² Therefore, it is incorrect to
18 interpret John 17:5 as meaning that in His pre-incarnate state
19 the Son’s glory was given Him by the Father. Eternally He
20 shared the same glory with the Father; the Father did not pro-
21 vide the Son’s deity with glory. Yet in His humanity, the Son
22 is glorified (Philippians 2:9) by the Father. So, accordingly, I ar-
23 gue that temporal activities among the Persons in the Trinity
24 do not necessarily reflect eternal relationships.

25

Mormon arguments for the plurality of God 1

Mormons, of course, deny that there is only one God. Brigham Young, for example, declared, "How many Gods there are I do not know." To give credence to such an exclamation -- which obviously contradicts the shema in Deuteronomy 6:4 -- the Mormon apologists work hard to argue for a plurality of Gods. I will respond below to ten of their arguments.

1. Mormons may say the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:16, 17 shows that there are at least three separate Gods.

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold the heavens were open to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

I will first respond by noting that Christ's humanity, that which was born and died, was baptized not His deity. I don't believe that God who fills heaven and earth (Ephesians 4:10) or is with believers everywhere (Matthew 28:20) can be covered by water. Therefore, it should not be argued that Jesus' baptism is evidence that the Son and the Father are separate Beings. His humanity is different from His deity. In one nature He wearies at Jacob's well (John 4:6). In the other He upholds the universe (Colossians 1:17). I then will contend that the Mormon position is in error because The Spirit and the Father

1 are one Being as God's activities of indwelling believers and
2 creating the universe demonstrate.

3 So, Mormons say that since we see the Son being baptized, the
4 Spirit descending, and the Father speaking from heaven the
5 Three must be different Gods. But, as said, I instead see it that
6 the nature of the One who was baptized in His humanity is
7 different in nature from the Father, but He in His divinity is
8 the same in essence as the Father. It was He who in a human
9 nature in the flesh grew in size and knowledge (Luke 2:52),
10 that was tempted by the devil, and later suffered under the
11 whip and expired on the cross which was baptized. One can-
12 not kill God!

13 Such conditions and experiences cannot be applicable to the
14 almighty (Revelation 1:8) and unchangeable (Hebrews 1:11, 12)
15 Son of God. It was not God the Son as He exists in His divin-
16 ity which was being baptized, but it was instead the Son in
17 the human nature which He added to His eternal Person by
18 "Taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness
19 of men" (Philippians 2:7).

20 This One being baptized, therefore, was not God as God is
21 but was Christ who "had to be made"-- and therefore, He was
22 not before—"like His brethren." (Hebrews 2:17). That, by the
23 way, evidences that God is not a man since Jesus was not a
24 man before His incarnation. That the divine nature of the
25 One being baptized cannot be localized, which was required
26 in the baptismal experience, is proven by His filling the uni-
27 verse (Ephesians 4:10) and residing within believers all over
28 the world (Colossians 1:27). How could He who in His deity is

everywhere be covered with water? That which is baptized is
only His humanity.

It will not do, therefore, to argue that Christ in His baptism
must be equivalent to Christ in His nature as God. Therefore,
the argument that Matthew 3:16, 17 evidences there being
three Gods is mistaken because Christ in His deity is not con-
fined to the body which was baptized. The essence of God the
Son is not proven as being different from the essence of the
Father because it was only Christ in His humanity that was
baptized. In His deity, Christ is the same God as the Father. But,
there remains the issue of whether The Father and the Holy
Spirit are the same God.

We might note that in Matthew 3:16, 17 God the Holy Spirit
being manifested spatially in the appearance of a dove need
not be evidence either that the Spirit is a different Being than
God the Father. One reads in 1 Corinthians 3:17 that believers
are the temples of God. I take "God" here to refer to the Father
as in chapter 3 this appears to be Paul's meaning (e.g., 3:23).
So, how does God the Father dwell in believers? Well, as 3:16
states, it is by "the Spirit of God (who) dwells in you." In other
words, the Father dwelling in believers is synonymous with
the Spirit dwelling in believers. That demonstrates that the
Father and the Spirit, while different "Persons" (given their in-
teractions as in John 14:16 and Acts 2:7) are one and the same
Being. They are one God.

