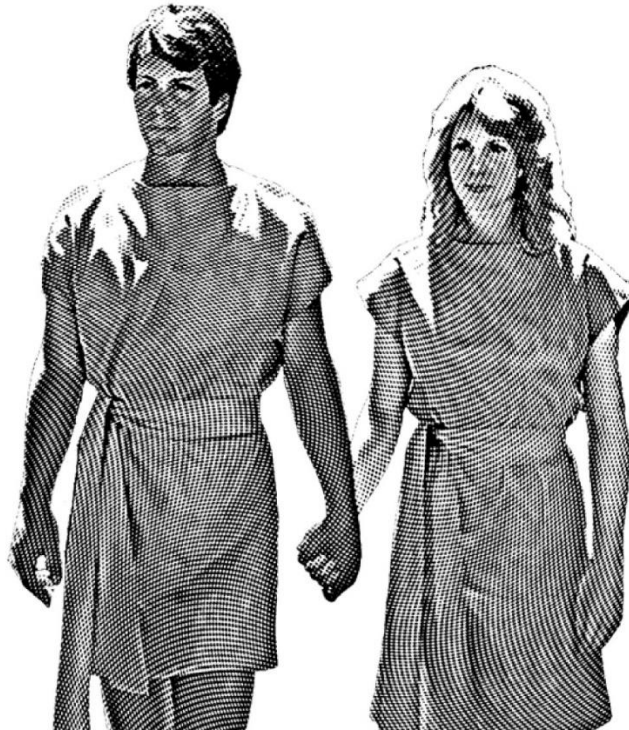


# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

# Adam-God Theory

B.H. ROBERTS FOUNDATION

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## What is the “Adam-God theory”?

The “Adam-God theory” is a set of teachings by Brigham Young adopted by many in the Church during his lifetime.<sup>1</sup> The theory includes many ideas about the plan of salvation, but its most prominent claim is that Heavenly Father and Adam are the same person.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In a November 14, 1852 sermon, Heber C. Kimball taught that Adam is “the Father and God of this earth.” Prior to this sermon, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal on April 10, 1852 that Heber taught the “God and Father of Jesus Christ was Adam.”

- [Heber C. Kimball teaches Adam is the God of this Earth but is distinct from “Elohim.”](#)
- [Wilford Woodruff records Heber C. Kimball teaching “God and Father of Jesus Christ was Adam.”](#)

<sup>2</sup> In a sermon delivered on April 9, 1852, Brigham Young taught:

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*.

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Though many referred to the idea as a “doctrine” at the time,<sup>3</sup> it is best characterized as “Adam-God theory” because it is non-canonical, was taught for just a few decades in the early Church, and is no longer taught.<sup>4</sup>

## Is Adam actually God?

No, probably not. Church leaders have consistently condemned the idea that Adam is God for over a century.<sup>5</sup>

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- [Brigham Young teaches that Adam is the only God with whom we have to do and he was transplanted from another planet to this earth with Eve.](#)

<sup>3</sup> During an April 4, 1860, meeting between Orson Pratt and the rest of the Church leadership concerning his opposition to the Adam-God theory, Brigham called his teaching a "doctrine" that originated from Joseph Smith.

It was Joseph's doctrine that Adam was God &c. When in Luke Johnson's at O. Hydes the power came upon us, or shock that alarmed the neighborhood. God comes to earth & eats & partakes of fruit. Joseph could not reveal what was revealed to him, & if Joseph had it revealed, he was not told to reveal it.

The June 8, 1868 minutes for the Provo School of the Prophets used "doctrine" to describe Brigham's Adam-God theory:

The doctrine preached by Pres. Young for a few years back, wherein he says that Adam is our God — the God we worship — that most of the people believe this — some believe it because the President says so — others because they can find testimony in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. . .

- [Minutes of April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and other Church leaders; Brigham Young claims Joseph taught Adam-God "in Luke Johnson's."](#)
- [Provo Minutes of the School of the Prophets evidences general acceptance of Adam being God; most believe it, some because Brigham Young taught it, others because it appears reasonable.](#)

<sup>4</sup> President Spencer W. Kimball taught the following in 1976:

We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine.

- [Spencer W. Kimball refers to the Adam-God teaching as a "theory," denounces it, and says it is not "according to the scriptures."](#)
- [Elden Watson reports a private interview where President Kimball clarified his conference remarks about the Adam-God theory.](#)

<sup>5</sup> In a letter to Alfred Saxey dated January 9, 1897, Joseph F. Smith wrote that Brigham "no doubt expressed his personal opinion or views upon the subject" and "What he said was not given as a revelation or commandment from the Lord."

During the April 1922 General Conference, Charles W. Penrose argued against the Adam-God teaching, arguing that Adam could not be God as Adam "prayed to the Eternal Father as we do."

During the April 1975 General Conference, Vaughn J. Featherstone called Adam-God teachings a "theory" and that those who believed it "don't have time to study faith and repentance. Maybe they ought to get back to basics."

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## When was the theory of Adam-God first taught?

Adam-God theory was first taught by Brigham Young on April 9, 1852 in a sermon delivered at the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Brigham taught that Adam is “our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do” and was a different person from Elohim.<sup>6</sup>

3

## Where did Brigham say he received these teachings from?

On at least three occasions, Brigham said that his Adam-God teachings were based on what he learned from Joseph.<sup>7</sup>

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- [Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Alfred Saxey, states Adam-God may represent Brigham's personal opinion but the teaching is not revealed doctrine and is not binding on Church members.](#)
  - [Charles W. Penrose says that Adam-God speculation is going beyond what has been revealed; Adam cannot be God as he worshiped the Father.](#)
  - [Vaughn J. Featherstone calls "Adam-God" a "theory" and those who profess belief in it as ignorant of the basics of the Gospel.](#)

<sup>6</sup> In the same sermon, Brigham Young, addressing Adam/Michael's role in the creation of this earth, taught:

It is true that the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum, as in all heavenly bodies, and in organizing element, perfectly represented in the Deity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

On October 8, 1854, George D. Watt recorded Brigham as teaching that God the Father told Adam "Yahovah Michael, go and create a world, make it, organize it, form it; and then put upon it every thing in all the variety that you have seen, that you have been in the habit of being associated with in other worlds, of beasts, birds, fowl, fish, and every insect, and creeping thing," — and finally, the whole eternity of element is full of life, bring it together and make of it living creatures." Yahovah Michael, goes and does as he is told.

- [Brigham Young teaches that Adam is the only God with whom we have to do and he was transplanted from another planet to this earth with Eve.](#)
- [Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

<sup>7</sup> During the April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and the rest of Church leadership, Brigham used D&C 78 as evidence that Joseph taught believed Adam was God.

One thing I have thought that I might still have omitted. It was Joseph's doctrine that Adam was God &c. When in Luke Johnson's at O. Hydes the power came upon us, or shock that alarmed the neighborhood. God comes to earth & eats & partakes of fruit. Joseph could not reveal what was revealed to him, & if Joseph had it revealed, he was not told to reveal it. The Spirit is sent when the mother feels earth, God put it into his mouth, & when god, wanted to translate he had the power. Not a contradictory thing in what I have said."

On December 16, 1867, Wilford Woodruff recorded Brigham Young teaching that Joseph taught Adam-God theory:

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Helen Mar Kimball, one of Joseph Smith's plural wives, also claimed that Joseph taught that Adam was God.<sup>8</sup>

## Timeline of the Adam God Theory

<b>Brigham Young Era</b>	
<i>April 9, 1852</i>	Brigham Young's[BIO] gives his first public sermon on Adam-God theory.[9]
<i>March 4, 1854</i>	Dan Jones[BIO] publishes an article explaining Adam-God in the Welsh periodical <i>Udgorrn Seion</i> (English: <i>Zion's Trumpet</i> ).[10]
<i>October 8, 1854</i>	Brigham Young reiterates the core ideas of Adam-God theory in the October 1854 General Conference.[11] According to Wilford Woodruff,[BIO] this was the "greatest sermon that ever was delivered to the Latter-day Saints." [12]
<i>1852-1860</i>	Orson Pratt[BIO] expresses opposition to Adam-God theory during his mission to the United Kingdom in 1852.[13] The next year, Orson Pratt publishes criticism of Adam-God theory in the May

President Young spoke of the first organization of this school By Joseph Smith the Prophet. The word of wisdom was given in this school. Presidet Young said Adam was Michael the Ark angel & he was the Father of Jesus Christ & was our God & that Joseph taught this Principle.

In a May 14, 1876 journal entry, Brigham wrote:

Is there in the heaven of heavens a Leader? Yes, and we cannot do without one and that being the case, whoever he is may be called God. Joseph s<a>id that Adam was our Father and God, and himself, being a leader, he too was their God.

- [Minutes of April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and other Church leaders; Brigham Young claims Joseph taught Adam-God "in Luke Johnson's."](#)
- [1880 Doctrine and Covenants states that D&C 78 was received near the Luke Johnson farm.](#)
- [Wilford Woodruff records Brigham teaching Adam is the Father of Jesus and citing Joseph.](#)
- [Brigham teaches the leader in Heaven is Adam, and the Adam-God doctrine was taught by Joseph.](#)

<sup>8</sup> In her 1882 book *Plural Marriage As Taught by the Prophet Joseph*, Helen Mar Kimball Whitney also argued that the Adam-God theory originated with Joseph:

Brigham Young did not happen to be the author of this doctrine, and to prove the truth of my assertion, I will produce some of the Prophet's teachings, given May 16th, 1841.

Helen then quotes Joseph as identifying Adam/Michael as the "Ancient of Days" of Daniel 7:

Daniel, in his seventh chapter of his book, speaks of the Ancient of days—he means the oldest man, our father Adam, Michael. . . . He (Adam) is the father of the human family and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. . . .

- [Helen Mar Kimball Whitney said Joseph was the "author" of the Adam-God "doctrine."](#)

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	<a href="#">[14]</a> and October issues <a href="#">[15]</a> of his periodical <i>The Seer</i> . This controversy was recorded by Wilford Woodruff in his journal. <a href="#">[16]</a>
<i>April 4-5, 1860</i>	Orson Pratt apologizes to Brigham and other Church leaders for publicly opposing Adam-God theory. <a href="#">[17]</a> He agrees to submit his writings in advance to Church leadership for doctrinal inspection. <a href="#">[18]</a>
<i>1860s</i>	The RLDS Church begins including Adam-God theory as a criticism against the LDS Church and Brigham Young being Joseph Smith's true successor. <a href="#">[19]</a>
<i>July 4, 1868</i>	Orson Pratt confesses he was wrong for “opposing doctrines revealed” to Brigham Young and the Salt Lake School of the Prophets. <a href="#">[20]</a>
<i>1877</i>	Brigham Young, L. John Nuttall, <a href="#">[BIO]</a> and Wilford Woodruff work on perfecting the “Lecture at the Veil.” <a href="#">[21]</a> This lecture was part of the temple endowment ceremony in the St. George Temple and explained core concepts of Adam-God theory. <a href="#">[22]</a>
<i>August 15, 1876</i>	Brigham Young preaches his last sermon that references Adam-God. <a href="#">[23]</a>
<i>August 29, 1877</i>	Brigham Young dies.
<b>Post-Brigham Era</b>	
<i>February 1880</i>	The RLDS Church claims that the LDS Church is not the same Church Joseph Smith founded due to “the doctrine of Adam-god worship.” <a href="#">[24]</a>
<i>January 9, 1897</i>	In a letter dated January 9, 1897, Joseph F. Smith <a href="#">[BIO]</a> says that teaching Adam-God theory is “in no sense binding upon the Church nor upon the consciences of any of the members thereof.” <a href="#">[25]</a>
<i>December 1897</i>	Ephraim H. Nye, <a href="#">[BIO]</a> a mission president in California, <a href="#">[26]</a> asks Church leadership about Adam's relationship to God the Father.

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	The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve refrain from offering guidance.
September 1902	Charles W. Penrose[BIO] teaches readers of the Church's periodical the <i>Improvement Era</i> that "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has never formulated or adopted any theory concerning the subject treated upon by President Young as to Adam." [27]
March 20, 1905	Hyrum Albert Cluff[BIO] is tasked by local Church leaders in Mexico to discourage members in his ward from teaching Adam-God theory, and to put any ward members who teach it on probation.[28]
June 30, 1916	In a formal statement of doctrine entitled "The Father and the Son," the First Presidency of Joseph F. Smith clearly defines the identities of Elohim/God the Father, Jehovah/Jesus Christ, and Michael/Adam.[29]
1958	The book <i>Mormon Doctrine</i> by Bruce R. McConkie[BIO] is published with an entry called "Adam-God Theory." It states that this theory is taught by "cultist and other enemies of the restored truth." [30]
October 1976	President Spencer W. Kimball[BIO] explicitly condemns the "Adam-God theory" as a "false doctrine." [31][32]
January 2002	President Gordon B. Hinckley, [BIO] when queried by the media concerning Brigham's teachings concerning Adam-God, responds that "We don't speculate on that a lot. Brigham Young said if you went to Heaven and saw God it would be Adam and Eve. I don't know what he meant by that." [33]

## Did other Church leaders believe in it at the time?

Yes. Many other Church leaders at the time, including eleven of the apostles, also supported and taught the theory.[34] Brigham and others began incorporating Adam-God theory in the temple endowment.[35]

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Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, various articles and documents supporting Adam-God theory were published among Church members in the British Isles.<sup>[36]</sup> It appears that Church members in Utah were less interested in the theory.<sup>[37]</sup>

3

## What did the theory consist of?

In addition to stating that Adam is Heavenly Father, the theory taught some ideas that still exist in some form in the Church today. For example, the teaching that the Father of Jesus Christ was previously a Savior in another world<sup>[38]</sup> is still taught, however “the Father” is Elohim<sup>[39]</sup> rather than Adam (see below).<sup>[40]</sup>

