

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## The Names of God in the Old Testament: The Implications for the Mormon Doctrine of Deity

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What is in a name? A great deal, if it proclaims and describes to us what kind of a person God is. Today names are significant, but they were held in even greater importance in the culture of ancient Israel. Individuals were sometimes renamed to reflect certain character traits, as were Abram (changed to Abraham, meaning “father of a multitude,” Genesis 17:5), Jacob (changed to Israel, meaning “ruling with God,” Genesis 35:10), and Simon (changed to Peter, meaning “stone,” Matthew 16:18).

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In the Bible God is called by many names which describe different facets of His nature, attributes, and character. A few of the Old Testament names for God and their meanings are: El-Elyon, “The Most High God”, Jehovah-Jirah, “The Lord will provide”, Jehovah-Shalom, “The Lord of Peace”, and El-Shaddai, “The Almighty God”. There are three primary names for God - Elohim, Jehovah (Yahweh), and Adonai — which everyone should have some understanding of to make their study of the Bible more meaningful. A code system in the King James Version Bible designates which divine name(s) is used in a given passage. This knowledge is very useful in evaluating the validity of the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon Church). In our experience, we have not found one Mormon who can explain the discrepancies between the Mormon Church’s doctrine of God and how these three names of God are used in the Old Testament; indeed, most Mormons are apparently not even aware of the huge problem that exists in this regard.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One Mormon who is aware of the problem, though we have not met him, is Boyd Kirkland. He has written: “While Elohim and Jehovah appear very frequently in the Old Testament, these divine names do

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This article begins by looking at how the code system works. It then examines some specific Old Testament passages to see how knowing which Hebrew name for God is used in a passage contributes to a more accurate understanding of the biblical teaching.

## The KJV Bible's System for Designating the Divine Names

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If you look at the KJV text carefully, you will notice that Deity is variously referred to as "God", "GOD", "Lord", "LORD," or some combination of these terms. These different English words and spelling variations were used by the King James translators to designate the various Hebrew words and names for God in the Old Testament. As has been noted, the three primary Hebrew words for God are Elohim, Jehovah (or Yahweh), and Adonai.

**Elohim.** This is a general Hebrew term for Deity that designates God as our Creator and the object of all true worship. It occurs 2,570 times in the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> The King James translators rendered this Hebrew word as "God." Notice that God in this instance is spelled with a capital "G" and with the letters "od" written in lower case. It is thought by many scholars to be related to the Hebrew word El, meaning "strength," "mighty," or "the Almighty."

While Elohim is plural in form, when it refers to the true God, it designates only one Divine Being. We know this because it is consistently used with singular verbs, and with adjectives and pronouns in the singular, so that by the rules of Hebrew grammar it must be understood and translated as singular.<sup>3</sup> Joseph Smith revealed his superficial understanding of Hebrew by arguing that Elohim must be translated "Gods" on the basis of its plural form. He showed no understanding of the elementary fact that it is

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not designate two different gods with a Father-Son relationship as they do in Mormonism." See, "Elohim and Jehovah in Mormonism and the Bible," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 19:1 (Spring 1986), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Jack B. Scott, "elohim," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:44.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. So also the standard Hebrew grammar, E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd English ed., A. E. Cowley, trans. (London: Oxford University Press, 1910, 1976), pp. 398, 399: "That the language has entirely rejected the idea of the numerical plurality of *elohim* (whenever it denoted the one God), is proved especially by its being almost invariably joined with a singular attribute."

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consistently used with singular verbs, adjectives and pronouns when referring to the true God, and the implications of this usage.<sup>4</sup>

Because Elohim is a general term for God, it is also used when describing false gods. For instance, Exodus 20:2-3 declares: "I am the LORD thy God [Elohim] which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt ... Thou shalt have no other gods [elohim] before me." Since the same word is used for the one true God and for false gods, the KJV translators simply used a capital "G" and made it singular when the context is speaking of the one true God, to prevent confusion. However, it is important to understand that they followed the rules of Hebrew grammar in rendering Elohim singular when it refers to the true God; thus, in the verse above, the pronoun used with God is singular ("I") and the verb form of the Hebrew word translated as "brought" is also singular. These grammatical cues require the word Elohim to be translated as singular in this and similar instances.

