

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

# Adam-God

A PROJECT OF [MORMONISM RESEARCH MINISTRY](#)

*Brigham Young's Adam-God teaching and Mormonism's subsequent damage control*

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## Overview

According to scholar David John Buerger, Brigham Young clearly taught that

“Adam was the father of the spirits of mankind in addition to being the first procreator of mankind’s physical bodies; that Adam came to this earth as a resurrected and exalted being; that he ‘fell’ to a mortal state of existence in order to procreate mortal bodies; and that Adam was the spiritual and physical father of Jesus Christ.” (*Dialogue*, vol. 15, no. 1, p. 45)

According to the [Institute for Religious Research](#),

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“While not a doctrine believed by most LDS people today, there can be no doubt that Brigham Young believed and taught that Adam was God the Father, the God of this earth, and the Father of Jesus in the flesh. President Young taught this for over 20 years, claiming it was from the Lord, only to have later Mormon Prophet Spencer W. Kimball declare this false doctrine.”

Mormon Mark Butler [puts it bluntly](#):

“[T]he historical record does rather more than suggest Brigham Young taught Adam God. He gave a rather extensive discourse on the subject in General Conference on October 8, 1854. This caused a big controversy that kept it from becoming the doctrine of the Church and instead transformed it from official mystery to official denial to official heresy to official mystery again over the past one hundred and fifty years.”

Mormon apostle Bruce McConkie states that if anyone teaches a false doctrine like Adam-God, then he will be damned:

“You talk about teaching false doctrine and being damned. Here is a list of false doctrines that if anyone teaches he will be damned. And there is not one of these that I have ever known to be taught in the Church, but I am giving you the list for a perspective because of what will follow. Teach that God is a Spirit, the sectarian trinity. Teach that salvation comes by grace alone, without works. Teach original guilt, or birth sin, as they express it. Teach infant baptism. Teach predestination. Teach that revelation and gifts and miracles have ceased. Teach the Adam-God theory (that does apply in the Church). Teach that we should practice plural marriage today. Now, any of those are doctrines that damn” (*Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, p. 337).

BYU professor Stephen E. Robinson summarizes the popular Mormon approach to the problem:

“So how do Latter-day Saints deal with the phenomenon? We don’t; we simply set it aside. It is an anomaly.” (*Are Mormons Christians?*, p. 19)

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## Evidence<sup>1</sup>

Circa July, 1839	Joseph Smith	<a href="#"><i>History of the Church</i>, 3:385-88</a>
February 16, 1847	Brigham Young	<a href="#"><i>Wilford Woodruff's Journal</i>, Vol. 3, p. 132</a>
April 9, 1852	Brigham Young	<a href="#"><i>Journal of Discourses</i> 1:50-51</a>
April 9, 1852	Hosea Stout	<a href="#"><i>Hosea Stout Journal</i>, vol. 2, p. 436</a>
April 9, 1852	Wilford Woodruff	<a href="#"><i>Wilford Woodruff's Journal</i></a>
April 10, 1852	Wilford Woodruff	<a href="#"><i>Wilford Woodruff's Journal</i></a>
April 16, 1852	Samuel Holister Rogers	<a href="#"><i>Journal of Samuel Holister Rogers</i> 1:179</a>
August 28, 1852	Brigham Young	<a href="#"><i>Journal of Discourses</i>, volume 6, p. 275</a>
November 26, 1853		<a href="#"><i>Millennial Star</i>, no. 48, vol. 15</a>
December 10, 1853		<a href="#"><i>Millennial Star</i> No. 50, vol. 15</a>
February 19, 1854	Wildford Woodruff	<a href="#"><i>Wilford Woodruff's Journal</i>, vol. 4, p. 250</a>
August 26, 1854	Franklin D. Richards	<a href="#"><i>Millennial Star</i>, August 26, 1854, vol.16, p.534</a>
October 6, 1854	Joseph Lee Robinson	<a href="#"><i>Diary of Joseph Lee Robinson</i>, Oct. 6, 1854, pg. 102-103</a>
October 8, 1854	Brigham Young	<a href="#"><i>Unpublished Brigham Young Discourse LDS General Conference - October 8, 1854 -</i></a>

<sup>1</sup> This list is currently being developed.