2

## Teachings of Adam-God Theory Compared with Current Teachings

Adam-God Theory	Current Teachings
Adam and Eve, who were resurrected and exalted beings, <sup>[41]</sup> were transplanted from another world. <sup>[42]</sup>	Adam and Eve came to earth from the spirit world. <sup>[43]</sup>
God the Father (Adam) was a Savior on a previous earth like Jesus would be on ours. <sup>[44][45]</sup>	Heavenly Father (Elohim) was a Savior on a previous earth like Jesus would be on ours. <sup>[46]</sup>
Adam and Eve had spirit children after their exaltation. <sup>[47]</sup>	Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother had spirit children. <sup>[48]</sup>
Elohim is the grandfather of God, Jehovah (not Jesus <sup>[49]</sup> ) is the Father of Adam, <sup>[50]</sup> Adam is our God and our Heavenly Father. <sup>[51]</sup>	Elohim is our God and our Heavenly Father. He is the father of both Jehovah (Jesus) and Adam. <sup>[52][53]</sup>
Faithful men and women will go on to be exalted parents of human families. <sup>[54][55]</sup>	Faithful men and women will go on to be exalted parents of human families. <sup>[56]</sup>

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics

## When did the Church stop teaching it?

The Church moved away from Adam-God after Brigham Young died in 1877.<sup>[57]</sup> However, after Brigham's death, some Latter-day Saints continued to believe this theory.<sup>[58]</sup>

3

## Did the Church ever denounce Adam-God theory?

Yes. In the October 1976 General Conference, President Spencer W. Kimball specifically denounced the Adam-God theory,<sup>[59]</sup> though one source reports that his remarks were deliberately nuanced.<sup>[60]</sup>

In 2002, President Gordon B. Hinckley said in an interview that “Brigham Young said if you went to Heaven and saw God it would be Adam and Eve. I don't know what he meant by that.”<sup>[61]</sup>

2

## Was Adam-God theory taught as a private “mystery” or “deep doctrine” or was it a public thing?

Brigham seemed to acknowledge that the theory was “considerable of a mystery to a good many,”<sup>[62]</sup> but he did teach it in public in his capacity as leader of the Church.<sup>[63]</sup>

Adam-God teachings were published in Church magazines,<sup>[64]</sup> hymnals,<sup>[65]</sup> sermons,<sup>[66]</sup> private gatherings,<sup>[67]</sup> and in teachings in the St. George Temple.<sup>[68]</sup>

5

## Adam-God was taught in the temple?

Yes. In the St. George Temple there was a portion of the endowment that was referred to as the “Lecture at the Veil”<sup>[69]</sup> which explained the creation, the exaltation of Adam and his descendants, Adam and Eve being the parents of our spirits, and the mission of Jesus as the Savior.<sup>[70][71]</sup>

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## Was this ever an “official” doctrine?



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Sort of. Adam-God theory was publicly asserted by leaders of the Church. It was referred to as a “doctrine” by Brigham Young and other leaders,<sup>[72]</sup> and key ideas were taught in the St. George Temple.<sup>[73][74]</sup> However, it was never canonized or placed into Latter-day Saint scripture.

## Was “Adam-God” ever canonized?

No. Even in Brigham Young's time, it was not accepted as the unanimous belief of both the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. It was never presented to the body of the Church to be approved.<sup>[75][76]</sup> In 1897 Joseph F. Smith stated that the teaching was “in no sense binding upon the Church nor upon the consciences of any of the members.”<sup>[77][78]</sup>

2

## So was Adam-God just a pet theory or did he claim it was an actual revelation?

Brigham Young indicated that he received it from God<sup>[79]</sup> and that it was taught by Joseph Smith,<sup>[80]</sup> but he also sometimes indicated that it was just an educated guess.<sup>[81][82]</sup> Heber C. Kimball, who Brigham regarded as his “prophet,”<sup>[83]</sup> claimed that it was revealed to him by God.<sup>[84]</sup>

On the subject of understanding the nature of God, Brigham taught that “it is as much my right to differ from other men, as it is theirs to differ from me, in points of doctrine and principle.”<sup>[85]</sup> He often instructed the Saints to think for themselves.<sup>[86]</sup>

4

## Did anyone oppose the teaching, and were there any consequences for their disagreement?

Yes, Orson Pratt<sup>[BIO]</sup> opposed the Adam-God teachings and publicly debated Church leaders about its doctrinal status.<sup>[87]</sup> This caused concern among Church members that he might leave the Church.<sup>[88]</sup> On April 4, 1860, Pratt apologized to Brigham Young and other leaders for publicly opposing the doctrine.<sup>[89]</sup> The next day, Pratt agreed to submit his writings for doctrinal inspection before publication.<sup>[90][91]</sup> Following these meetings, Orson stopped publicly opposing Adam-God theory.<sup>[92]</sup>

2

## Did teaching Adam-God ideas continue after Brigham Young's death?

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics

Some Church members continued to believe Adam-God theory<sup>[93]</sup> and occasionally teach it, but the First Presidency and the Twelve no longer taught it after Brigham died, and some would privately reject it.<sup>[94]</sup>

Twelve years after Brigham Young's death, Edward Bunker, a bishop in Bunkerville, Nevada, disagreed with the idea that Adam was God.<sup>[95]</sup> This led the Stake Presidency to write a letter to the First Presidency asking how to address the matter.<sup>[96]</sup>

2

## Examples of Church Leaders Denouncing the Adam-God Theory

Date	Church Leader	Statements Disagreeing with Adam-God
January 9, 1897	Joseph F. Smith <sup>[BIO]</sup>	In a letter to Alfred Saxey, Joseph F. Smith wrote that Brigham “no doubt expressed his personal opinion or views upon the subject” adding that “What he said was not given as a revelation or commandment from the Lord.” <sup>[97][98]</sup>
February 27, 1902	Joseph F. Smith	“The full truth concerning [Adam-God doctrine] has not been revealed to us; and until it is revealed all wild speculations, sweeping assertions and dogmatic declarations relative thereto, are out of place and improper. We disapprove of them and especially the public expression of such views.” <sup>[99]</sup>
July 16, 1902	Joseph F. Smith	Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Lille Golsan, denied that Adam was the “God we worship throughout eternity.” <sup>[100]</sup>
November 1909	First Presidency	In their doctrinal exposition entitled “The Origin of Man,” the First Presidency stated that “Adam, our great progenitor, 'the first man,' was, like Christ, a pre-existent spirit, and like Christ he took upon him an appropriate body, the body of a man, and so became a 'living soul.’” <sup>[101]</sup>
June 30, 1916	First Presidency	In their doctrinal exposition entitled “The Father and the Son,” the First Presidency stated that “Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the

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		body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh. . . . Jehovah . . . is Jesus Christ the Son of Elohim.” [102]
April 1922	Charles W. Penrose [BIO]	During the April 1922 General Conference, Charles W. Penrose argued against Adam-God theory, saying that Adam could not be God as Adam “prayed to the Eternal Father as we do.” [103]
February 1931	Heber J. Grant [BIO]	“Since Adam had not passed through the resurrection his spirit and body were not inseparably connected, hence it was possible for him to become mortal by partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” [104]
April 1942	Joseph Fielding Smith [BIO]	During the April 1942 General Conference, Joseph Fielding Smith taught that Adam is subordinate to Jesus: “while Adam will preside over his posterity as Michael, the prince, and as he will hold the keys of salvation, as he does, all' of that will be under the direction of Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel, for Christ is greater than Adam.” [105]
March 20, 1949	Milton R. Hunter [BIO]	“The idea that Adam is the God of this world or that he was transplanted here from another planet is false and misleading” and that Latter-day Saint “scriptures prove [proponents of Adam-God] false and the theory of Adam's being transplanted would involve a belief in reincarnation, which the church condemns as being untrue.” [106]
1958	Bruce R. McConkie [BIO]	In an entry on Adam-God theory in his book <i>Mormon Doctrine</i> , McConkie referred to people who taught it as “Cultists and other enemies of the restored faith.” [107]
April 1965	Joseph Fielding Smith	“We learn by virtue of the law of primogeniture, that all who are saved in the kingdom of God will be subject to Adam, for by divine appointment he holds these keys under the direction of Jesus Christ. ” [108]

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May 11, 1966	LeGrand Richards <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	"We look upon Adam as the great patriarch of the race, the Ancient of Days referred to by Daniel in the 7th chapter of Daniel... he was with Elohim the Father, and Jehovah, (Jesus) in the creation of the earth... But we all lived in the spirit world before we were born, and Adam is not our God. We do not pray to him. We pray to the father through His Son, Jesus Christ." <a href="#">[109]</a>
May 13, 1966	Hugh Brown <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	B. "The Adam-God doctrine is not the doctrine of the Church." <a href="#">[110]</a>
April 1975	Vaughn Featherstone <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	J. Vaughn J. Featherstone called Adam-God a "theory" and that those who believed it "don't have time to study faith and repentance. Maybe they ought to get back to basics." <a href="#">[111]</a>
1976	Mark Petersen <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	E. Mark E. Petersen wrote that Adam-God is "ridiculous" and "is contrary to the word of the Lord" and that "To say that Adam is God is, of course, opposed utterly and completely to the scriptures as well as to our Articles of Faith." <a href="#">[112]</a>
October 1976	Spencer Kimball <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	W. "We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine." <a href="#">[113]</a> Notably, President Kimball did not say that Brigham Young was misquoted or taught false doctrine. <a href="#">[114]</a>
1980	Mark E. Petersen	"Adam was not our God, nor was he our Savior. But he was the humble servant of both in his status as an angel." <a href="#">[115]</a>
June 1, 1980	Bruce R. McConkie	"There are those who believe or say they believe that Adam is our father and our god, . . . . It is contrary to the whole plan of salvation set forth in the scriptures, and anyone who has read the Book of Moses, and anyone

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		who has received the temple endowment, has no excuse whatever for being led astray by it.” <a href="#">[116]</a>
February 19, 1981	Bruce R. McConkie	McConkie wrote that Brigham Young did teach that “Adam was the father of our spirits, and all the related things that the cultists ascribe to him” but that those teachings are “not true. He expressed views that are out of harmony with the gospel.” <a href="#">[117]</a> <a href="#">[118]</a>
c. 1980s	Bruce R. McConkie	“Among several small, quarrelling, cultist groups there are many similar heretical views. A number of different organizations worship Adam as God.” <a href="#">[119]</a>
January 2002	Gordon B. Hinckley <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	“We don't speculate on that a lot. Brigham Young said if you went to Heaven and saw God it would be Adam and Eve. I don't know what he meant by that.” <a href="#">[120]</a>

**EXPAND TABLE**

2

**What if I like the Adam-God theory and want to believe it? Can it be reconciled with current Church teachings?**

Adam being God has been specifically denounced by the Church.[\[121\]](#) However, current Latter-day Saint theology does leave room for some ideas featured in Adam-God theory. (See table.)

**Components of Adam-God Theory and their Status in the Modern Church**

Component of Adam-God Theory	Church Response
We had Heavenly Parents and a premortal life. Adam and Eve, after their exaltation, birthed the spirits of all who would later come to earth. <a href="#">[122]</a>	While the teaching that Adam and Eve are our Heavenly Parents is rejected, the teaching that we have Heavenly Parents is accepted. <a href="#">[123]</a>
Earth was created from preexisting matter. <a href="#">[124]</a>	Accepted. <a href="#">[125]</a>
Adam and Eve were our first parents. <a href="#">[126]</a>	Accepted. <a href="#">[127]</a>

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Adam is the "Ancient of Days." <a href="#">[128]</a>	Accepted. <a href="#">[129]</a>
Jesus is the foreordained Savior of his Father's children. <a href="#">[130]</a>	Accepted. <a href="#">[131]</a>
We will be exalted if we follow the pattern of Adam and Eve. <a href="#">[132]</a>	Accepted. <a href="#">[133]</a>
Adam is our God and Father. <a href="#">[134]</a>	Rejected <a href="#">[135]</a>
Elohim is the spiritual grandfather of Adam. Jehovah (not to be identified with Jesus Christ) is the spiritual father of Adam <a href="#">[136]</a>	Rejected. <a href="#">[137]</a>
Adam is the Father of Jesus' spirit and body. <a href="#">[138]</a>	Rejected. <a href="#">[139]</a>

## EXPAND TABLE

### Who is Adam in Latter-day Saint theology?

Adam is the first man[\[140\]](#) and a spirit son of God.[\[141\]](#) In the Doctrine and Covenants he is identified as the archangel Michael.[\[142\]](#)[\[143\]](#)

The Doctrine & Covenants also identifies Adam as the "Ancient of Days."[\[144\]](#) The Book of Daniel[\[145\]](#) calls him a "prince" who Christ has "set him upon high."[\[146\]](#)

### What did Joseph teach about Adam?

In Nauvoo, Joseph Smith taught that Adam presided over all of mankind,[\[147\]](#) that God set Adam to watch over and reveal the saving ordinances on this earth,[\[148\]](#) that "Ahman" is a name for God and a title that is shared by Adam and other figures,[\[149\]](#) that the Father of Jesus laid down his life and was resurrected,[\[150\]](#) and that Heavenly Father has a father just as Christ does.[\[151\]](#)

### Is there scriptural support for the idea that Adam is God?

Not really. There is no text in the Bible or other Latter-day Saint scriptures that indicates Adam is Heavenly Father.[\[152\]](#) There are several texts in Latter-day Saint scripture that show God being an authority over Adam. These include accounts of Adam transgressing,[\[153\]](#) offering sacrifice,[\[154\]](#) being commanded to repent and be

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baptized,[\[155\]](#) his mortality being a “probationary period,”[\[156\]](#) and having a subordinate priesthood role to Jesus.[\[157\]](#)

However, there is ambiguity in Daniel 7:22-25[\[158\]](#) about whether the “Ancient of Days”[\[159\]](#) is a different person from the “Most High.”[\[160\]\[161\]](#) This could be interpreted to support the idea that Adam is God.[\[162\]](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics



God Breathing Life into Adam by Franz Xaver Karl Palko, ca. 1760

**Do mainstream Christian interpretations believe that Adam is the “Ancient of Days”?**

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Some do,[\[163\]](#) but most do not. Many biblical commentators, in both Joseph Smith's time[\[164\]](#) and today,[\[165\]](#) believe that the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7 is God (the Father).[\[166\]](#) In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the “Ancient of Days” is Jesus.[\[167\]](#) Some scholars have argued that the “Ancient of Days” is the archangel Michael[\[168\]](#) or at least some high-ranking angel in God's court.[\[169\]](#) At least one nineteenth-century theologian argued that the Ancient of Days is not a person, but a reference to the Jewish people.[\[170\]](#)

1

## Are there LDS schism groups that teach Adam-God theory?

Yes. Today, many fundamentalist groups believe in the Adam-God theory today and some have written books and articles defending it.[\[171\]](#)

However, two prominent schism groups—the RLDS Church[\[172\]](#) and James J. Strang[\[BIO\]](#)[\[173\]](#) and his followers[\[174\]](#)—stated that they did not believe Adam was God.