In a handful of its 2,570 occurrences Elohim is used with plural pronouns. For instance, we read in Genesis 1:26: "And God [Elohim] said, Let us make man in our image (see also Genesis 3:22;11:7; Isaiah 6:8). Thus, Elohim conveys both the unity of the one God, and yet allows for the plurality of Divine Persons as expressed in the historic Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The term Elohim is unique to monotheistic Israel and is not found in any of the closely related languages of any of her polytheistic Semitic neighbors.<sup>5</sup>

**Jehovah/Yahweh.** When the name Jehovah (or Yahweh, as modern scholars believe it should be written) is used in the Hebrew text, it is written as "LORD" in our English Bibles. Notice that all the letters are capitalized. In some instances, Jehovah is also written as "GOD." Again, with all the letters capitalized. Wherever you see the words "LORD" or "GOD" in the Bible written in all uppercase letters, you will know that in every case it is the word Jehovah (or Yahweh) that has been translated from the original Hebrew text of Scripture. Jehovah is the personal name of God, and speaks of Him as the holy, self-existent God who hates sin but provides redemption. According to the standard Hebrew-English lexicon of the Old Testament, this name for God is used c. 6,823 times in the Old Testament.<sup>6</sup>

**Adonai.** When this word is used in the Hebrew text of Scripture, it is written as "Lord" in the King James Bible. Notice that it is spelled with a capital "L" and lower case "ord."

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<sup>4</sup> See his comments on the Hebrew word Elohim in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), pp. 371-372; also found in *History of the Church*, 7 vols, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950), 6:475-476.

<sup>5</sup> Scott, 1:44.

<sup>6</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1907, with corrections 1972), 217b; J. Barton Payne, gives the number 5,321, cf. "Yahweh," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1:210.

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It means “Sovereign,” or “Master,” and emphasizes the Lordship of God. This word is used more than 300 times in the Old Testament as a designation for God.<sup>7</sup>

Like *Elohim*, *Adonai* is a plural form. In this special plural form it always refers to God.<sup>8</sup> The singular form, *Adon*, is used to designate men who are lords over other people. A rare exception where the singular form for Lord (*Adona*) is used for God will be discussed later.

Joshua 7:6-7 illustrates how the different names for God in the Hebrew text are coded into the King James Bible:

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD [Jehovah] until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord [Adonai] GOD [Jehovah], wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God [Elohim] we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan!

Knowing the meaning of these various names for God adds significantly to this simple passage. The heart of the people and their reverence for God is more clearly understood.

## The Mormon Doctrine of God

As a matter of introduction to this section, it should be noted that Mormons are taught to distrust the accuracy of the Bible. The Book of Mormon teaches that “many plain and precious parts” were removed from the Bible (1 Nephi 13:26,28) by apostates in the early Church, and perhaps by Catholic priests and other translators down through the centuries.<sup>9</sup> However, contrary to this assertion, a careful study of the abundant manuscript evidence for the Old and New Testaments reveals that the Bible has been preserved without significant alteration and that no inspired books of the Hebrew prophets or Jesus’ apostles have been lost. With respect to the Old Testament in particular, it should be noted that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has immeasurably strengthened the evidence for the accurate preservation of the biblical text. Prior to the

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<sup>7</sup> Robert L. Alden, “*adon*,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1:13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> The eighth Article of Faith of the Mormon Church, found in the Pearl of Great Price, states that, “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.” Because this cloud of doubt is placed over the reliability of the Bible, it is not surprising that whenever there is a conflict between the Bible and latter-day revelation (the Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price) it is the Bible that must stand corrected by latter-day revelation.