Therefore, that God's voice came from heaven does not require
that the Father is different in being from He who is descend-
ing like a dove. In Psalm 104, for example, God *Elohim* whom

1 Mormons say is the Father and *Jehovah* whom Mormons say
2 is the Son are both named as being involved in creation. But so
3 is the Holy Spirit (Psalm104:30); He also creates. These three
4 are each involved in doing the same thing. But only one God
5 created. In other words, the Three are the same divine Being.

6 That only one God created is proven by texts as Revelation
7 10:6:

8 And swore by Him (note: **not by Them**) who
9 lives for ever and ever, who created heaven and
10 all the things that are in it, the earth and the
11 things that are in it, and the sea and the things
12 that are in it.

13 Please note that the verb translated “created” (that is *ktizō*
14 in its present tense, form) in the original Greek is singular in
15 number which demonstrates that only one Being is the subject
16 of that verb not three! Yet, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit
17 each created. Three in One! Thus, the unity of God is clearly
18 evidenced despite there being three “Persons” involved in the
19 creation! The three “Persons” are one and the same God. Why
20 are Mormons teaching that Persons in the Godhead are differ-
21 ent Gods? It better correlates to their heresy that we may be-
22 come Gods too. Recall Joe’s admonition “You have got to learn
23 to be Gods yourselves.” (King Follet Discourse)

24 2. Mormons may say that as Christ was incarnated, that dem-
25 onstrates His not being in the same essence as the Father.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among 1
us, and we beheld His glory, as of the only be- 2
gotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. 3
(John 1:14) 4

Mormons argue that as the Son is said to incarnate but the 5
Father did not, that shows that the Two cannot be one in es- 6
sence. What Mormons cannot concede is that our Lord's be- 7
coming human was not a changing of His divine nature but 8
adding humanity to His Person. In His divinity the Son re- 9
mains a Person in the one God. 10

Christ's Person includes the unchangeable divine nature + 11
the added human nature. This subject is thoroughly covered 12
in chapter 2, but in brief review we should remind ourselves 13
again of Paul's teaching in Philippians 2:6, 7: (1) The Son exists 14
in God's nature (note: not natures; there is only one nature in 15
God. As there is only one divine nature, there is only one God. 16
Form" refers to nature. In verse 6 the verb "being" (that is "ex- 17
isting") is present tense, so the Son never gave up that divine 18
nature. He remains fully God even though He became human 19
as well. (2) Then, verses 7 and 8 tell us that the Son who eter- 20
nally and immutably (Hebrews 1:12) exists in God's nature also 21
took the nature of a bondservant which is human. One nature 22
plus one nature equals two natures. In His first and almighty 23
nature He remains one in essence or being with the Father, 24
but in His second, He has a limited human nature . That was 25
required because only as man could He could die for our sins. 26
As God He could not. Mormons, who just don't get it, make a 27

1 huge theological mistake in their denial of the two natures in
2 Christ.

3 3. Mormons may say *Elohim* and *Jehovah* (that is, “Yahweh”)
4 are two different Gods.

5 If Mormons can convincingly support this, then belief in there
6 only one divine Being is shown to be compromised. But in my
7 view the Old Testament clearly teaches that the two are the
8 same God. Recall that in the King James translation *Elohim*
9 is rendered “God” and *Jehovah* is LORD. (“Lord” with only
10 the first letter capitalized would be *Adonay*). But, the names
11 *Elohim* and *Jehovah* appear together over and over again in
12 ways which can only be understood as the two referencing
13 the same God. Here are a few examples which show that the
14 two are one:

15 (1).Genesis 2:4: “The LORD God made the earth.” But as
16 Revelation 10:6 demonstrates, only one God created. Note also
17 Malachi 2:10: “Has not one God created us?” If just one God
18 created us, and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each were in-
19 volved in creation, then how are these three separate and dif-
20 ferent Gods? So, “LORD God” in Genesis 2:4 should be under-
21 stood not as there being two Gods but one.

22 (2). Exodus 5:3: “Sacrifice to the LORD our God lest He fall on
23 us with pestilence or the sword.” But observe that the verse re-
24 fers the LORD God as “He” not “Them.” The pronoun evidences
25 that only one Being is the referent.