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		<a href="#">Brigham Young Papers, Ms d 1234 ff marked: Addresses-1854, July - Oct.</a>
May 6, 1855	Wilford Woodruff	<a href="#">Journal of Wilford Woodruff, CHO, Ms/f/115; May 6, 1855</a>
December 15, 1855	Franklin D. Richards	<a href="#">Millennial Star, Vol 17:785-786</a>
March 11, 1856	Wildford Woodruff	<a href="#">Journal of Wilford Woodruff</a>
April 20, 1856	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses 3:319-320</a>
June 29, 1856	Heber C. Kimball	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, 4:1</a>
1856		<a href="#">Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 11th Edition, Liverpool, 1856</a>
February 8, 1857	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 4, pp. 217-219</a>
March 8, 1857	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 4, p. 271</a>
October 7, 1857	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 5, p. 331-332</a>
October 9, 1859	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Dicourses, vol. 7, pp. 285-290</a>
April 4, 1860		<a href="#">Minutes of Meeting, at Historian's Office</a>
April 5, 1860		<a href="#">Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the Twelve</a>
June 12, 1860	Heber C. Kimball	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 8, pp. 243-24</a>
June 27, 1860	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Deseret News</a>

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September 4, 1860	Wildford Woodruff	<a href="#">Journal of Wilford Woodruff</a>
October 14, 1860	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Wilford Woodruff</a>
February 3, 1861	John D. Lee	<a href="#">The Diaries of John D. Lee</a>
October 8, 1861	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Brigham Young Papers</a>
January 12, 1862	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 9, pp. 147-150</a>
November 6, 1862	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 10, pp. 353-357</a>
July 8, 1863	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 10, pp. 230-231</a>
December 16, 1867	Wilford Woodruff	<a href="#">Journal of Wilford Woodruff</a>
January 24, 1868	Wilford Woodruff	<a href="#">Undetermined</a>
June 8, 1868	Orson Pratt and Brigham Young	<a href="#">Minutes of the School of the Prophets, Provo, Utah, 1868-71, p. 38</a>
July 4, 1868		<a href="#">Historian's Office Journal</a>
December 11, 1869	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal History</a>
April 18, 1870	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 13, pp. 311</a>
January 25, 1871	Jans Christian Anderson Weibye Daybooks	<a href="#">Jans Christian Anderson Weibye Daybooks</a>
May 7, 1871	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 14, p. 111</a>
June 17, 1871	Joseph F. Smith	<a href="#">Joseph F. Smith Journal</a>

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June 8, 1873	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Deseret News, vol. 22, no. 308</a>
June 18, 1873	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Deseret News, vol. 22, no. 308</a>
August 31, 1873	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Journal of Discourses, vol. 16, p. 167</a>
May 14, 1876	Brigham Young	<a href="#">Undetermined</a>
February 7, 1877	John Nuttall	<a href="#">Quoted in David John Buerger's <i>The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship</i>, 111-112</a>
February 10, 1877	John Nuttall	<a href="#">Journal of L. John Nuttall</a>
February 12, 1877	John Nuttall	<a href="#">Journal of L. John Nuttall</a>
February 13, 1877	John Nuttall	<a href="#">Journal of L. John Nuttall</a>
1877	Edward Tullidge	<a href="#">Undetermined</a>
1888	Abraham H. Cannon	<a href="#">Diary of Abraham H. Cannon</a>
1895	Wilford Woodruff	<a href="#">Millennial Star 57:355</a>
January 7, 1897	Joseph F. Smith	<a href="#">Letter to the Honorable A. Saxey, Provo, Utah from Joseph F. Smith; d1325/Bk4/fd 1</a>
December 18, 1897	Franklin D. Richards	<a href="#">Letter of F. D. Richards, Richards Family Collection, Franklin Dewey Richards Letterbook; Ms/f/318/reel 11</a>
Spetember, 1902	Charles Penrose	<a href="#">Improvement Era (September 1902) and Millennial Star (11 December 1902)</a>