## How have other members tried to explain Brigham Young's Adam-God teachings?

Church leaders and scholars have varied in their explanations for why Brigham taught the theory and how to reconcile it with normal Church teachings (see below).

## Explanations from Church leaders about Brigham Young and the Adam-God Theory

Person	Explanation
Joseph Smith <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	F. Brigham Young was expressing his personal opinion. <a href="#">[175]</a>
Joseph Smith <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	Fielding Brigham Young never taught that Adam was God. <a href="#">[176]</a>
Mark Petersen <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	E. Brigham Young was misquoted. <a href="#">[177]</a>
Bruce McConkie <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	R. Brigham Young did teach Adam-God theory but was in error. <a href="#">[178]</a>
Elden Watson <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	Brigham Young used “Adam” as another name for God the Father. The Adam we're familiar with was a separate person. <a href="#">[179]</a>

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Hugh Nibley <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	W.	The relationship between Adam and God and the related theology is misunderstood. <a href="#">[180]</a> <a href="#">[181]</a>
Gordon Hinckley <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	B.	We do not know what Brigham Young meant. <a href="#">[182]</a>
Matthew Brown <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	B.	Brigham Young did teach Adam-God theory but was in error. <a href="#">[183]</a>
Brian C. Hales <a href="#">[BIO]</a>		The relationship between Adam and God and the related theology may not be fully understood. <a href="#">[184]</a> <a href="#">[185]</a>
Jonathan Stapley <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	A.	Brigham Young taught Adam-God theory as a revision to Joseph Smith's teachings. <a href="#">[186]</a>
Daniel Peterson <a href="#">[BIO]</a>	C.	The relationship between Adam and God is not clearly understood. <a href="#">[187]</a>

## EXPAND TABLE

**Has the Church ever offered any explanations for Brigham's Adam-God theory in a curriculum or essay?**

No. The Church has not referenced Brigham Young's Adam-God theory in its curriculum or its Gospel Topics Essays.

**Does it matter whether Heavenly Father is really Elohim or Adam?**

Probably. God has many names and titles, [\[188\]](#) so “Adam” could be one of them. [\[189\]](#) However, the name or title of God is less important than developing a relationship with God and Jesus Christ. [\[190\]](#)

1

## THE FACTS

- Adam-God theory is a belief that Adam and Heavenly Father are the same person.
- Adam-God theory was taught authoritatively by Brigham Young and apostles of his day, and was adopted in many official ways.
- The idea that Adam is God was never canonized and is now denounced by the Church.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- Some aspects of Adam-God theory, like our premortal lives with Heavenly Parents or the foreordination of Jesus as Savior, are compatible with the gospel and still taught today.

## OUR TAKE

Prophets communicate with God and serve as a liason and teacher for the rest of us. But Brigham Young was a prophet and it seems like he was wrong about Adam-God theory. Though some parts of the theory are accepted today, it's clear from many years of additional Church teachings that the part about Heavenly Father being Adam is incorrect. Was Brigham just mistaken? Was he misunderstood? What does this say about his role as prophet?

There is abundant historical data that makes it clear that Brigham Young believed and taught the “Adam-God” theory—but while some records indicate that he was certain about the doctrine, other records indicate that he was merely “guessing” and “believed it to be true.” It was accepted by nearly all the apostles and was even taught in the St. George Temple, but for some reason it was never canonized.

There are several ways to try and make sense of this, but none are entirely satisfying. Brigham may have been mistaken, expressing an opinion, or misunderstanding revelation. We might not have enough context or understanding of what Brigham meant to come to a conclusion. It's also possible that Brigham had a revelatory basis for his beliefs. Maybe it's even possible that Brigham was right in some way, but the Saints weren't ready to understand what he meant.

It's okay to be bothered by this episode of Church history and its implications. It's also okay to withhold judgement when we don't have the full picture. It's unclear what a loving Heavenly Father meant to happen here, but we have many testimonies and evidences of Him and His love for us.

## WHAT'S YOUR TAKE?

280 characters remaining

*These takes are curated for a general audience and may contain minor edits when posted.*

SUBMIT

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- **Ken**  
"Very interesting article. Well done."
- **Russell** C.  
"Your conclusions articulate my thoughts and impressions very well. We have much to learn and part of that is humility with our limited understanding and zeal to learn more - eventually."

## READ MORE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- [Historicity of Jesus](#)
- [Joseph Smith's Pre-1830 Education](#)
- [CES Letter](#)

## [872 Primary Sources](#)

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### Footnotes

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- **BIOBrigham Young**

Brigham Young (1801–1877) was an early Latter-day Saint leader. He was born in Whitingham, Vermont, and joined the faith in his twenties after two years of deliberation. He became the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles following the fractionalization of the Church in Kirtland, Ohio. After Joseph Smith's martyrdom in 1844, Young assumed the presidency and led the Latter-day Saints to settle in the Great Basin region. He was married to fifty-five women and fathered fifty-nine children from sixteen of his wives. He also served as the Territorial Governor for Utah Territory until 1857 and as the prophet until his death.

- **BIODan Jones**

Dan Jones (August 4, 1811–January 6, 1862) was a prominent Welsh missionary in the early Church. He was born in Flintshire, Wales to a family of miners and immigrated to the United States in 1840, where he became captain of the steamboat *Maid of Iowa*. He was baptized into the Church in 1843. He served several missions to Wales, helped many Welsh converts immigrate to United States, and published the Welsh-language Church periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili*, or Prophet of the Jubilee.

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- **BIOWilford Woodruff**

Wilford Woodruff (1807–1898) was the fourth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He joined the faith in 1833 and became an apostle in 1839. He served as an apostle until he became President of the Church in 1889.

- **BIOOrson Pratt**

Orson Pratt (1811–1881) was born in Hartford, New York, and was an apostle for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was called on many missions. He was excommunicated from the Church in August 1842, after allegations of Joseph Smith's impropriety. Pratt was rebaptized in January 1843 and served as a leading pamphleteer for the Church and defender of the faith.

- **BIOL. John Nuttall**

Leonard John Nuttall (July 6, 1834 – February 23, 1905) was a Latter-day Saint printer and early Utah civic leader. He worked as a private secretary for John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff and served as a member of the Council of Fifty. Nuttall kept a detailed journal of the early history of the Church. He served in the Utah County militia and held various local government positions in Provo and at the territorial level. He served a mission to England from 1875 to 1875. Nuttall became the first stake president of the Kanab Stake in 1877 and was the first recorder for the St. George Temple.

- **BIOJoseph F. Smith**

Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) was born in Far West, Missouri to Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith. At age 15, he was called to serve his first mission to the Sandwich Islands under the direction of apostle Parley P. Pratt. During the 1858-59 session of the Utah territorial legislature, he served as the sergeant-at-arms. He served another mission for the Church in Great Britain from 1860 to 1863.

Smith was ordained an apostle by Brigham Young in July 1866. He served as a counselor in the First Presidency under John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow. He became the president of the Church in 1901. Smith issued the Second Manifesto, declaring that any church officer who performed a plural marriage would be excommunicated, alongside the couple themselves. He also received what is now canonized as section 138 of the Doctrine and Covenants, a vision of the spirit world in 1918.

- **BIOEphraim H. Nye**

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Ephraim Hesmer Nye (August 6, 1845–May 15, 1903) was born in England, immigrated to Australia, joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and migrated to Utah in 1860, settling in Ogden. He served a mission in Great Britain from 1882 to 1884. From 1896 to 1901, he served as president of the California Mission.

- **BIOCharles W. Penrose**

Charles W. Penrose (1832-1925) was an early Latter-day Saint leader. He was born in London, England, and joined the faith in 1850 as a teenager. In 1861, he immigrated to Utah and became a farmer, retailer, politician, and newspaper editor, publishing widely on subjects like polygamy and the Word of Wisdom. He was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from 1904 to 1911 and a member of the First Presidency from 1911 until 1925.

- **BIOHyrum Albert Cluff**

Hyrum Albert Cluff (1866–1913) was born in Provo, Utah and immigrated with his parents to the Mormon colonies in Colonia Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. He played an important role in developing Latter-day Saint wards and communities in Mexico during a period marked by many difficulties, including the Mexican Revolution. In 1908, he was set apart as a second counselor in the Juarez Stake. In 1909, he organized a “union community” in Mexico and was appointed president of its board. He died in 1913 and was buried in Bluewater, New Mexico.

- **BIOBruce R. McConkie**

Bruce Redd McConkie (1915-1985) was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan. His family moved back to Utah when he was an infant. McConkie served as a missionary in the Eastern States Mission and was involved in the first Hill Cumorah Pageant. McConkie married Amelia Smith, the daughter of Joseph Fielding Smith, in 1937. He graduated with a degree in law from the University of Utah in 1939. McConkie served as an officer in Army Intelligence during WWII. He was called as a Seventy in 1946. McConkie edited and published many sermons and teachings of Joseph Fielding Smith. He published the controversial compendium *Mormon Doctrine* in 1958. He then served as president of the Southern Australian Mission in 1961. McConkie was called as an apostle and served on the Quorum of the Twelve from 1972 until his death in 1985.

- **BIOSpencer W. Kimball**

Spencer W. Kimball (1895-1985) was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the twelfth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Reared in Thatcher, Arizona, Kimball founded and ran a securities business as a young man and became involved in

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several Thatcher-area community organizations. He became an apostle in 1943, where he became a leading advocate for ministry to and work with indigenous Americans. As Church president, he became an advocate for the global expansion of the Church. In 1978, President Kimball received the revelation to lift the priesthood/temple restriction on peoples with African ancestry.

- **BIOGordon B. Hinckley**

Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2008) was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. He served as the fifteenth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Hinckley graduated from the University of Utah in English literature. After serving a mission to Great Britain, he became a secretary under the Church's Radio, Publicity, and Missionary Literature division. He became an apostle in 1961 and then a member of the First Presidency in 1981. In 1995, he became Church president. He oversaw the expansion of temple construction, increased standards for missionary worthiness, the expansion of the Church into West Africa and East Asia (particularly South Korea).

- **BIOHeber J. Grant**

Heber J. Grant (1856-1945) served as the seventh president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Jedediah Grant (a counselor in the First Presidency) and Rachel Ivins Grant (a long-term Relief Society President in Salt Lake City). Grant worked as a clerk for Zion's bank and started an insurance company and a Utah Sugar Company. He became an apostle in 1882 and established the Church's first mission in Japan. He became Church president in 1918 and served for 27 years.

- **BIOJoseph Fielding Smith**

Joseph Fielding Smith (1876-1972) was the tenth president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He became an apostle in the Quorum of the Twelve in 1910 and served in this capacity until he became a member of the First Presidency in 1965. He was the Church Historian and Recorder from 1921 until 1970. He became president of the Church following the death of David O. McKay in 1970.

- **BIOMilton R. Hunter**

Milton Reed Hunter (October 25, 1902–June 27, 1975) was a Latter-day Saint educator and author. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Brigham Young University and went on to receive a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley. He worked for many years as a seminary teacher before being called to serve on the Church's First Council of the Seventy. Hunter's Church assignments led him to travel throughout Latin America and he wrote

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books on Book of Mormon archeology and nineteenth-century Church history. His works include *Utah in Her Western Setting*, *Christ in Ancient America*, and *Archeology and the Book of Mormon*.

- **BIOLeGrand Richards**

LeGrand Richards (February 6, 1886–April 6, 1838) was a Latter-day Saint leader and author. He served a mission in the Netherlands in 1905 and returned in 1914 as a mission president. He served as a mission president again in the southern U.S. in 1934. He was called to serve as the presiding bishop of the Church in 1938 until his call as an apostle in 1952. He is well known for his book *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*.

- **BIOHugh B. Brown**

Hugh B. Brown (1883-1975) was born in Granger, Utah. He was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and First Counselor in the First Presidency. He served a mission to England. Brown became an officer in the Canadian military and was sent to England to fight in WWI. He was president of the British Mission when WWII started and was then asked serve as coordinator for all Latter-day Saint servicemen stationed in Europe during the war. He was a lawyer in Alberta, Canada until he became an apostle in 1958 and continued to serve in the First Presidency from 1961 until 1970. He served as an apostle until his death in 1975

- **BIOVaughn J. Featherstone**

Vaughn J. Featherstone (March 13, 1931–May 12, 2018) was a Church leader. He served as a member of the Presiding Bishopric from 1972 to 1976, Texas San Antonio Mission from 1976 to 1978, Young Men's general president from 1985 to 1990, and a General Authority Seventy from 1976 to 2001.

- **BIOMark E. Petersen**

Mark E. Petersen (1900-1984) served as an apostle for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Born in Salt Lake City, Petersen served a mission to Nova Scotia and attended the University of Utah, where he studied journalism. He worked as a reporter for the *Deseret News* and soon became the *Deseret News* general manager. In 1944, he was appointed to the apostleship. He became the author of multiple short books on scriptural figures such as Moses and Joshua and moral issues such as alcohol consumption and sexual relationships. Petersen also was an ardent opponent of the Civil Rights Movement, warning that it would lead to racial intermarriage. Petersen died from cancer in 1984.