(3). Leviticus 26:13: "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt." But aside from the singularity of the pronoun "I," it can be noted that texts as Exodus 4:5 demonstrate that Moses taught that only one God was responsible for liberating the Hebrews and He is the LORD God.

(4). Numbers 23:19, 21: "God is not a man (and) The LORD his God is with him." The context shows that only one Individual is meant by the LORD God as He is not said not to be "men" but not to be a "man." (verse 19).

(5). Deuteronomy 10:12, 13: "Fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways...and to keep the commandments of the LORD." In addition to the LORD GOD again being identified by the singular "His," we should observe that the commandments are those given by only one Being, one God, not several (Psalm 119:115) See also Mark 7:9 "the commandment of God." God in the Greek in this verse is the genitive singular *theou*. As only one God gave the commandments, "LORD" and "God" are the same Being.

(6). Joshua 22:34: "The LORD is God." The unity of the divine Being is here demonstrated by the fact that "LORD" (*Jehovah* i.e., *Yahweh*) is in the singular form. It does not say "LORDS." So, the LORD is one God. And, just as there is only one *Jehovah* (Deuteronomy 6:4) so there also is only one *Elohim*: "Besides Me there is no Elohim." (Isaiah 44:6).

(7). Judges 2:12: "They forsook the LORD God of their fathers." However, their fathers had only one real God. See, for example,

1 Genesis 12:1-4 and the calling of Abraham where four times
2 the LORD is called "I," He is not called "We"!

3 One could proceed through the entire Old Testament provid-
4 ing such evidences. Yes, I know that Mormons teach that it is
5 God the Son only who is *Jehovah*, and so references to LORD
6 God are to be limited to only one God in the Godhead not the
7 two others. But I believe that I have shown here and in chap-
8 ter two that this this teaching is in error.

9 4. Mormons may say 1 Corinthians 8:5 shows there are many
10 Gods.

11 For even if there are so- called gods, whether
12 in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods
13 and many lords) yet for us there is one God, the
14 Father of whom are all things, and we for Him;
15 and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are
16 all things, and through whom we live. (1 Corin-
17 thians 8:5,6)

18 As said above, Mormons grasp at any possibilities to find in
19 the Bible proofs that there are many gods. However, in verse
20 4 we read, "there is no other God but one." Therefore, the idols
21 mentioned in verse 4 are not really Gods.

22 5. Mormons may say that Jesus referred to other gods, there-
23 fore there are more Gods than one.

24 Jesus answered them, is it not written in your
25 law, "I said you are gods. If He called then god to

whom the word of God came (and the Scripture
cannot be broken). (John 10:34) 1
2

Of whom is our Lord speaking? His referent is in Psalm 82. 3
These are human judges tasked with the function to defend 4
the poor and do justice. They were called “gods” because they 5
worked under divine authority. But instead look at how they 6
act and consider their future. Mormons would have you be- 7
lieve that these individuals who lacked understanding, who 8
walked in darkness, and who were subject to death are Gods! 9
If you really believe that such conditions are true of Gods, 10
then, yes, be a Mormon. 11

6. Mormons may say that the plural *Elohim* means Gods. 12

The Mormon Elder B.H. Roberts, said to have been “a brilliant 13
thinker,” contends that the plural noun *Elohim* translated in 14
the King James Version as “God” in Genesis 1 and all through 15
the Old Testament means “Gods.”⁴ While it is true that *Elohim* 16
is a plural noun, that does not require it to be understood as in- 17
dicating that two or more Beings are the subjects of the verbs 18
in, for example, Genesis chapter one. First note that while the 19
noun is plural in form the verbs are all singular denoting that 20
the Being doing the action of the verb is one. 21

For example: 1:1: God created; 1:3: God said; 1:4: God saw; 1:5: 22
God called; 1:7: God made. 23

Second, competent Jewish scholars translated *Elohim* with the 24
singular form of *Theos* (not the plural *Theoi*) when translat- 25
ing the Old Testament into Greek a couple of centuries before 26

1 Christ. Third, Jews understand *Elohim* as being one God as,
2 for example, as taught in the midrash of 300-500 C.E called
3 Bereshit Rabbah. But even more significant is that when the
4 inspired author of Hebrews quoted from Psalm 45:6, “Your
5 throne O *Elohim* is forever,” he translated “*Elohim*” by the
6 Greek singular “*Theos*.” (Hebrews 1:8) So, Mormons are in con-
7 tradiction to the inspired author of Hebrews! But how many
8 Mormons realize this? The plural *Elohim* is used of God to in-
9 dicate His greatness.