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June 27, 1908	Samuel O. Bennion	<a href="#">Liahona, The Elders Journal, vol. 6, p. 33</a>
1909	Joseph Fielding Smith	<a href="#">Undetermined</a>
April, 1915	Charles Penrose	<a href="#">General Conference</a>
April, 1916	Charles Penrose	<a href="#">General Conference</a>
October, 1916	Joseph F. Smith	<a href="#">General Conference</a>
September 6, 1917	George C. Jamoson	<a href="#">General Conference</a>
July 23, 1921	B.H. Roberts	<a href="#">Deseret News</a>
February 26, 1931	Heber J. Grant	<a href="#">Messages from the First Presidency, 5:289-290</a>
April 15, 1938	Joseph Fielding Smith	<a href="#">Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, p. 96</a>
December 12, 1943	John Widtsoe	<a href="#">Improvement Era 46:769; cf. Evidences and Reconciliations, p. 56</a>
March 22, 1949	Milton R. Hunter	<a href="#">Provo Herald</a>
1953	Rodney Turner	<a href="#">M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University</a>
1954	Joseph Fielding Smith	<a href="#">Doctrines of Salvation 1:96</a>
1958	Bruce R. McConkie	<a href="#">Mormon Doctrine, 1st ed., pp. 17-18</a>
April 10, 1965	Joseph Fielding Smith	<a href="#">"Marriage And Family Are To Be Forever", The Deseret News [Church News]</a>



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

April 29, 1966	Reed C. Durham, Jr.	<a href="#">Undetermined</a>
May 11, 1966	LeGrand Richards	<a href="#">Letter</a>
1966	Joseph Fielding Smith	<a href="#">Answers to Gospel Questions, vol. 5</a>
October, 1976	Spencer W. Kimball	<a href="#">"Adam-God Theory Denounced," LDS Church News</a>
1976	Mark E. Peterson	<a href="#">Undetermined</a>
1978	Elden Watson	<a href="#">Undetermined</a>
1979	Mark E. Peterson	<a href="#">Adam: Who Is He? [1979], pp. 16-17</a>
June 1, 1980	Bruce McConkie	<a href="#">BYU Speech</a>
December, 1980	Mark E. Peterson	<a href="#">Ensign, November 1980</a>
February 19, 1981	Bruce McConkie	<a href="#">Private correspondence</a>
1985	Bruce McConkie	<a href="#">New Witness for the Articles of Faith, ch. 12</a>
1998	Stephen E. Robinson	<a href="#">Are Mormons Christian?</a>
January 21, 2002	Gordon B. Hinckley	<a href="#">The New Yorker</a>
April 23, 2006	Robert L. Millet	<a href="#">Public dialog between Robert Millet and Greg Johnson held at Mt. Olympus Presbyterian</a>
May 25, 2006	Blake Ostler	<a href="#">Blog comment</a>



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August 7, 2009

Matthew B. Brown

[Paper presented at the 2009 FAIR Conference, Sandy, Utah.](#)

## Further reading

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### Mainstream LDS

- [The Position of Adam in Latter-Day Saints Scripture and Theology](#), by Rodney Turner - "A thesis submitted to the faculty of the division of religion of Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the master of arts"
- [Brigham Young's Teachings on Adam](#) (PDF), by Matthew B. Brown (2009 FAIR presentation)
- [Adam-God's Last Stand](#), by W. John Walsh
- [What About the Adam-God Theory?](#), by Van Hale (fringe Mormon)
- [Bruce McConkie's Letter of Rebuke to Professor Eugene England](#)
- [Can Anyone Articulate Adam-God?](#), by Sam MB (ByCommonConsent.com)
- [Adam-God: Thoughts and Reconciliations](#) (PDF), by Nathan Oman
- [Six Reactions to the Adam-God Theory](#), by Brian C. Hales
- [Fundamental Teachings About Adam - The First Man](#), by Brian C. Hales
- [Different Thoughts - Adam-God](#), by Elden Watson

### Other

- [Conflict in the Quorum: Orson Pratt, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith](#), by Gary James Bergera (Signature Books, 2002)
- [The Adam-God Doctrine](#) (PDF), by David John Buerger - From Dialogue, volume 15, number 1, Spring 1982.
- ["Adam-God" - Brigham Young's Theory or Divine Doctrine?](#), by Bill McKeever (Mormonism Research Ministry)

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- [The Adam-God Doctrine](#), by Jerald and Sandra Tanner
- [Another botched joke?](#), by Bill McKeever
- [Adam-God doctrine](#) (Wikipedia)
- [Adam-God Doctrine](#) (MormonThink)

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<https://www.adamgod.com/>