- **BIOJames J. Strang**



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James J. Strang (March 21, 1813—July 9, 1856) was a religious leader who claimed to have been appointed as Joseph Smith's successor. He was born in New York and joined the Church in Nauvoo in 1843. When Brigham Young was proclaimed Joseph Smith's rightful successor, Strang led away a group of Church members. The group, nicknamed “Strangites,” settled first in Wisconsin and later on Beaver Island in Lake Michigan. In 1849, his followers crowned him King James I. He served in the Michigan legislature in 1852 and 1854. In 1856, he was shot by two former Strangites.

- **BIOElden Watson**

Elden Jay Watson is an author and historian. He received an MA in physics from the University of Utah in 1968 and worked for thirty-two years in the electronics industry. His authorial and editorial works include the *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, the *Orson Pratt Journals*, and *The Jehovah Doctrine*.

- **BIOHugh W. Nibley**

Hugh Winder Nibley (1910–2005) was an influential Latter-day Saint scholar known mostly for his historical and apologetic writings on Latter-day Saint scripture and doctrine. Nibley was born in Portland, Oregon and received a PhD in history from the University of California, Berkeley in 1938. After serving in United States Army during World War Two, Nibley was hired to teach at Brigham Young University in 1946, where he taught religion until 1975. He continued to work at BYU as an emeritus professor until 1994. Nibley is perhaps best known for his apologetic work on the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham. Nibley died in 2005 at age 94.

- **BIOMatthew B. Brown**

Matthew B. Brown (August 29, 1964–October 5, 2011) was a historian and author who produced several books, articles, and lectures on doctrinal and historical topics. He served a mission in Spokane, Washington and received a BA in history from Brigham Young University. His notable works include *Symbols in Stone: Symbolism on the Early Temples of the Restoration*, *The Gate of Heaven*, and *Receiving Gifts of the Spirit*.

- **BIOBrian C. Hales**

Brian C. Hales (1957–living) is an author and anesthesiologist who resides in Utah. He served as a missionary in Venezuela from 1976 to 1978. Hales studied medicine at the University of Utah and completed his residency at the University of Kansas Medical Center. He has written books on the topic of polygamy, including *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism*.

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- **BIOJonathan A. Stapley**

Jonathan Stapley is an electrochemist and independent Church scholar who resides in Washington. He studied food science at Brigham Young University and went on to receive a Ph.D. in carbohydrate chemistry from Purdue University before pursuing research in Church history and doctrine. Much of his research concerns liturgy and women and the priesthood. Stapley is the author of the book *The Power of Godliness: Mormon Liturgy and Cosmology*.

- **BIODaniel C. Peterson**

Daniel C. Peterson (1953–present) is a professor emeritus of Islamic Studies and Arabic in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages at Brigham Young University. He attended received a bachelor's degree in philosophy and Greek from BYU and did graduate work in Jerusalem and Cairo before receiving a Ph.D. from UCLA. His academic work focuses mostly on the Qur'an and Islamic philosophy. Peterson served as chairman of the board of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies and currently serves as editor-in-chief of *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship*.

- [\[1\]↵](#)

In a November 14, 1852 sermon, Heber C. Kimball taught that Adam is “the Father and God of this earth.” Prior to this sermon, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal on April 10, 1852 that Heber taught the “God and Father of Jesus Christ was Adam.”

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[Heber C. Kimball teaches Adam is the God of this Earth but is distinct from “Elohim.”](#)

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[Wilford Woodruff records Heber C. Kimball teaching “God and Father of Jesus Christ was Adam.”](#)

- [\[2\]↵](#)

In a sermon delivered on April 9, 1852, Brigham Young taught:

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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*.

•

[Brigham Young teaches that Adam is the only God with whom we have to do and he was transplanted from another planet to this earth with Eve.](#)

• [\[3\]](#)

During an April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and the rest of the Church leadership concerning his opposition to the Adam-God theory, Brigham called his teaching a “doctrine” that originated from Joseph Smith.

It was Joseph's doctrine that Adam was God &c. When in Luke Johnson's at O. Hydes the power came upon us, or shock that alarmed the neighborhood. God comes to earth & eats & partakes of fruit. Joseph could not reveal what was revealed to him, & if Joseph had it revealed, he was not told to reveal it.

The June 8, 1868 minutes for the Provo School of the Prophets used “doctrine” to describe Brigham's Adam-God theory:

The doctrine preached by Pres. Young for a few years back, wherein he says that Adam is our God —the God we worship—that most of the people believe this—some believe it because the President says so—others because they can find testimony in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. . .

•

[Minutes of April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and other Church leaders; Brigham Young claims Joseph taught Adam-God “in Luke Johnson's.”](#)

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Provo Minutes of the School of the Prophets evidences general acceptance of Adam being God; most believe it, some because Brigham Young taught it, others because it appears reasonable.](#)

- [\[4\]](#)↵

President Spencer W. Kimball taught the following in 1976:

We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine.

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[Spencer W. Kimball refers to the Adam-God teaching as a “theory,” denounces it, and says it is not “according to the scriptures.”](#)

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[Elden Watson reports a private interview where President Kimball clarified his conference remarks about the Adam-God theory.](#)

- [\[5\]](#)↵

In a letter to Alfred Saxey dated January 9, 1897, Joseph F. Smith wrote that Brigham “no doubt expressed his personal opinion or views upon the subject” and “What he said was not given as a revelation or commandment from the Lord.”

During the April 1922 General Conference, Charles W. Penrose argued against the Adam-God teaching, arguing that Adam could not be God as Adam “prayed to the Eternal Father as we do.”

During the April 1975 General Conference, Vaughn J. Featherstone called Adam-God teachings a “theory” and that those who believed it “don’t have time to study faith and repentance. Maybe they ought to get back to basics.”

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Alfred Saxey, states Adam-God may represent Brigham's personal opinion but the teaching is not revealed doctrine and is not binding on Church members.

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Charles W. Penrose says that Adam-God speculation is going beyond what has been revealed; Adam cannot be God as he worshiped the Father.

•

Vaughn J. Featherstone calls “Adam-God” a “theory” and those who profess belief in it as ignorant of the basics of the Gospel.

- [\[6\]←](#)

In the same sermon, Brigham Young, addressing Adam/Michael's role in the creation of this earth, taught:

It is true that the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Eloheim, Yahovah, and Michael, these three forming a quorum, as in all heavenly bodies, and in organizing element, perfectly represented in the Deity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

On October 8, 1854, George D. Watt recorded Brigham as teaching that God the Father told Adam

“Yahovah Michael, go and create a world, make it, organize it, form it; and then put upon it every thing in all the variety that you have seen, that you have been in the habit of being associated with in other worlds, of beasts, birds, fowl, fish, and every insect, and creeping thing,” — and finally, the whole eternity of element is full of life, bring it together and make of it living creatures.” Yahovah Michael, goes and does as he is told.

•

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[Brigham Young teaches that Adam is the only God with whom we have to do and he was transplanted from another planet to this earth with Eve.](#)

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[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

30

- [\[7\]←](#)

During the April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and the rest of Church leadership, Brigham used D&C 78 as evidence that Joseph taught believed Adam was God.

One thing I have thought that I might still have omitted. It was Joseph's doctrine that Adam was God &c. When in Luke Johnson's at O. Hydes the power came upon us, or shock that alarmed the neighborhood. God comes to earth & eats & partakes of fruit. Joseph could not reveal what was revealed to him, & if Joseph had it revealed, he was not told to reveal it. The Spirit is sent when the mother feels earth, God put it into his mouth, & when god, wanted to translate he had the power. Not a contradictory thing in what I have said."

On December 16, 1867, Wilford Woodruff recorded Brigham Young teaching that Joseph taught Adam-God theory:

President Young spoke of the first organization of this school By Joseph Smith the Prophet. The word of wisdom was given in this school. Presidet Young said Adam was Michael the Ark angel & he was the Father of Jesus Christ & was our God & that Joseph taught this Principle.

In a May 14, 1876 journal entry, Brigham wrote:

Is there in the heaven of heavens a Leader? Yes, and we cannot do without one and that being the case, whoever he is may be called God. Joseph said that Adam was our Father and God, and himself, being a leader, he too was their God.

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[Minutes of April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and other Church leaders; Brigham Young claims Joseph taught Adam-God "in Luke Johnson's."](#)

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[1880 Doctrine and Covenants states that D&C 78 was received near the Luke Johnson farm.](#)

31

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[Wilford Woodruff records Brigham teaching Adam is the Father of Jesus and citing Joseph.](#)

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[Brigham teaches the leader in Heaven is Adam, and the Adam-God doctrine was taught by Joseph.](#)

- [\[8\]←](#)

In her 1882 book *Plural Marriage As Taught by the Prophet Joseph*, Helen Mar Kimball Whitney also argued that the Adam-God theory originated with Joseph:

Brigham Young did not happen to be the author of this doctrine, and to prove the truth of my assertion, I will produce some of the Prophet's teachings, given May 16th, 1841.

Helen then quotes Joseph as identifying Adam/Michael as the “Ancient of Days” of Daniel 7:

Daniel, in his seventh chapter of his book, speaks of the Ancient of days—he means the oldest man, our father Adam, Michael. . . . He (Adam) is the father of the human family and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. . . .

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[Helen Mar Kimball Whitney said Joseph was the “author” of the Adam-God “doctrine.”](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[9\]←](#)

In this sermon, Brigham taught:

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.

Brigham Young had previously taught some of the tenets of Adam-God theory, but not in public. Willard Richards, in a journal entry for February 16, 1847, recorded Brigham teaching:

we are all father adams . . . as soon at the time times I shall pass the chain to father adam. . . . I want to stop your calling me father Young. in the Priesthood. the term properly applies to father adam, & to our father in heaven.

Brigham Young once claimed that if the Saints from previous dispensations “with their Apostles, Prophets, Seers, and Revelators” were asked about the nature of Deity, they would have various opinions.

I am led to think there would be found a great variety in their views and feelings upon this subject, without direct revelation from the Lord. It is as much my right to differ from other men, as it is theirs to differ from me, in points of doctrine and principle, when our minds cannot at once arrive at the same conclusion.

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[Brigham Young teaches that Adam is the only God with whom we have to do and he was transplanted from another planet to this earth with Eve.](#)

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[Willard Richards records Brigham Young teaching that “we are all father Adams”; the title “Father” only properly applies to “Father Adam” who is “our Father in heaven.”](#)

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Brigham Young teaches that, if ancient prophets and apostles were asked about their doctrine of deity, there would be differences of theological opinion.](#)

- [\[10\]](#)↵

In his article published in *Udgorrn Seion, Neu Seren y Saint* (English: *Zion's Trumpet, or Star of the Saints*), Jones teaches that the "Ancient of Days" (Michael/Adam) is the father of our spirits:

the Father of Jesus Christ is the Father of our spirits, is true, —if we have proved that he and the "Ancient of Days" are the same, then the "Ancient of Days" is the Father of all our spirits.

And that this figure is the father of the spirit and body of Jesus:

the "Ancient of Days" was simply another name for the "Highest," his "Father," &c. After using scriptural fact from God in heaven, one sees the consistency of the conception of his body by the same Father in the womb of the Virgin.

•

[Dan Jones said Adam/the Ancient of Days is the God and Father of our spirits.](#)

- [\[11\]](#)↵

Brigham Young's many statements explaining core tenets of Adam-God theory include these from 1854:

Every world has had an Adam, and an Eve: named so, simply because the first man is always called Adam, and the first woman Eve; and the oldest son has always had the privilege of being ordained, appointed, and called to be the heir of the family, if he does not rebel against the Father; and he is the savior of that family. Every world that has been created, has been created upon the same principle

and

I reckon that Father Adam was a resurrected being, with his wives and posterity, and in the Celestial kingdom they were crow[n]ed with glory, immortality, and eternal lives. . .

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Adam then, was a resurrected being; and I reckon, our spirits and the spirits of all the human family were begotten by Adam, and born of Eve.

•

[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

34

- [\[12\]](#)↵

In his journal entry for October 8, 1854, Woodruff wrote:

President Young preached to a congregation of several thousand out of Doors And I Believe that He preached the greatest sermon that ever was Deliverd to the Latter Day Saints since they have been a People.

•

[Wilford Woodruff refers to Brigham's October 8, 1854 discourse as the greatest sermon ever delivered to the Saints.](#)

- [\[13\]](#)↵

William Clayton, in his October 3, 1852 journal, recorded a debate between Pratt and Orson Spencer. Pratt argued that “our father Adam [came] to this earth in the morning of creation with a resurrected body,” appealing to the creation accounts in Genesis and the Book of Moses in support of his position. He reported that

The Brethren are evidently getting tired of arguing on a subject in regards to which so little is known, or satisfaction desired; and on which there is so great a difference of opinion.

William Clayton informed Brigham Young the next day that there had been disagreements about whether Adam had a resurrected body or was created from the dust of the earth and “on this subject brother Pratt and myself, have rather locked horns.”

•

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[William Clayton reports on Orson Spencer teaching Adam being God in light of Genesis and the Book of Moses; Orson Pratt challenges this teaching and denies that Adam had a resurrected body in Eden.](#)

•

[William Clayton informs Brigham Young that he and Orson Pratt have debated one another on the subject of Adam and whether he had a resurrected body when he entered the Garden.](#)

• [\[14\]](#)↵

In the May 1853 issue of *The Seer*, Orson Pratt made a number of comments showing that Adam was subordinate to Jesus, such as Adam standing “next in age to the first born.”

He taught that Michael was one of the sons and daughters “springing from the same Father: but in the temporal world Michael became a father to his own brethren, according to the flesh . . . “

•

[Orson Pratt makes a distinction between God and Adam/Michael; teaches that Adam learned language by immediate inspiration from God.](#)

• [\[15\]](#)↵

In the October 1853 issue of *The Seer*, Orson Pratt subverted an important tenet of Adam-God theory when he wrote:

God, the Father of our spirits, became the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh. . . . for this reason Jesus called “the Only Begotten of the Father;” that is, the only one in this world whose fleshly body was begotten by the Father.

This is in opposition to Adam-God theory, under which everyone is both a spirit and physical son or daughter of God/Adam.

•

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Orson Pratt teaches while we are all the spirit children of God, only Jesus is both the spiritual and physical son of the Father.