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discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest manuscripts for the Old Testament dated from about A.D. 900. However, among the Dead Sea Scrolls were copies of all or parts of every Old Testament book except Esther, dating from at least a century before Christ. A comparison of these ancient biblical manuscripts with the Medieval Hebrew Masoretic manuscripts (on which the Old Testament portion of the King James Bible was based) shows that the Old Testament text was preserved with a very high degree of accuracy over a period of approximately 1,000 years.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, unless someone is able to show where the Old Testament text is inaccurate, we will continue to hold that it can be trusted. (This is not to say that the New Testament text is not also reliable; it certainly is, but that is not the object of our discussion here.)

The Mormon Church teaches that there are many Gods throughout the universe but that there are only three separate and distinct Gods for this earth. The main God is called Elohim. He is God the Father. Elohim has not always been God but at a point in time he progressed to become a God. He is a glorified, exalted, resurrected man from another world with a body of flesh and bones and is married to at least one wife. Through normal means of procreation, he fathered his first son who was born as a baby in spirit form. This first spirit child of Elohim was named Jehovah. Lucifer was a later spirit child born to Elohim. Later you and I were born, along with other spirit brothers and sisters, some of whom took part in a rebellion with Lucifer and became the demons. We have now come to this earth to receive bodies and to go through a probationary time to see if we will be worthy to become Gods of our own individual earths. According to Mormon doctrine, it was this firstborn Jehovah who dealt with and appeared to men throughout the Old Testament period.<sup>11</sup> He was the Jehovah of the Old Testament, separate and distinct from God the Father (Elohim). Jehovah later came to earth, took on a physical body, and was named Jesus. There is also a third and separate God, the Holy Ghost. For this study the Holy Ghost will not be discussed, except to say that he is supposed to possess a body of spirit matter in the form of a man. This spirit matter is very "fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes" (Doctrine & Covenants 131:7). The LDS Church teaches that the Holy Ghost can be in only one place at a time. According to the late Mormon apostle Bruce R. McConkie, nothing is known about his origin ("In this dispensation, at least, nothing has been revealed as to his origin or destiny; expressions on these matters are both speculative and fruitless.");<sup>12</sup> however, though no additional revelation has come forth from LDS presidents on the subject, Joseph Fielding McConkie of Brigham Young

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<sup>10</sup> For a convenient summary of the evidence by a respected scholar, see F.F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 61-69.

<sup>11</sup> See "The Father and the Son: A Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and The Twelve," *Improvement Era* 19 (August 1916), pp. 940-41.

<sup>12</sup> "Holy Ghost," in *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), p. 329.

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University writing in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* identifies the Holy Ghost as, “a spirit son of God the Father.”<sup>13</sup>

In summary, the Mormon Church teaches that Elohim is a distinct and separate God from His literal Son, Jehovah. There was a time when neither were Gods. Elohim is also our literal Father in the pre-existent spirit world and, consistent with this, it can even be said that “Man and God are of the same race, and it is within the power of righteous man to become like his Father.”<sup>14</sup> Jehovah is our literal older brother, and we were all born to Father Elohim and a Mother God. We were at one time Jehovah’s equals, as his brother and sister spirits.

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## The Mormon Doctrine of God Compared with Biblical Passages

The Bible uses the names Elohim, Jehovah, and Adonai interchangeably for the one true God, along with a number of other less frequently occurring names. A good example of this interchangeable use is found in Psalm 136:1-3,26:

O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. O give thanks unto the God [Elohim] of gods [elohim]; for his mercy endureth forever. O give thanks unto the Lord [Adonai/construct plural] of Lords [adonai]: for his mercy endureth forever. ... O give thanks unto the God [El] of heaven: for his mercy endureth forever.

One of the names of God in the Old Testament is Jehovah-Elohim. It is translated in the King James Bible as “The LORD God” and literally means “Jehovah is Elohim,” or “The LORD is God.” (Jehovah-Elohim is rendered “LORD God” 20 times in Genesis 2-3, and there are scores of other examples in the Old Testament). Since the Hebrew Elohim is both a name-title for the one true God that could also be used to designate the false gods of heathen idol worshipers, we have the proclamation in the biblical Scriptures that Jehovah is our Elohim. It is a proclamation that Jehovah is the true God.