10 7. Mormons may say that Three divine Beings are alluded to
11 in Acts 7:55, 56

12 But he being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into
13 heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus
14 standing at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55)

15 The reader is invited to review the comment on Matthew
16 3:16, 17 above. “Jesus standing” cannot be a reference to the de-
17 ity of Christ as in that divine nature Jesus fills the universe
18 (Ephesians 4:24) and the universe was created through Him
19 (Hebrews 1:2). Shall we believe that a man standing on two legs
20 created all things? Well, if one is Mormon, I suppose so. But I
21 prefer to believe that He who is standing is the one who was
22 not before human but was made “like His brethren” (Hebrews
23 2:17) and “became flesh” (John 1:14) which He previously was
24 not. As to being at the “right hand of God,” that expression de-
25 notes being in a position of power as texts like Psalm 80:17 and
26 110:1 demonstrate.

8. Mormons may say that as Christ is the Son of the Father, He cannot be the same in nature as the Father.

Within evangelicalism there have been several understandings expressed regarding the meaning of "Son of God." One is that the Son in His deity eternally is "generated" by the Father" in an ongoing, undefined, process (see chapter 2). A second is that being "Son of" requires Christ who in His divinity is equal in essence with the Father nevertheless is eternally role subordinate to the Father. Yet another is that "son of" denotes being of the same kind. So, in the Old Testament "son of" can indicate membership in a profession or guild. A "son of the troop" would be a member of the troop. Then, "Son of God" would mean He is God. And, we can note that when Jesus said that He was "Son of God," the Jews accused Him of making Himself "equal with God" (not with Gods-John 5:18). So, given John 5:18 and Philippians 2:6 as well, in my opinion, "Son of God" means being God.

The reader is invited to read below to be reminded of how the same attributes existing between the Father and the Son evidence that these Two are equal. But not only are they equal in nature, They comprise only one Being as there is only one God:

"Besides Me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6).

"I am God and there is no other" (Isaiah 46:9).

"The only God" (John 5:44).

1 "No other God but one" (1 Corinthians 8:4)

2 But, Christ is included that one God:

3 "The Word was God" (John 1:3)

4 "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28)

5 "Therefore God" (Hebrews 1:9)

6 "Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

7 Given that some (see the New World Translation rendition of
8 Titus 2:13) have supposed that while Christ is Savior, He is not
9 identified as "God" in Titus 2:13. I hope the reader will forgive
10 me for being a bit technical in regard to this text. It should
11 be noted that in the original language of the New Testament
12 when two singular nouns of the same case (God, Savior which
13 here are both genitive singular) are joined by the conjunction
14 (*kai*) and only the first noun is modified by the article ("the")
15 then both nouns refer to the same individual. Christ, there-
16 fore, is both our Savior and our God. All praise to Him! (Note
17 that Titus 2:13 does not say that He is "one of the Gods.")

18 9. Mormons may say that as the Bible repeatedly states that
19 the LORD is "the God of gods" there must be many who are
20 Gods.

21 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord
22 of lords. (Deuteronomy 10:17; Joshua 22:22;
23 Daniel 11:36)

But these other “gods” were not gods at all but were “the work of men’s hands-wood and stone.” (2 Kings 19:18; Isaiah 37:19). They were but “molded gods.” (Leviticus 19:4). Can we forget that Israel soon after being redeemed from Egypt made itself a golden calf which they then pronounced to be god and began worshipping as god? (Exodus 32) Likewise, that the Lord God is “God of gods” does not prove a plurality of divine beings but alludes instead to the false religions of those who make and worship idols. And, for Mormons to build their doctrine of deity on such texts which allude to these practices shows the extent of the Mormon willingness to depart from the biblical doctrine of God.

10. Mormons may say that as Christ was exalted by the Father in Philippians 2 and Psalm 45, Christ cannot be the same in being with the Father.