- [\[16\]←](#)

In 1856 Wilford Woodruff recorded two disputes between Pratt and Church leaders, including Brigham Young, noting that “President Young said that will destroy him if he dos not repent & turn from his evil way,” resulting in Pratt promising he would not publish material in opposition to Brigham's views.

Woodruff would record that, on March 24, 1858, Orson Pratt promised not to openly criticize Brigham Young concerning the doctrine:

At the Close Orson Pratt Confessed his faults and said that He would never teach those principles again or speak them to any person on the Earth. We all forgave him and voted to receive him into full fellowship.

- 

Wilford Woodruff said Orson Pratt disagrees with Brigham Young concerning how Adam's body was formed.

- 

Wilford Woodruff, in his journal, records debate between Orson Pratt and other Church leaders concerning creation of Adam out of the dust of the earth.

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Wilford Woodruff said Orson Pratt promised not to oppose Brigham on Adam and God.

- [\[17\]←](#)

Brigham Young would claim that Joseph Smith did teach Adam-God theory in Luke Johnson's home, referring to D&C 78. Wilford Woodruff, who was present, noted that “the Twelve voted to receive the Confession of Orson Pratt.”

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Thomas Bullock recorded Orson Pratt's surprise at the meeting being called, noting that Pratt thought Brigham

was perfectly satisfied with the confession, as he was informed by bro. Watt, when he handed him the sermon to revise that the President had read it and approved of it, and wishing to have it read for them later that week; and he was quite astonished when bro. Young made the remarks he did on the stand a short time afterwards.

He added that Pratt felt he could not preach Adam-God, noting that its teachings "were false, he could not do it, because if he did he would prove himself a hypocrite."

•

[Thomas Bullock records Orson Pratt and other Church leaders opposing Adam-God teachings.](#)

•

[Wilford Woodruff records Brigham and the leadership of the Church voting to accept Orson Pratt's confession and apology.](#)

•

[Minutes of April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and other Church leaders; Brigham Young claims Joseph taught Adam-God "in Luke Johnson's."](#)

•

[1880 Doctrine and Covenants states that D&C 78 was received near the Luke Johnson farm.](#)

•

[Joseph said in a revelation Michael had "the keys of salvation."](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[18\]←](#)

In this meeting, Brigham Young was recorded as saying to Pratt:

I want you to do just as you have done in your apostleship, but when you want to teach new doctrine, write your ideas, and submit them to me and if they are correct, I will tell you. There is no man's sermons that I like read, when you understand your subject, better than yours—but you are not perfect, neither am I.

In this meeting also, Orson Pratt subitted a sermon to serve as a confession for his doctrinal errors. The minutes for this meeting record that the sermon “was satisfactory to Prest. Young.”

Disputes between Orson and other Church leaders would persist. In his journal for September 23, 1860, Wilford Woodruff recorded Orson debating Brigham and Heber C. Kimball on the nature of God:

Brother Pratt said I do not believe as Brother Brigham & Brother Kimball do in some points of doctrin & they do not wish me to acknowled[ge] to a thing that I do not believe. Brother Brigham Said No you Cannot See the truth in this matter until you get into the spirit world.

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[George Sims records Orson Pratt's submission of a sermon where he would make confession about various doctrinal statements to Brigham for inspection.](#)

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[Brigham instructs Orson Pratt to submit any doctrinal writings to the Church leadership for inspection before sharing them publicly.](#)

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[Wilford Woodruff records Orson Pratt having a dispute with Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball concerning the nature of God.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[19\]](#)↵

Brigham Young's teachings concerning Adam and God were discussed in the November and December 1860 issues of the RLDS *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald* by an author writing under the pen name of "A Stone in the Mountain."

The editor introduced the two-part series with the following summary:

Brigham says, "Adam is our Father and our God and the only God with whom we have to do." The atrocious wickedness of this doctrine is proved with overwhelming evidence from the new translation of the Bible, Book of Abraham, revelation to Moses, B. of C., and B. of M.,"

The two-part series concludes by accusing Brigham Young of deception:

his thousands by his false revelation, in which he says Adam is the only God with whom we have to do, and made idolators of them? . . . we learn that many of the Nephites became idolators. See B. of M., 22 c. of Alma, page 355. Perhaps they thought as a great many Mormons do that Adam is God, and worshiped him, which is idolatry.

RLDS objections to Adam-God would persist after Brigham's death in 1877. Joseph Lambert wrote in 1894:

Brigham Young taught that Adam is our father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do; Joseph Smith taught that Adam was a man, standing at the head of the race, and that all his official honor and power came from the "Holy One," whom alone we are to worship, and "who is without beginning of days or end of life."

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[RLDS Periodical calls Brigham's teaching on Adam and God "idolatry."](#)

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[RLDS Periodical said Brigham's teachings on Adam and God is evidence of the LDS Church worshiping a false god.](#)

-

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[RLDS periodical discusses Brigham Young's teachings concerning Adam and God; concludes LDS Church worships Adam and the teaching is idolatrous.](#)

•

[Joseph Richard Lambert \(RLDS\) raises objection to Brigham Young's teachings on Adam-God from the Doctrine and Covenants.](#)

40

- [\[20\]](#)↵

The minutes for the Salt Lake School of the Prophets for July 4, 1868, records:

Elder Orson Pratt made a full confession before the School of his error in opposing doctrines revealed; said whenever he had done so and excused himself because of what was written, his mind became darkened and he felt bad. He asked forgiveness of Pres. Young, of the Twelve and the whole school. Pres. Young expressed his satisfaction with Elder Pratt's confession and preached in relation to Adam etc. Elder Woodruff spoke and felt happy at Bro.Pratt's position and present feelings.

•

[Orson Pratt confesses to being in error for opposing Brigham Young's "revealed" teachings concerning Adam and God to the Salt Lake City School of the Prophets.](#)

- [\[21\]](#)↵

L. John Nuttall recorded how he and Wilford Woodruff helped write the lecture for Brigham Young in his journal entries for February 1877.

Wilford Woodruff, in a journal entry dated March 21, 1877, wrote that Brigham Young was laboring all winter to produce "a perfect form of Endowments as far as possible," which would include the Lecture.

•

[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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L. John Nuttall records how he and Wilford Woodruff wrote the lecture (at the veil) for the endowment.

41

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L. John Nuttall said he and others made the Lecture at the Veil, which Brigham corrected.

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L. John Nuttall said he worked on Lecture at the Veil) and Brigham approved it.

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Wilford Woodruff notes in journal for March 1877 that Brigham Young was laboring all winter to produce a perfect form of the Temple Endowment.

- [\[22\]](#)↩

In the February 7, 1877 journal entry from L. John Nuttall there is an account of the "Lecture at the Veil."

The lecture taught that Adam "was made of the dust of the earth but not of this earth" and that "Adam was an immortal being when he came on the earth." Adam, on another earth, "had been faithful in all things and gained his resurrection and his exaltation," being "numbered with the Gods," and "had begotten all the spirits that was to come to this earth and Eve, our common mother who is the mother of all living, bore those spirits in the Celestial World." Jesus was supposed to be "Father Adam's oldest son" and "first begotten."

-

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [\[23\]](#)↵

In a sermon from August 15, 1876, Brigham taught that Adam and Eve desired for their children to join them in the Celestial Kingdom and to become “sons of God” and joint-heirs with him:

There are very few of the children of Father Adam and mother Eve, who will be prepared to go into the Celestial Kingdom. Those who prepare themselves here below, through obedience to the Gospel, receiving through their faithfulness the keys of the Priesthood, and sanctifying themselves through the truth, they are preparing themselves to become the sons of God.

•

[Brigham teaches “Father Adam and mother Eve” wants their children to be prepared to go into the Celestial Kingdom.](#)

- [\[24\]](#)↵

During the Kirtland Temple lawsuit of February 1880, the RLDS Church alleged that the LDS Church was not the same Church Joseph Smith founded due to “the doctrine of Adam-god worship”:

That the Church in Utah the defendant of which John Taylor is President, has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws <ordinances> and usages of said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, and has incorporated into its system of faith the doctrines of Celestial Marriage and a plurality of wives, and the doctrine of Adam-god worship, contrary to the laws and constitution of said original church.

•

[During the Kirtland Temple Suit, it is alleged by the RLDS that the Church has departed from the faith including Adam-God.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[25\]←](#)

In response to a query by Alfred Saxey concerning Adam-God theory, Joseph F. Smith taught:

The Doctrine was never submitted to the Councils of the Priesthood, nor to the Church for approval or ratification and was never formally or otherwise accepted by the Church. It is therefore in no sense binding upon the Church nor upon the consciences of any of the members thereof, except perhaps only so far as some may have confidence in President Young, believing that he had light on the subject which was not given in connection with his public mention thereof. It is thought, even if there is truth in it, that the bare mention made by Prest. Young without indubitable evidence and authority being given of its truth, was unfortunate to say the least.

43

- [Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Alfred Saxey, states Adam-God may represent Brigham's personal opinion but the teaching is not revealed doctrine and is not binding on Church members.](#)

- [\[26\]←](#)

On December 4, 1897, Ephraim H. Nye wrote to Franklin D. Richards asking for clarification on the relationship between Adam and God. Nye was writing an article in the *Fresno Republican* responding to some "attacks" from the RLDS Church.

On December 16, 1897, Franklin D. Richards would note how the Church leaders received Nye's article and that it was decided that "no action as to the dealing with Adam our F. & God" would be taken.

In a letter dated December 18, 1897, Franklin D. Richards would inform Nye:

The Council did not deem it wise to lay out any line of procedure in which to deal with the subject, but felt that it is best to avoid bringing it up, and to do the best we can and as the Spirit may suggest when it is thrust upon us.

- [Ephraim H. Nye writes to Franklin D. Richards asking about the validity of "The Adam God story" that he was writing about in the Fresno Republican to counter RLDS Church accusations.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [Franklin D. Richards records Council deciding not to deal with subject of Adam being our God and Father in response to Ephraim H. Nye's query regarding the teaching's status.](#)

- [Franklin D. Richards writes to applaud Ephraim H. Nye for his article on Adam-God in the \*Fresno Republican\*; encloses a copy of Brigham Young's sermons from vol. 1 of the \*Journal of Discourses\*.](#)

- [\[27\]](#)↵

Charles W. Penrose also added:

The express declaration of the Church is: "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." We believe that these are separate persons, but that they are one as to the Godhead. . . There are many persons who are called gods, both in heaven and on earth, as the Apostle Paul declares, but "to us there is one God, even the Father of whom are all things, and one Lord, even Jesus Christ, by whom are all things."

- [Charles W. Penrose interprets Brigham Young as teaching that Adam will stand, in eternity, at the head of the human family as the great Patriarch who will rule over all his posterity.](#)

- [\[28\]](#)↵

In his journal entry for March 20, 1905, Cluff wrote:

there has been some talk and discussion on the god head & I and Bro H.M. Cluff was called to make a special visit to all the people who had advocated that doctrine that

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

addam is god & the father of christ was false & to day in meeting all was given one week for probation & if they did not repent they would be dropped from there positions in the ward

•

[Hyrum Albert Cluff records how he and H.M. Cluff were tasked with warning advocates of Adam-God theology that they would be removed if they continued teaching it.](#)

45

- [\[29\]](#)↵

In their doctrinal pronouncement, the First Presidency declared:

Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh. . . . Jehovah . . . is Jesus Christ the Son of Elohim.

•

[First Presidency teaches “God” and “Father” can be used as titles for people other than God the Father, including Jesus.](#)

- [\[30\]](#)↵

McConkie wrote in 1958:

Cultists and other enemies of the restored truth, for their own peculiar purposes, sometimes try to make it appear that Latter-day Saints worship Adam as their Father in heaven. In support of their false assumptions, they quote such statements as that of President Brigham Young to the effect that Adam is our father and our god and the only god with whom we have to do.

McConkie did teach that Adam can be correctly considered a “god” in a limited sense:

There is a sense, of course, in which Adam is a god. But so also, in the same sense, are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses and all the ancient prophets; Peter, James, and John; and all the righteous saints of all ages, including those of both high and low degree.

•

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Bruce R. McConkie calls Adam-God a “theory”; teaches Adam is subordinate to both Jesus and His Father.](#)

- [\[31\]↵](#)

During the October 1976 General Conference, President Spencer W. Kimball said:

We warn you against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine.

•

[Spencer W. Kimball refers to the Adam-God teaching as a “theory,” denounces it, and says it is not “according to the scriptures.”](#)

- [\[32\]↵](#)

Elden Watson reported that he, along with other members of a Church committee working under the direction of apostle Mark E. Petersen, heard President Kimball give these clarifying remarks:

He said that he did not say that Brigham Young did not make the statements which are attributed to him, nor did he claim that they were falsely reported. Neither did he say that Brigham Young taught false doctrine. What he did say and what he meant is that the Adam-God theory is false, and the Adam-God theory is that interpretation which is placed on Brigham Young's words by present day apostates and fundamentalists--their understanding of what Brigham Young meant is false.

•

[Elden Watson reports a private interview where President Kimball clarified his conference remarks about the Adam-God theory.](#)

- [\[33\]↵](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

President Hinckley's was questioned by non-LDS reporter Lawrence Wright about Brigham Young's Adam-God teachings. Hinckley added that he was “not going to worry about what [Brigham Young] said about those things.”

•

[Lawrence Wright said Gordon B. Hinckley said he did not know what Brigham Young meant in some of his Adam-God teachings.](#)

47

- [\[34\]](#)↵

In his journal for April 4-5, 1860, Wilford Woodruff noted how he, Brigham, and various other Church leaders opposed Orson Pratt's disbelief of Adam-God theory. Woodruff also noted that Orson would apologize to the Quorum of the Twelve for this:

5th The Quorum of the Twelve met this morning in the prayer room. We talked the matter over Concerning Brother Pratt dressed & prayed. Read over his sermon and Corrected it and the Twelve voted to receive the Confession of Orson Pratt.

This event shows that it was the near-unanimous belief of the leadership of the Church by 1860.

