

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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Evidence¹

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Unpublished Brigham Young Discourse LDS General Conference - October 8, 1854 -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

¹ This list is currently being developed.

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

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

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

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

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

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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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