

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

A Method for

Working with Mormons

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Background

It stormed heavily in Salt Lake City on April 9, 1852, but the people turned out for the sessions of the Spring LDS Conference that were held in the Mormon Tabernacle that day. Each session of the six-day church conference was filled to capacity. Those desiring the best seats lined up outside the doors hours before they opened. At times, because the crowds were so large, many male members would leave the tabernacle to allow more room for the women to attend.

At 6:00 on the evening of the ninth, all LDS male members gathered together in the Salt Lake Tabernacle for another session. The house was full. After the usual introductory exercises, Mormon Prophet and President Brigham Young began to address his brethren upon various subjects. He instructed them concerning the place recreation and amusements should occupy in their lives and concerning the principle of tithing.

Then, after a moment's pause, the Mormon Prophet took up his next topic. The question was, "*Who begot Jesus Christ in the flesh?*" This was a hot issue. There had been no little dispute about it among the LDS Elders, and there were opposing views. As a Prophet and mouthpiece of God, Brigham Young stepped forward to silence all erroneous opinions and to declare with finality the true answer to the inquiry.¹

☞ First, he repeated the fundamental Mormon doctrine that the Father and Son each has a physical body of flesh and bones.

¹ Believing himself to be a prophet of God, Young declared that it was his gift and calling to teach true doctrine and to guard the members against heresy:

- What man or woman on the earth, what spirit in the spirit-world can say truthfully that I ever gave a wrong word of counsel, or a word of advice that could not be sanctioned by the heavens? (*Journal of Discourses*: 12:127).
- It is my duty to see that correct doctrine is taught and to guard the Church from error" it is my calling ("Misc. Minutes," unpublished ins., B.Y. Collection, Church Archives).

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- ✎ Next, he set forth Mormonism's belief that God the Father in a pre-existent period begot every spirit that would come to this earth.
- ✎ Then Brigham looked out over the vast audience and boldly commanded all of his hearers, whether near or far, Mormon or non-Mormon, to take heed to his next statements:

Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a *celestial body*, and brought Eve, *one of his wives*, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, the Archangel, the Ancient of Days! about whom holy men have written and spoken—He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom WE have to do. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and will know it sooner or later.²

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Using the Adam-God Falsehood to Witness to Mormons

One forceful way of using the Adam-God falsehood to turn Mormons to the true and living God is first to inquire whether the Mormon has a firm testimony that Brigham Young is a prophet of God and therefore a reliable teacher of Mormon doctrine. Next, ask the Mormon to fill in the blanks in the following passages:

- ✎ "... Who did beget him? His father, and his father is our God and Father of our spirits, and he is the framer of the body, the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who is He? He is _____."³
- ✎ "Our spirits and the spirits of all the human family were begotten by _____."⁴

² Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 50. According to Mormon theology, Adam is Michael the archangel and the Ancient of Days. Cf. *Doctrine and Covenants*, 27:11.

³ This position is strikingly presented by R. J. Rushdoony's analysis of the apologetic of Van Til in *By What Standard?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1958), pp. 19–64, where he applies the story of the emperor's clothes to the nakedness of compromising biblical truth with man's reason. Van Til is still not always fully understood and fully appreciated; cf. "The Biblical Authoritarianism of Cornelius Van Til," in G. R. Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), pp. 125–250.

⁴ Otherwise, the standard of truth is nothing more than a constantly varying tradition of men (e.g., cf. F. F. Bruce and F. G. Rupp, eds., *Holy Book and Holy Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968).

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- ☞ "Then _____ said, 'I want my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here. I once dwelt upon an earth, something like this, in a mortal state, I was faithful, I received my crown and exaltation. I have the privilege of extending my work, and to its increase there will be no end. I want my children who were born to me in the spirit world to come here and take tabernacles of flesh.'"⁵
- ☞ " _____ had lived on an earth similar to ours, he had received the Priesthood and the Keys thereof and had been faithful in all things and gained his resurrection and his exaltation and was crowned with glory immortality and eternal lives and was numbered with the Gods for such he became through his faithfulness, and had begotten all the spirits that was to come to this earth."⁶
- ☞ "... there are Lords many and Gods many ... there is but one God with whom we have to do.... You and I have only one God to whom we are accountable.... But let us turn our attention to the God with which we have to do. I tell you simply, he is our father; the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the father of our spirits.... I tell you more _____ is the father of our spirits. He had lived upon an earth; he did abide his creation and did honor to his calling and priesthood, and obeyed his master or Lord, and probably many of his wives did the same and they lived, and died upon an earth and then were resurrected again to immortality and eternal life."⁷
- ☞ " _____ was a resurrected being with his wives and posterity, and in the celestial kingdom they were crowned with glory, immortality and eternal lives with thrones, principalities and powers ..."⁸
- ☞ " _____ is our Father *and our God and the only God with whom WE have to do.*"⁹

⁵ *Journal of Discourses*, 8:58.

⁶ L. John Nuttall Journal, pp. 20–24, copied from original at B.Y.U. Library, Special Collections, Provo, Utah.

⁷ Otherwise, the standard of truth is nothing more than a constantly varying tradition of men (e.g., cf. F. F. Bruce and F. G. Rupp, eds., *Holy Book and Holy Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ The Christian Counseling Center, Latham, New York, is a ministry of the Loudonville Community Church established for the purpose of training Christian pastors in the methods and content of nouthetic counseling. Pastoral counsel is provided at no charge to any in the area seeking help with their problems. Pastors who complete the training are now assisting with the backlog of applicants for counseling.

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Most Mormons will fill in the blanks with the name “Elohim” (which they understand as the personal name for God the Father). They will all admit that these quotes are referring to the one whom they worship as Heavenly Father. After they have done this, point out to them that Brigham Young made these comments in reference to Adam. (The excerpts are footnoted so you can turn to the entire quotations as they appear in the preceding article.) Then press home to them the fact that the Mormon Church has not taught the truth about God, but the Bible always has. From that point continue your witness about the God of the Bible and His plan of salvation.¹⁰

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¹⁰ Vlachos, C. A. (1979). “Brigham Young’s False Teaching: Adam Is God.” *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, 3(2), 120–121.