There are over 700 verses in the Old Testament that show Jehovah [LORD] and Elohim [God] are the same God. Many of these verses also state that Jehovah is the only Elohim. Following are a few examples:

**Isaiah 43:10,11.** Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD [Jehovah] and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me

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<sup>13</sup> “Holy Ghost,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols., (New York: Macmillan, 1992) 2:649.

<sup>14</sup> “Man,” in *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 423.

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there was no God [Elohim] formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD [Jehovah]; and beside me there is no savior.

Note from these verses that there are several things which God wants us to know, believe, and understand:

- (1) There is only one true God (Elohim) and Jehovah is that one true God.
- (2) There were no Elohim formed before Jehovah. This means that Jehovah does not have a Father. That is, no God [Elohim] preceded him, by whom He was procreated. This refutes the teaching of Joseph Smith and the LDS Church that Jehovah is the spirit son of Elohim, our Heavenly Father, and that our Heavenly Father is an exalted man who progressed to become a God, and who himself has a Father, as Joseph Smith taught in his well-known King Follet Discourse.<sup>15</sup>
- (3) There will be no Elohim formed after Jehovah. Some say that Isaiah 43:10,11 is talking about idols. But that cannot be true for there certainly have been idols and false gods made and worshiped since this passage was written. Therefore, when God said no Gods would be formed after him, it must refer to real, true Gods. Again, this refutes the teaching of the LDS Church that human beings can become Gods.<sup>16</sup>

**Isaiah 44:6,8.** Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah] the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God [Elohim] ... Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God [Elohim] beside me? yea, there is no God [Elohim] I know not any.

The compound name "LORD of hosts" (*Jehovah-Sabaoth*) is yet another name for God and means, Lord over all the hosts of heaven and earth. The emphatic "Thus saith Jehovah" in the above verse commands our attention, so we would do well to listen. The following points are made under authoritative declaration:

- (1) Jehovah is the first Elohim and the last Elohim. There can be only one first and only one last. This again rules out the possibility of any other Gods existing throughout all of eternity past and throughout all of eternity future. It also again shows that Jehovah and Elohim are not different Gods.

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<sup>15</sup> *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 342ff.; *History of the Church*, 6:302ff.

<sup>16</sup> *Gospel Principles* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992) p. 302.

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(2) Jehovah is the only God [Elohim] that exists. This again rules out the possibility of other sovereigns existing.

(3) No reasonable person would challenge the intellect of God. When He says that He does not know of something, this certainly does not imply some limitation in the scope or capacity of His knowledge. On the contrary, when He says He does not know of something, we may be assured this means that thing does not exist. Therefore, it is plain that when God says He does not know of any other Gods it is because they do not exist. Thus, these verses affirm unequivocally that no other Gods exist, nor will exist, throughout all of time and space.

**Deuteronomy 6:4.** Hear, O Israel: the LORD [Jehovah] our God [Elohim] is one LORD [Jehovah].

This is possibly the most oft-quoted verse by our Jewish friends, and is known as the “Shema” (from the first word in the Hebrew text, *shema*, meaning, “hear,” or “observe”). This proclamation that there is only one God is the foundation stone of Judaism. Following the interpretive principle of allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, we would do well to take note of how Jesus and the Jews of his day understood this passage, as revealed in Mark 12:28-34. There Jesus is asked by a scribe, “Which is the first commandment of all?” (by which we may understand, first in order of importance). Jesus responds by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4. The scribe in turn gives his understanding of this Scriptural passage: “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he.” Jesus clearly accepted this as a correct interpretation, for verse 34 records: “And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” We may thus conclude that Deuteronomy 6:4 teaches that “there is one God, and there is none other than He,” and that Jehovah is the personal name of the one and only Elohim.<sup>17</sup>

As was noted earlier, however, Elohim is a plural noun. In Hebrew there are two words for “one:” *echad* and *yachid*. It is interesting that the word used here, *echad*, stresses unity, but allows for diversity or plurality within that oneness.<sup>18</sup> For instance, we could speak of one army made up of many members. However, the oneness described in this verse does not suggest a “oneness of purpose,” but the singleness of the Divine Being. While the Old Testament does not explicitly teach the Tri-une nature God - that is, three distinct Persons in one Divine Being - its teaching is consistent with and contains allusions to the

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<sup>17</sup> Other biblical passages that teach there is only one true God include, 1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6,8; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 3:20; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19.