•

[Wilford Woodruff records Brigham and the leadership of the Church voting to accept Orson Pratt's confession and apology.](#)

- [\[35\]](#)↵

L. John Nuttall recorded Brigham Young teaching, as part of the “Lecture at the Veil” for the St. George Temple, that Adam

had lived on an earth similar to ours he had received the priesthood and 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 came through his faithfulness, and had begotten all the spirits that was to come to this earth and Eve our common mother who is the mother of all living, bore those spirits in the Celestial World and when this earth was organized by Elohim, Hehovah, and Michael who is Adam our common father.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

•

[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

48

- [\[36\]](#)↵

British Church members' belief in Adam-God theory was affirmed by Church leaders in both *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* and the hymn "We Believe in our God." The hymn teaches that "our God" is "Our own Father Adam" and that Jesus Christ "is his [Adam's] Son."

•

[Francis M. Lyman reports of a man being excommunicated in England for rejecting Adam-God; teaches that, while it is true, it is not essential and instead, other doctrines should be emphasized.](#)

•

[LDSMS publishes tribute to Samuel W. Richards; lists the announcement of the Adam-God doctrine as one of the events marking his time as mission president.](#)

•

[Franklin D. Richards said Adam-God was Adam becoming God of this earth.](#)

•

[Hymn #306 in English 1856 Hymnal teaches Adam is the Lord of the earth and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [\[37\]](#)↵



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Critic T. B. H. Stenhouse wrote in 1873:

The mass of the Mormon people do not believe the doctrine of the Adam deity, but of them all, one only, Orson Pratt, has dared to make a public protest against that doctrine.

In his journal for May 26, 1892, Abraham H. Cannon would note that there were some Church members in Utah who

do not accept of the statement of Pres. Young that such is the case, but to me it seems reasonable to think that Adam has at least much to do with our present condition, and will control greatly our future destiny.

•

[T.B.H. Stenhouse, in a work critical of the Church, notes that the majority of members do not believe Adam is God; notes conflict between Brigham and Orson concerning doctrine.](#)

•

[Abraham H. Cannon records how some Church members did not believe Brigham's saying: "Adam is our God."](#)

- [\[38\]](#)↵

In a sermon delivered on June 16, 1844, Joseph taught that Jesus imitated His Father (who Himself had a Father) in dying and being resurrected:

if J. had a Far. can we not believe that he had a Far. also— I despise the idea of being scared to death— I want you all to pay part[icu]lar attent[io]n. J. sd. as the Far. wrought precisely in the same way as his Far. had done bef[ore]— as the Far. had done bef— he laid down his life & took it up same as his Far. had done bef— he did as he was sent to lay down his life & take it up again

•

[Joseph teaches that, just as Jesus laid down his life and was resurrected, so too did the Father.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

•  
[Joseph teaches that Jesus “laid down his life & took it up,” the same as his \[Father\] had done” before.](#)

- [\[39\]↵](#)

In the April 1969 General Conference, Harold B. Lee, then president of the Quorum of the Twelve, said, applying the mention of “the Father” to Elohim rather than to Adam (as in Adam-God theory):

The reasoning of Joseph Smith . . . “that God was once as we are now,” is given additional strength if our brother will recall the words of the Master: “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the son likewise” (John 5:19). When we consider the fact that our Lord and Master, Jesus of Nazareth one of the Godhead, came to tabernacle in mortality, then this quoted statement, taken literally is of great significance. The scriptures make it plain to the student of these sacred writings that there are three personages in the Godhead: (1) God, the Eternal Father, known as the Father as our spirits, (2) his Son, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, even Jehovah, and (3) the Holy Ghost.

•  
[Harold B. Lee teaches that the Son can only do what the Father has previously done \(John 5:19\).](#)

- [\[40\]↵](#)

In a sermon dated October 8, 1854, Brigham Young taught:

Every world has had an Adam, and an Eve: named so, simply because the first man is always called Adam, and the first woman Eve; and the oldest son has always had the privilege of being ordained, appointed, and called to be the heir of the family, if he does not rebel against the Father; and he is the savior of that family.

•  
[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[41\]](#)↵

John Pulsipher recorded Brigham Young teaching on October 8, 1854 that “Tho [Adam] is God & had lived & died & been reserected on some other planet.”

Samuel W. Richards also taught this, writing in his journal for March 25, 1855 that

adam and Eve were made of the dust of the Earth from which they came,—they brought their bodies with them. They had lived died and been resurrected before they came here

•

[Joseph Pulsipher records Brigham Young teaching that Adam is the God we have to account to; Adam came into Eden with a resurrected body with animals and seeds from another planet.](#)

•

[Samuel W. Richards records Brigham Young teaching that Adam and Eve were made from the dust of another earth; they came to Eden with a resurrected body.](#)

- [\[42\]](#)↵

In a diary entry dated March 1855, Samuel W. Richards recorded that “Adam and Eve were made of the dust of the Earth from which they came.”

In April 20, 1856, Brigham Young said that “Adam was made from the dust of an earth, but not from the dust of this earth.”

Brigham would elsewhere teach that

Adam was as conversant with his Father who placed him upon this earth as we are conversant with our earthly parents. The Father frequently came to visit his son Adam, and talked and walked with him; and the children of Adam were more or less acquainted with their Grandfather, and their children were more or less acquainted with their Great-Grandfather . . .

Heber C. Kimball taught that when Adam planted the Garden of Eden

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

he planted it with seeds he brought with him; and he also brought the animals from the earth he lived upon, where his Father dwelt.

•

[Brigham Young teaches that Adam helped create this world and brought seeds from another planet to this earth; hopes to learn more about the God of Adam.](#)

52

•

[Samuel W. Richards records Brigham Young teaching that Adam and Eve were made from the dust of another earth; they came to Eden with a resurrected body.](#)

•

[Brigham Young teaches that Adam was visited by His Father while in the Garden of Eden and conversed with Him just as we converse with our earthly parents.](#)

•

[Heber C. Kimball teaches Adam planted the Garden with vegetation and animals from the earth his Father dwelt on.](#)

- [\[43\]](#)↵

In the Church's *Gospel Principles* manual, we read:

Adam and Eve were among our Father's noblest children. In the spirit world Adam was called Michael the archangel (see D&C 27:11; Jude 1:9). He was chosen by our Heavenly Father to lead the righteous in the battle against Satan (see Revelation 12:7–9). . . . Eve was "the mother of all living" (Moses 4:26).

•

[Gospel Principles manual presents traditional understanding of Adam, Eve, and their relationship to God.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[44\]](#)↵

Joseph Smith taught the doctrine that God the Father was a Savior on a previous earth, however, unlike Brigham Young, he did not say that God was Adam.

Referring to John 5:19, Joseph Smith taught on April 7, 1844:

What did Jesus say— as the father hath had power in himself even so hath the son power. to do what why what the father did To lay down his body and took it up again. Jesus what are you going to do— to lay down my life as my father did that I might take it up again. If you deny it you deny the bible

On June 16, 1844 he taught that Jesus “laid down his life & took it up same as his Far. [Father] had done bef[ore].”

- 

[Joseph teaches that, just as Jesus laid down his life and was resurrected, so too did the Father.](#)

- 

[Joseph teaches that Jesus “laid down his life & took it up,” the same as his \[Father\] had done” before.](#)

- [\[45\]](#)↵

Brigham Young and some later nineteenth-century church leaders echoed the doctrine of Joseph Smith that God the Father was a Savior on a previous world, but went further to specifically teach that God was Adam and that Jesus was Adam's oldest Son.

Every world has had an Adam, and an Eve . . . and the oldest son has always had the privilege of being ordained, appointed, and called to be the heir of the family, if he does not rebel against the Father; and he is the savior of that family.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Wilford Woodruff remembered Brigham Young teaching that “if we are ever exalted and crowned in the presence of God we shall become saviors of a world which we shall create & people.”

In 1888, John Taylor taught that “Father Adam” had a resurrected body in the Garden and was a Savior in a previous world.

•

[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

•

[Wilford Woodruff records Brigham teaching that on each world there is a Savior who atones for the sins of that people.](#)

•

[John Taylor teaches that “Father Adam” had a resurrected body in the Garden and was a Savior in a previous world.](#)

- [\[46\]](#)↩

In the April 1969 General Conference, Harold B. Lee, then president of the Quorum of the Twelve, advocated a literal interpretation of John 5:19. In contrast to Brigham Young, he applied the mention of “the Father” to Elohim rather than to Adam:

The reasoning of Joseph Smith, in the partial statement from which he has quoted, “that God was once as we are now,” is given additional strength if our brother will recall the words of the Master: “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” (John 5:19.)

When we consider the fact that our Lord and Master, Jesus of Nazareth, one of the Godhead, came to tabernacle in mortality, then this quoted statement, taken literally, is of great significance.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

After quoting John 5:19 in the October 2001 conference, Elder Neal A. Maxwell may have been alluding to a similar interpretation of the verse when he said: “This verse carries intimations of grand things—beyond the beyond.”

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[Harold B. Lee teaches that the Son can only do what the Father has previously done \(John 5:19\).](#)

55

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[Neal A. Maxwell said John 5:19 “carries intimations of grand things.”](#)

- [\[47\]↵](#)

During the December 11, 1869 meeting of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets, Brigham Young taught:

[everyone] will have to be sealed to men until the chain is united from Father Adam down to the last Saint. This will be the work of the Millennium . . . Some may think what I have said concerning Adam strange, but the person will come when this people will be willing to adopt Joseph Smith as their Prophet, Seer, Revelator and God, but not the Father of their Spirits, for that was our Father Adam.

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[Brigham Young teaches that Father Adam is the Father of our Spirits at a meeting of the Salt Lake City School of the Prophets.](#)

- [\[48\]↵](#)

In the 1909 statement “The Origin of Man,” the First Presidency taught:

man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality.

This was reiterated in the 1925 First Presidency Statement “Mormon View of Evolution”:

[WWW.LIONANDLAMBAPOLOGETICS.ORG](http://WWW.LIONANDLAMBAPOLOGETICS.ORG)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity.

During a women's fireside on September 16, 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball taught that we are "Born with a noble birthright" and that "God is your father . . . He and your mother in heaven value you beyond measure."

56

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[First Presidency, in statement on man's origins, distinguishes Adam from the God and Father of our spirits.](#)

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[Spencer W. Kimball teaches that Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother are the parents of our spirits.](#)

•

[First Presidency issues statement affirming Adam as a historical person and "our great progenitor" who was made in the image of God, just like Jesus.](#)

- [\[49\]↩](#)

In a general conference address on October 8, 1854, Brigham referred to Adam as "Yahovah Michael." In a November 11, 1867 sermon, he referred to God and the Father of Adam as both "Elohim" and "Jehovah."

We obey the Lord, Him who is called Jehovah, the Great I AM, I am a man of war, Eloheim, etc.

In his journal for June 17, 1871, Joseph F. Smith recorded Brigham saying Jehovah was the Father of Adam and Elohim was his "heavenly grandfather":

Eloheim, Yahova + Michael were father, son and grandson. They made this Earth + Michael became Adam.



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

This would be included in the Lecture at the Veil (1877), where, according to John L. Nuttall, Brigham taught that “this earth was organized by Elohim, Hehovah, and Michael who is Adam our common father. Adam and Eve.”

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[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

57

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[Brigham calls God the father both “Jeohvah” and “Eloh\(e\)im.”](#)

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[Brigham teaches Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael are Father, Son, and Grandson, respectively; after the earth was made, Michael became Adam.](#)

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[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [\[50\]](#)↵

In his journal entry for June 17, 1871, Joseph F. Smith recorded Brigham saying that

Eloheim, Yahova + Michael were father, son and grandson. They made this Earth + Michael became Adam.

•

[Brigham teaches Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael are Father, Son, and Grandson, respectively; after the earth was made, Michael became Adam.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[51\]](#)↵

In an 1855 poem, Eliza R. Snow spoke of “Father Adam, our God . . . And Jesus, our Brother, who died for us all.”

In the December 15, 1855 issue of *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Franklin D. Richards wrote concerning “God the Father, Michael or Adam” and that

This is the God with whom we have to do, and who stands at our head to do battle with the powers of darkness and assist us, His children, to overcome, that we may receive a like glory with Himself and live in His presence.

In a sermon dated March 8, 1857, Brigham Young addressed the various ways the term “God” is used in the Scriptures. “It is said to be eternal life, 'to know the only wise God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent'” that this “God” was “Father Adam.”

In the same sermon, when discussing the final judgment, Brigham spoke of the faithful:

passing Peter, Jesus, the Prophets, Moses, Abraham, and all back to Father Adam, and be pretty sure of receiving his approbation . . . When we get before father Adam and the innumerable company that will come before him—when we draw near to the Ancient of Days with the rest of his children, and receive his approbation, shall we not be safe?

In December 1853, Samuel W. Richards taught British Church members that

While the God of unnumbered worlds is acknowledged to be his God and Father, Adam still maintains his exalted position at the head of all those who are saved from among the whole family of man; and he will be God over all those who are made Gods from among men.

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[Samuel W. Richards addresses British Saints about Adam being God and our Judge; Adam himself is subordinate to “the Great Eloheim” who is “the god of unnumbered worlds.”](#)

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[Eliza R. Snow delivers a poem identifying “Father Adam” as “our God” that is reprinted in the LDSMS.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Franklin D. Richards teaches that Adam is the God and Father of the human family and suggests that Jesus was begotten by Adam.](#)

59

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[Brigham Young discusses the various uses of the term “God”; ultimately, our God is “Father Adam” who will gather us to him with innumerable angels.](#)

- [\[52\]](#)↵

The 1916 First Presidency Statement on the Father and the Son teaches that

Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh. . . . Jehovah . . . is Jesus Christ the Son of Elohim.

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[First Presidency teaches “God” and “Father” can be used as titles for people other than God the Father, including Jesus.](#)

- [\[53\]](#)↵

In a May 11, 1966 letter, LeGrand Richards wrote that Adam “was with Elohim the Father, and Jehovah (Jesus) in the creation of the earth” and that “we all lived in the spirit world before we were born, and Adam is not our God.”