Were Mormons to simply acknowledge that when Christ became flesh He could not change in His deity (Hebrews 1:12; 2:9, 14, 17), then they would find that much in the Gospels would make more sense. Do Mormons really believe that God’s nature falls asleep in a boat (Mark 4:38) or does not know some things (Mark 13:32) or sweats (Luke 22:44) or dies (John 19:33)? Yes, I guess they must. But were they to without qualification acknowledge that God is “almighty” (Genesis 17:1), I think they would question that Christ, as God, needs to take naps or is ignorant of some things or sweats fearing death or was murdered. To me it clearly is the case that such experiences as those are true only of His humanity not of His deity. But in Mormonism the difference between humanity and deity

1 seems negligible. But in the Bible, that difference is extremely
2 great.

3 So, in regard to the exaltation of Christ by the Father, we
4 should feel obliged to inquire whether it is Christ as man or
5 Christ as God who is exalted. For this purpose we can turn to
6 Philippians 2:8,9 and read,

7 And being found in the appearance of a man,
8 He humbled Himself and became obedient to
9 the point of death, even the death of the cross.

10 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him.

11 It was as man, then, that Christ was exalted. The anointing of
12 the Son in Psalm 45:7 clearly does not correspond to the ex-
13 altation of Christ in Philippians 2 since in the former the Son
14 in majesty sits on an eternal throne. Nor is there anything in
15 Psalm 45 to suggest that Christ was exalted into deity. But, in
16 the latter the Son in humbleness dies on a cross. It therefore,
17 follows that as Christ was exalted in His manhood, not in His
18 deity, the exaltation of Christ does not prove Him to be a dif-
19 ferent Being than God the Father.

20 Before concluding this book, I would like to argue that as the
21 Three Persons in God have the same attributes, the same titles,
22 and do the same works that the Three are one God. The Father,
23 of course, has not in New Testament interpretation often had
24 His deity questioned. We should remind ourselves then of
25 how the Son and the Spirit are equal to the Father in powers,
26 titles, and works.

So, let's observe that the Son is said to be immutable (Hebrews 13:8), eternal (John 1:1), all powerful (Revelation 1:8), omnipresent (Ephesians 1:23) and omniscient (John 16:30). Also, note that the Son is given the same titles given the Father as God (John 20:28) and Lord. (Revelation 17:14). Furthermore, The Son was involved with the Father in both creation (Colossians 1:16) and salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:9). And, finally we should be reminded that His name is put on equal footing with that of the Father (Matthew 20:19). So, all of these things are said of Christ. But note: There is none like God except God Himself (Isaiah 46:9). So, Christ is included in that one God.

Likewise, the Holy Spirit is said in Scripture to be omnipresent (Psalm 139:7), omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10) and eternal (Hebrews 9:4). Also, the Spirit is referred to as both Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17) and God (Acts 5:3, 4). And, the Spirit also is involved in both creation (Genesis 1:2) and salvation (John 3:8). Finally, we must recall that the Holy Spirit is put on the same footing as the Father (2 Corinthians 13:14). But, again note that there are none like God but God Himself! (Isaiah 46:9) So, the Holy Spirit is included in that one God.

Review questions chapter 4

1. What Mormon teaching does Deuteronomy 6:43 refute?
2. How does God creating indicate He is a Trinity?
3. Explain what shows Robertson's understanding of *Elohim* is incorrect.

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- 1 4. How do Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10 define God's im-
- 2 age in man?
- 3 5. Explain how John 4:6 and Colossians 1:17 can be harmonized.
- 4 6. Comment on the meaning of Philippians 2:6, 7.
- 5 7. What are some qualities of the true God?
- 6 8. How does Malachi 2:7 refute Mormon doctrine?
- 7 9. What shows that John 10:34 cannot refer to real Gods?
- 8 10. What evidences that Christ in His divinity was not
- 9 baptized?

Endnotes chapter 4

1

1. Bruce R. McConkie. *Mormon Doctrine*. (Salt Lake, 1966), 257. 2

2. Daniel B. Wallace. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 378. 3
4

3. Brigham Young. *Discourses*. 7.333. 5

4. B.H. Roberts. *Mormon Doctrine of Deity*, (Bountiful Utah: Horizon, 1982), 139. 6
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