<sup>18</sup> Herbert Wolf, “*echad*,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1:30.

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later New Testament revelation regarding the Trinity. Prof. Ronald Youngblood has given a good summary of the case:

God did not reveal himself in clearly defined Trinitarian terms in the Old Testament. To do so would have provided needless temptations to polytheism in the light of ancient culture. But the Old Testament prepares the way for the doctrine of the Trinity in several ways:

- (1) It uses a plural word for God (*elohim*) with singular verbs (Gen. 1:1 and often).
- (2) It employs various triadic formulas in reference to God (e.g., the three-man visitation of Gen. 18:2, the triple name of the God of the patriarchs in Exod. 3:15 and often, and the thrice-spoken 'Holy' of Isa. 6:3).
- (3) The "angel of the God"/"the Lord" sometimes refers to God as his sender, sometimes speaks as though he himself were God. (4) Father, Spirit, and Word are all active in creation (Gen. 1:1-3; see also John 1:1-3).<sup>19</sup>

**Psalm 110:1.** The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Adona], Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

This verse has been universally accepted for centuries by both Jews and Christians as a Messianic psalm. Matthew 22:41-46 shows that Jesus understood "the LORD" [Jehovah] in Psalm 110:1 to refer to the Heavenly Father and "Lord" [Adona] to refer to the Son of God and Messiah:

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ [Messiah]?<sup>20</sup> whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then called him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Two other New Testament passages, Acts 2:32-36 and Hebrews 1:13, quote Psalm 110:1 and also interpret it as an invitation by God the Father ["LORD"/Jehovah] to Jesus Christ ["Lord"/Adona] to sit at His right hand.

Two important implications arise from the names of God as used in Psalm 110:1. First, notice that Jehovah is speaking to Adona (a singular form of Adonai). As was mentioned earlier in this article, when the word "Lord" is used for God it is generally written in the

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<sup>19</sup> "Monotheism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), p.732.

<sup>20</sup> "Christ" is the English translation of the New Testament Greek word, *christos*, meaning "annointed (one)," which in turn is equivalent to the Old Testament Hebrew word, *mashiah*.

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plural form (Adonai), though it consistently takes singular verbs and pronouns. This is in harmony with the historic Christian doctrine that God is Tri-une (three Divine Persons, but only one Divine Being). In the case of Psalm 110:1, Jehovah is speaking to a specific Person within the Tri-une Godhead, so he uses the singular word for Lord. God is in fact speaking to God, or to put it another way, as we can understand the passage from the perspective of Peter's sermon in Acts 2:34-36, God the Father is speaking to His pre-incarnate Son.

Second, we have seen that the New Testament writers themselves interpret Psalm 110:1 as Jehovah speaking to Jesus. However, this would be impossible according to Mormon doctrine which teaches that the Jehovah is Jesus, that the name Jehovah refers uniquely to Jesus, and that he is a separate God from Elohim, whom the LDS Church identifies as Heavenly Father. In the words of the late Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the LDS Church, "There are three Gods: the Eternal Father, Elohim, to who we pray; Christ or Jehovah, and the Holy Ghost."<sup>21</sup> If the name Jehovah designates only Jesus, as the LDS Church teaches, then Psalm 110:1 would be Jesus inviting Himself to sit at His own right hand.

The late LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie authored the popular brochure, "What Mormons Think of Christ." On page six Elder McConkie offered his translation of Psalm 110:1: "The Lord (Elohim, the Father) said unto my Lord (Jehovah, the Son)..."<sup>22</sup> Of course, this translation is completely impossible, since, as we have seen, it is Jehovah, not Elohim, who is speaking to Adona. It is very difficult to believe that Elder McConkie was ignorant of his error. He was too much of a scholar and the brochure he authored is too important to the LDS missionary program, not to have received careful scrutiny before publication. Evidently, in order to sustain Mormon doctrine, Elder McConkie found it necessary to ignore the clear and undisputed meaning of the "God-breathed"<sup>23</sup> Scriptural text.