In his February 19, 1981 letter to Eugene England, Bruce R. McConkie wrote that “Elohim” is

God the Eternal Father. He is a glorified and exalted personage. He has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s. In the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name.

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[LeGrand Richards informs Morris L. Reynolds that the Adam-God doctrine isn't true.](#)

•

[Bruce R. McConkie said in a letter Brigham taught Adam is the Father of our Spirits and it's a false doctrine.](#)

60

- [\[54\]](#)↵

Brigham Young would teach in a sermon on October 8, 1859 that “the Father of our spirits ... was once a man in mortal flesh as we are, and is now an exalted Being.” He added that

How many Gods there are, I do not know. But there never was a time when there were not Gods and worlds, and when men were not passing through the same ordeals that we are now passing through.

•

[Brigham teaches our God and Father was once a finite man like we are at present and that we can be exalted.](#)

- [\[55\]](#)↵

John Beck recorded Brigham teaching in a October 8, 1861 meeting that

If faithfull a Man will attain to an Adam & the Wife to be an Eve & begat Millions of Spirits who will come forth & receive their Tabernacles upon an earth like this &c

On November 6, 1864, Brigham was recorded as teaching that every

faithful son of God, becomes, as it were, Adam to the race that springs from his loins, when they are embraced in the covenants and blessings of the Holy Priesthood; and in the lapse of eternity, and in the progress of eternal lives, every true son of God becomes a king of kings, and a lord of lords, and it may also be said of him, as it was written of Jesus Christ, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”

On June 30, 1867, Brigham taught that faithful women should aspire “to be Eves and mothers of human families . . . ”

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[John Beck records a meeting where Brigham taught a faithful man and woman will become an Adam and Eve.](#)

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[Brigham Young teaches that faithful women will become a Mother Eve and help populate their own earth as Eve did.](#)

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[Brigham Young teaches that Adam's God placed him as Lord of this creation; all faithful men will become an "Adam."](#)

- [\[56\]](#)↵

Elder Bruce C. Hafen explained:

When we're in the temple, we can naturally think of ourselves as if we were Adam and Eve.

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[Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen said the New Testament is Christ giving the atonement and the temple shows Adam and Eve receiving the atonement.](#)

- [\[57\]](#)↵

For example, in his January 9, 1897 letter to Alfred Saxey, Joseph F. Smith wrote:

President Young no doubt expressed his personal opinion or views upon the subject. What he said was not given as a revelation or commandment from the Lord.

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Alfred Saxey, states Adam-God may represent Brigham's personal opinion but the teaching is not revealed doctrine and is not binding on Church members.](#)

- [\[58\]](#)↵

Edward Stevenson, one of the seven presidents of the Seventy, continued believing and teaching Adam-God theory.

Stevenson wrote three journal entries on March 7; 1880, March 4, 1882; and February 28, 1896 supporting the theory. In the 1896 entry, Stevenson wrote about a talk in which he had quoted a revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants about "God" sending his "only begotten son."

Who is this that speaketh - But Adam God. and speaking of Jesus Christ, his only son, begotten in the way he was begoton.

Brigham's son, Brigham Young, Jr., recorded in his diary on October 12, 1897 that

At meeting of all the apostles except Grant and Merill. Pres. Snow led out on Adam being our Father and God. How beautiful the thought—it brot God nearer to us. Bro. Franklin [D. Richards] said it made him thrill through his whole body—it was new & it was inspiring. I followed.

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[Edward Stevenson records in his journal that he said Adam is the God and Father of his spirit and body.](#)

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[Edward Stevenson understands Brigham Young to have taught that Adam is God; understands Elohim to be the Father/God of Adam and Jesus to be Jehovah.](#)

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[Edward Stevenson said Elohim, Jehovah, Jesus, and Adam/Michael are distinct persons.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Brigham Young, Jr., records attending a meeting with fellow apostles where Adam-God was discussed; teaching described as “inspiring” and felt that it brought God nearer to them.](#)

63

- [\[59\]](#)↵

During the October 1976 General Conference, Spencer W. Kimball warned Latter-day Saints

against the dissemination of doctrines which are not according to the scriptures and which are alleged to have been taught by some of the General Authorities of past generations. Such, for instance, is the Adam-God theory. We denounce that theory and hope that everyone will be cautioned against this and other kinds of false doctrine.

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[Spencer W. Kimball refers to the Adam-God teaching as a “theory,” denounces it, and says it is not “according to the scriptures.”](#)

- [\[60\]](#)↵

Elden Watson said that President Kimball had a private meeting after the talk with him and other members of a Church committee working with Adam-God members. He reported that President Kimball pointed out

that he did not say that Brigham Young did not make the statements which are attributed to him, nor did he claim that they were falsely reported. Neither did he say that Brigham Young taught false doctrine. What he did say and what he meant is that the Adam-God theory is false, and the Adam-God theory is that interpretation which is placed on Brigham Young's words by present day apostates and fundamentalists--their understanding of what Brigham Young meant is false.

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Elden Watson reports a private interview where President Kimball clarified his conference remarks about the Adam-God theory.](#)

- [\[61\]](#)↵

Reporter Lawrence Wright of *The New Yorker* reported on January 21, 2002:

When I asked him to characterize God's connubial relationship, he replied, "We don't speculate on that a lot. Brigham Young said if you went to Heaven and saw God it would be Adam and Eve. I don't know what he meant by that." Pointing to a grim-faced portrait of the Lion of the Lord, as Young was called, he said, "There he is, right there. I'm not going to worry about what he said about those things."

•

[Lawrence Wright said Gordon B. Hinckley said he did not know what Brigham Young meant in some of his Adam-God teachings.](#)

- [\[62\]](#)↵

In his February 8, 1857 sermon, Brigham taught that

Whether Adam is the personage that we should consider our heavenly Father, or not, is considerable of a mystery to a good many. I do not care for one moment how that is; it is no matter whether we are to consider Him our God, or whether His Father, or His Grandfather, for in either case we are of one species—of one family—and Jesus Christ is also of our species.

Previously, on October 8, 1854, George D. Watt recorded Brigham as teaching that

There are items of doctrine, and principles, in the bosom of eternity that the best of the Latter Day Saints are unworthy to receive.

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[Brigham Young teaches the relationship between "Heavenly Father" and "Adam" is a mystery.](#)



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

65

- [\[63\]](#)↵

On October 1861, Brigham would present a sermon entitled “A Few Words on Doctrine” where he taught that

Some years ago, I advanced a doctrine with regard to Adam <being our father and God>, that will be a curse to many of the Elders of Israel because of their folly. With regard to it they yet grovel in darkness and will. Yet It is one of the most glorious of revelations of the economy of heaven, yet upon it the world holds it division.

During the December 11, 1869 meeting of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets, Brigham taught that

[everyone] will have to be sealed to men until the chain is united from Father Adam down to the last Saint. This will be the work of the Millennium . . . Some may think what I have said concerning Adam strange, but the person will come when this people will be willing to adopt Joseph Smith as their Prophet, Seer, Revelator and God, but not the Father of their Spirits, for that was our Father Adam.

During a June 18, 1873 sermon, he would teach:

that Adam is our father and our God. Our Father Adam helped to make this earth, it was created expressly for him, and after it was made he and his companions came here. He brought one of his wives with him, and she was called Eve, because she was the first woman upon the earth. Our Father Adam is the man who stands at the gate and holds the keys of everlasting life and salvation to all his children who have or who ever will come upon the earth.

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[Brigham Young affirms that he did teach Adam was our Father and God; acknowledges difficulty teaching has inside and outside the Church.](#)

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Brigham Young teaches that Adam is our Father and God and holds priesthood keys.](#)

•

[Brigham Young teaches that Father Adam is the Father of our Spirits at a meeting of the Salt Lake City School of the Prophets.](#)

66

- [\[64\]](#)↵

Samuel W. Richards wrote in 1853 that Brigham's teachings concerning Adam-God were truths revealed in this dispensation:

OUR FATHER ADAM.—The extract from the *Journal of Discourses* may startle some of our readers, but we would wish them to recollect that in this last dispensation God will send forth, by His servants, things *new* as well as *old*, until man is perfected in the truth.

In an 1854 general conference address, James Little taught:

I believe in the principle of obedience; and if I am told that Adam is our Father and our God, I just believe it. Brethren, I feel well, and have felt well all the time.

•

[Samuel W. Richards informs readers of the LDSMS that Brigham Young's sermons concerning Adam and God represent new teachings reserved for this dispensation.](#)

•

[James Little said Adam is our Father and God and Franklin D. Richards said it has only been revealed in this dispensation.](#)

- [\[65\]](#)↵

Hymn #306 in the 1856 hymnal for Latter-day Saints in Britain reads

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

We believe in our God, the great Prince of his race, The Archangel, Michael, the Ancient of days, Our own Father Adam, earth's Lord is his plane, Who'll counsel and fight for his children again. We believe in his Son Jesus Christ, who in love For his brothers and sisters, came down from above;

E. L. T. Harrison's hymn, "Sons of Michael," when originally published in *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* (April 13, 1861), referred to Michael as "the Eternal Father." The current (1985) Latter-day Saint hymnal refers to Michael as the "ancient Father."

67

- [Hymn #306 in English 1856 Hymnal teaches Adam is the Lord of the earth and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [Elias L. T. Harrison calls Michael our "Eternal Father" in a hymn.](#)

- [Hymn #51 in the 1985 Church Hymnal teaches that the Michael will appear at the end-times and the faithful will be his "sons."](#)

- [\[66\]←](#)

On February 19, 1854, Brigham Young taught that

our God the Father of your spirits and my spirits [sic] he is the and framer of body the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is he I tell you who he is Father Adam Michael the Ancient of Day

In an 1860 sermon, Heber C. Kimball taught that, when Adam planted the Garden of Eden

he planted it with seeds he brought with him; and he also brought the animals from the earth he lived upon, where his Father dwelt.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Heber C. Kimball teaches Adam planted the Garden with vegetation and animals from the earth his Father dwelt on.](#)

•

[Brigham identifies Adam/Michael with the God and Father of Jesus Christ; Holy Ghost is not the Father of Jesus.](#)

68

- [\[67\]](#)↵

During a Church leadership meeting concerning Orson Pratt's disagreement with Adam-God theory, George Sims recorded that

President Young, Bro Taylor, Woodruff Geo a Smith, Erastus Snow, O. Hyde, came to the conclusion that Br. Orson ought to retract the erroneous portions of his doctrine; and publish a sermon to that effect; this he might do with the assistance of the twelve; if this was not complied with the doctrines would be submitted to the general conference;

Solomon Farnham Kimball recorded his father, Heber C. Kimball, as teaching on April 30, 1862 that

the Lord told me that Adam was my father and that he was the God and father of all the inhabits of this Earth

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[Heber C. Kimball teaches that he was told by the Lord in April 1862 that Adam was his father and the God and Father of the inhabitants of this earth.](#)

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[George Q. Cannon said "Father Adam" as "our God and Father" was revealed to him.](#)

- [\[68\]](#)↵

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

L. John Nuttall recorded the Lecture at the Veil, provided to him by Brigham Young, as teaching that Adam came to Eden with a resurrected celestial body and is the father of our spirits:

Adam was an immortal being when he came on the earth. He had lived on an earth similar to ours he had received the priesthood and 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 came through his faithfulness, and had begotten all the spirits that was to come to this earth

69

- [L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [\[69\]](#)

L. John Nuttall recorded in 1877 how he and Wilford Woodruff helped write the lecture for Brigham Young. He wrote that Brigham Young was laboring all winter to produce “a perfect form of Endowments as far as possible,” which would include the lecture, indicating that it was something Brigham et al. were working on perfecting the text of the lecture.

- [L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [L. John Nuttall records how he and Wilford Woodruff wrote the lecture \(at the veil\) for the endowment.](#)

- [L. John Nuttall said he and others made the Lecture at the Veil, which Brigham corrected.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[L. John Nuttall said he worked on Lecture at the Veil\) and Brigham approved it.](#)

70

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[Wilford Woodruff notes in journal for March 1877 that Brigham Young was laboring all winter to produce a perfect form of the Temple Endowment.](#)

- [\[70\]↵](#)

One account exists of the Lecture at the Veil in a February 7, 1877 journal entry from L. John Nuttall, who was the recorder at the St. George Temple.

Nuttall wrote that the lecture taught that Adam “was made of the dust of the earth but not of this earth”; Adam “was made just the same way you and I are made but of another earth. Adam was an immortal being when he came on the earth,” Adam, on another earth, “had been faithful in all things and gained his resurrection and his exaltation,” being “numbered with the Gods,” and “had begotten all the spirits that was to come to this earth and Eve, our common mother who is the mother of all living, bore those spirits in the Celestial World” and that Jesus is “Father Adam's oldest son” and “first begotten.”

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[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [\[71\]↵](#)

Some Latter-day Saints believed that the Temple ceremony provided support for Adam-God. Daniel H. Wells was recorded as teaching the Salt Lake School of the Prophets on June 9, 1873 that, concerning “that doctrine pertaining to Adam being our Father & our God . . . The Endowments plainly teach it and the Bible & other revelatoins are fully of it.”

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

In a discourse delivered in Provo on June 27, 1863, Heber C. Kimball taught that

the Almighty sent Jehovah and Michael to do the work. . . . has it not been imitated before you in your holy endowments . . . if we are the Lords of this creation under Adam, ought we not to take a course to imitate our Father in heaven? Is not all this exhibited to us in our endowments?

71

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[SLC School of the Prophets says Adam-God is true doctrine, but should be discussed carefully by the Church.](#)

•

[Heber C. Kimball teaches that Adam's God and Father made him the Lord of this creation and Saints should imitate Adam.](#)

- [\[72\]←](#)

In his journal entry for April 4-5, 1860, Wilford Woodruff noted how he, Brigham, and various Church leaders opposed Orson Pratt's rejection of Adam-God theory. Woodruff also noted that Orson would apologize to the Quorum of the Twelve for this:

5th The Quorum of the Twelve met this morning in the prayer room. We talked the matter over Concerning Brother Pratt dressed & prayed. Read over his sermon and Corrected it and the Twelve voted to receive the Confession of Orson Pratt.