(It is notable that the LDS Church's teaching that Jehovah refers only to Jesus is contradicted within one of its own latter-day scriptures, the Book of Moses, that is

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<sup>21</sup> *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, p. 85; see also James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 38, "Elohim, as understood and used in the restored Church of Jesus Christ, is the name-title of God the Eternal Father, whose firstborn Son in the spirit is Jehovah - the Only Begotten in the flesh, Jesus Christ;" and Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 224 - "Elohim ... is also used as the exalted name-title of God the Eternal Father."

<sup>22</sup> See also, Elder McConkie's *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1980), 3:386 - "We may throw aside the 'learned' assumptions that someone other than Elohim was testifying of his Son. David's Messianic utterance speaks of one Lord saying to another, of one God saying to another, of Elohim saying to Jehovah, of the Eternal Father saying to his Beloved Son, sit thou on my right hand."

<sup>23</sup> See 2 Timothy 3:16 - "All scripture is given by inspiration of God (Greek: *theopneustos*, literally: "God-breathed")."

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supposed to be restored, ancient revelation. Moses 3:18 includes the phrase, "I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten." Based on a comparison with the parallel biblical expression "LORD God" (Hebrew: Jehovah Elohim) in Genesis chapter two, of which the Book of Moses chapter three is supposed to be an inspired revision, the designation "Lord God" in Moses must reasonably be understood as representing the Hebrew Jehovah Elohim. However, since, according to Mormon doctrine, the name Jehovah refers exclusively to Jesus, Moses 3:18 would then have Jesus (Jehovah) addressing Jesus ("mine Only Begotten," a designation used exclusively for Jesus in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon) as his son.)

Mormon apologists frequently argue that Jesus and God the Father could not be one in being and essence because the New Testament sometimes describes them as addressing one another (Matthew 3:16; John 17:1ff) and describes Jesus as sitting at the right hand of God (e.g., Luke 22:69). They ask, "If there is only one God, how can He speak to Himself or be physically juxtaposed to himself?" We see in Psalm 110:1, however, that God does "speak" to Himself and does "sit" at His own right hand. The LDS Church errs in holding that God has a physical body and in disregarding the biblical teaching that God is Spirit (John 4:24) and everywhere present (1Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:24; Psalm 139:7-9). It further fails to understand that the expression, "to sit at the right hand," is a figurative way of designating position and authority. The Greek for Luke 22:69 literally says, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit at [the] right of the power of God."

As we have seen from the Old Testament Scriptures examined in this paper, the teaching of the Mormon Church that Elohim and Jehovah are separate Gods is surely wrong and has no basis in the Bible. The Bible states emphatically and repeatedly that there is only one God (see Deut. 4:35,39; 32:39; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1 Kings 8:60; 2 Kings 5:15; 19:15; Neh.9:6; Psalms 18:31; 86:10; Isaiah 37:16,20; 43:10,11; 44:6,8; 45:21; Hosea 13:4; Joel 2:27; Zech.14:9; Mark 12:29-34; John 5:44; 17:3; Rom. 3:30; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Gal. 3:20; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim.1:17; 2:5; Jas. 2:19), and the words Elohim and Jehovah, as well as Adonai, are used interchangeably in the Scriptures. When we come to the New Testament, God sheds greater light on the mystery of His Tri-une nature. The New Testament continues to teach that there is only one God (Mark 12:28-34; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; James 2:19), but it also presents that Father as God, the Son as God and the Holy Ghost as God. These two aspects of biblical teaching lead to the awesome but inescapable conclusion that God is Tri-une in nature. How gracious that He has stooped to reveal this mystery to us in His holy Word. How crucial that we correctly interpret His Word and humbly accept it.

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