This event shows that it was the near-unanimous belief of the leadership of the Church by 1860.

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[Wilford Woodruff records Brigham and the leadership of the Church voting to accept Orson Pratt's confession and apology.](#)

- [\[73\]←](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

In his record of Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil of the St. George Temple, L. John Nuttall recorded Brigham teaching that Adam is the Father of Jesus:

Father Adam's oldest son (Jesus the Savior) who is the heir of the family is Father Adams' first begotten as it is written.

•

[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [\[74\]](#)↵

L. John Nuttall recorded the Lecture at the Veil, provided to him by Brigham Young, as teaching that Adam came to Eden with a resurrected, celestial body and was the father of our spirits.

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[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [\[75\]](#)↵

Orson Pratt explicitly rejected the Adam-God doctrine. William Clayton noted in 1852 that Pratt and Orson Spencer disagreed on the topic of the status of Adam's body in Eden. Clayton noted that Orson Pratt taught that God

took the dust of the earth and moulded a body into which he put the spirit of man just as we have generally understood from the scriptures; while Brother Spencer endeavors to substantiate the position taken by President Young viz. that Adam came to this earth with a resurrected body

In the May 1853 issue of *The Seer*, Orson Pratt made a number of comments showing that Adam was subordinate to Jesus, such as Adam standing “next in age to the first born” and that Michael, was not the Father of our Spirits.



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

He taught that Michael was one of the sons and daughters “springing from the same Father: but in the temporal world Michael became a father to his own brethren, according to the flesh . . . “

•

[William Clayton reports on Orson Spencer teaching Adam being God in light of Genesis and the Book of Moses; Orson Pratt challenges this teaching and denies that Adam had a resurrected body in Eden.](#)

73

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[Orson Pratt makes a distinction between God and Adam/Michael; teaches that Adam learned language by immediate inspiration from God.](#)

- [\[76\]↵](#)

In a revelation received April 1835, Joseph Smith taught the necessity of both the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve being in unanimous agreement for a doctrine to be binding and authoritative:

27 And every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions, in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with the other— 28 A majority may form a quorum when circumstances render it impossible to be otherwise— 29 Unless this is the case, their decisions are not entitled to the same blessings which the decisions of a quorum of three presidents were anciently, who were ordained after the order of Melchizedek, and were righteous and holy men.

•

[Joseph Smith teaching the necessity of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve to be in unanimous agreement for a doctrine to be authoritative.](#)

- [\[77\]↵](#)

In a letter dated January 9, 1897, Joseph F. Smith, writing to Alfred Saxey, noted that

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

The Doctrine was never submitted to the Councils of the Priesthood, nor to the Church for approval or ratification and was never formally or otherwise accepted by the Church. It is therefore in no sense binding upon the Church nor upon the consciences of any of the members thereof

•

[Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Alfred Saxey, states Adam-God may represent Brigham's personal opinion but the teaching is not revealed doctrine and is not binding on Church members.](#)

74

- [\[78\]](#)↵

In the March 2020 issue of the Ensign, Dallin H. Oaks addressed how doctrine is formulated in the Church:

the Lord revealed that its most important business and most difficult cases should be decided by a council of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:78–79). There, every decision “must be by the unanimous voice of the same” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:27). Otherwise, they would not be “entitled to the same blessings which the decisions of a quorum of three presidents were anciently” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:29).

A 2007 Church Newsroom article entitled “Approaching Mormon Doctrine” states:

With divine inspiration, the First Presidency (the prophet and his two counselors) and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (the second-highest governing body of the Church) counsel together to establish doctrine that is consistently proclaimed in official Church publications.

In a September 18, 1981 address to religious educators, Bruce R. McConkie stated that individual Church leaders and apostles “do not create the doctrines of the gospel. . . . I cannot create a doctrine, I cannot originate a concept of eternal truth.”

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[Oaks, quoting past Church leaders, teaches that, for a doctrine to be binding, there must be unanimous agreement among the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Bruce R. McConkie, addressing religious educators, teaches he and other Church leaders cannot make Church doctrine or have power to do such on their own.](#)

•

[Church Newsroom said not everything a Church leader says is necessarily binding on members.](#)

- [\[79\]](#)↵

In a sermon delivered June 8, 1873, Brigham taught:

How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, and which God revealed to me—namely that Adam is our father and our God. Our Father Adam helped to make this earth, it was created expressly for him, and after it was made he and his companions came here. He brought one of his wives with him, and she was called Eve, because she was the first woman upon the earth. Our Father Adam is the man who stands at the gate and holds the keys of everlasting life and salvation to all his children who have or who ever will come upon the earth.

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[Brigham Young teaches that Adam is our Father and God and holds priesthood keys.](#)

- [\[80\]](#)↵

On April 4, 1860, Brigham responded to Orson Pratt's disagreement with Adam-God theory by claiming that

It was Joseph's doctrine that Adam was God &c. When in Luke Johnson's at O. Hydes the power came upon us, or shock that alarmed the neighborhood. God comes to earth & eats & partakes of fruit. Joseph could not reveal what was revealed to him, & if Joseph had it revealed, he was not told to reveal it.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Minutes of April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and other Church leaders; Brigham Young claims Joseph taught Adam-God “in Luke Johnson's.”](#)

- [\[81\]](#)↵

In a sermon from October 8, 1854, Brigham Young stated that “I reckon, as the Yankees say, I guess; but I will I tell you what I reckon,” adding that

I reckon that Father Adam was a resurrected being . . . I reckon that Adam came into the Garden of Eden . . . I reckon there was a previous understanding, and the whole plan was previously calculated before the Garden of Eden was made . . . I reckon that all things were first made spiritual preparatory to the natural organization.

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[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

- [\[82\]](#)↵

Brigham sometimes said that certain elements of Adam-God theory were just his opinion.

On April 25, 1855, Brigham taught that the relationship between God and Adam

is a subject I am aware that does not appear so close to our understandings at present as we could wish it or as it will be some day, and it is one that should not trouble us at all, all such things will become more clear to your minds bye and bye. I tell you this as my belief about that personage who is called the Ancient of Days, the Prince and so on . . .

In February 1857, Brigham would teach that

Whether Adam is the personage that we should consider our heavenly Father, or not, is considerable of a mystery to a good many. I do not care for one moment how that is; it is no matter whether we are to consider Him our God, or whether His Father, or His Grandfather, for in either case we are of one species—of one family—and Jesus Christ is also of our species.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

On October 9, 1859, Brigham would use tentative language when he taught that “Adam and Eve are the parents of all pertaining to the flesh, and I would not say that they are not also the parents of our spirits.”

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[Brigham Young teaches the relationship between “Heavenly Father” and “Adam” is a mystery.](#)

77

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[Brigham Young affirms Adam and Eve are our parents in the flesh and also our Spirits.](#)

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[Brigham identifies the “Ancient of Days” with the Divine Being who appeared to Moses in the Book of Exodus.](#)

- [\[83\]↵](#)

During a sermon delivered April 9, 1853, Brigham taught that

I am not a visionary man, neither am I given much to prophesying. When I want any of that done I call on brother Heber—he is my Prophet, he loves to prophesy, and I love to hear him.

•

[Brigham claims that Heber C. Kimball is his “Prophet”; states he received a vision of the then-future Salt Lake Temple “as if it was in reality before me.”](#)

- [\[84\]↵](#)

On April 30, 1862, Heber C. Kimball taught that “the Lord told me that Adam was my father and that he was the God and father of all the inhabits of this Earth.”

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Heber C. Kimball teaches that he was told by the Lord in April 1862 that Adam was his father and the God and Father of the inhabitants of this earth.](#)

- [\[85\]↵](#)

Brigham Young once claimed that if the Saints from previous dispensations “with their Apostles, Prophets, Seers, and Revelators” were asked about the nature of Deity

I am led to think there would be found a great variety in their views and feelings upon this subject, without direct revelation from the Lord. It is as much my right to differ from other men, as it is theirs to differ from me, in points of doctrine and principle, when our minds cannot at once arrive at the same conclusion.

•

[Brigham Young teaches that, if ancient prophets and apostles were asked about their doctrine of deity, there would be differences of theological opinion.](#)

- [\[86\]↵](#)

In a sermon from October 6, 1855, Brigham Young instructed the Saints not to take anything he said or did as revelation from God “unless the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit of revelation, makes them satisfied.”

On another occasion, when addressing Church members on June 28, 1857, Brigham urged Latter-day Saints to have the “light of the Holy Spirit continually” to avoid being deceived on doctrinal issues by Church leaders, cautioning “how easy it would be for your leaders to lead you to destruction unless you actually know the mind and will of the Spirit yourselves.”

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[Brigham tells the Saints not to be satisfied with anything he does unless the Spirit of Jesus and spirit of revelation makes them satisfied with his teachings.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Brigham Young urges the Saints to have the light of the Holy Spirit continually.](#)

- [\[87\]](#)↵

For example, Orson Pratt would subvert an important tenet of Adam-God theory when he wrote in 1853:

God, the Father of our spirits, became the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh. . . . for this reason Jesus called “the Only Begotten of the Father;” that is, the only one in this world whose fleshly body was begotten by the Father. There were millions of sons and daughters whom He begat before the foundation of this world, but they were spirits, and not bodies of flesh and bones; whereas, both the spirit and body of Jesus were begotten by the Father — the spirit having been begotten in heaven many ages before the tabernacle was begotten upon the earth.

This states that everyone but Jesus is considered to be only a spirit child of God, while Jesus is both the physical and spirit child of God. In Adam-God theory, everyone is both a spirit and physical son or daughter of God/Adam.

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[Orson Pratt teaches while we are all the spirit children of God, only Jesus is both the spiritual and physical son of the Father.](#)

- [\[88\]](#)↵

Joseph Lee Robinson, after commenting on a sermon where Brigham Young taught Adam-God theory, noted that

there were some that did not believe these sayings of the Prophet Brigham, even our Beloved Brother Orson Pratt told me he did not believe it. He said he could prove by the scriptures that it was not correct. I felt very sorry to hear Professor Orson Pratt say that. I feared least he should apostitize . . . for I knew verily it was possible that great men might fall.

•

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Brigham teaches all earths have their own "Adam and Eve" and that Adam is "God our Eternal Father"; fears Orson Pratt will apostatize for opposing such.](#)

- [\[89\]](#)↵

Brigham Young, referring to D&C 78, would claim that Joseph Smith taught Adam-God theory in Luke Johnson's home. Wilford Woodruff, who was present, noted that "the Twelve voted to receive the Confession of Orson Pratt."

Thomas Bullock recorded that Orson Pratt's surprise at the meeting being called, noting that Pratt thought Brigham

was perfectly satisfied with the confession, as he was informed by bro. Watt, when he handed him the sermon to revise that the President had read it and approved of it, and wishing to have it read for them later that week; and he was quite astonished when bro. Young made the remarks he did on the stand a short time afterwards.

Pratt said he could not preach Adam-God because its teachings "were false, he could not do it, because if he did he would prove himself a hypocrite."

In May 1845, W. W. Phelps, who served as Joseph's ghostwriter, published two articles that spoke of God the Father as the "head God."

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[Thomas Bullock records Orson Pratt and other Church leaders opposing Adam-God teachings.](#)

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[Wilford Woodruff records Brigham and the leadership of the Church voting to accept Orson Pratt's confession and apology.](#)

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[Minutes of April 4, 1860 meeting between Orson Pratt and other Church leaders; Brigham Young claims Joseph taught Adam-God "in Luke Johnson's."](#)



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[1880 Doctrine and Covenants states that D&C 78 was received near the Luke Johnson farm.](#)

81

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[Joseph said in a revelation Michael had “the keys of salvation.”](#)

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[W.W. Phelps teaches that our God and Father is the “head” of the Gods.](#)

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[W.W. Phelps teaches we can become kings and queens to our Eternal Father.](#)

- [\[90\]](#)↵

In this meeting, Brigham Young was recorded as saying to Orson Pratt:

I want you to do just as you have done in your apostleship, but when you want to teach new doctrine, write your ideas, and submit them to me and if they are correct, I will tell you. There is no man's sermons that I like read, when you understand your subject, better than yours—but you are not perfect, neither am I.

In this meeting also, Orson Pratt submitted a sermon for inspection to serve as a confession for his doctrinal errors. The minutes for this meeting record that the sermon “was satisfactory to Prest. Young.”

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[George Sims records Orson Pratt's submission of a sermon where he would make confession about various doctrinal statements to Brigham for inspection.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Brigham instructs Orson Pratt to submit any doctrinal writings to the Church leadership for inspection before sharing them publicly.](#)

82

- [\[91\]](#)

In his journal for April 5, 1860, Wilford Woodruff recorded that

The Quorum of the Twelve met this morning in the prayer room. We talked the matter over Concerning Brother Pratt dressed & prayed. Read over his sermon and Corrected it and the Twelve voted to receive the Confession of Orson Pratt.

During this meeting, Brigham instructed Orson that

when you want to teach new doctrine, write your ideas, and submit them to me and if they are correct, I will tell you. There is no man's sermons that I like read, when you understand your subject, better than yours—but you are not perfect, neither am I.

•

[Wilford Woodruff records Brigham and the leadership of the Church voting to accept Orson Pratt's confession and apology.](#)

•

[George Sims records Orson Pratt's submission of a sermon where he would make confession about various doctrinal statements to Brigham for inspection.](#)

- [\[92\]](#)

On August 23, 1865, the First Presidency and Orson Pratt rejected some of Orson Pratt's teachings.

In remarks which brother Pratt made in Great Salt Lake City, Jan. 29, 1860-remarks which were prompted upon learning our views respecting the doctrines that he had published,

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

and which he delivered without giving intimation of any such intention-while speaking in relation to the things which were deemed objectionable and erroneous by the First Presidency and Twelve-he confessed that he had erred and done wrong in publishing them.

In 1868 Orson would again confess to being in error in opposing Brigham's teachings:

The school of the prophets met <in Salt Lake City> at 2 p.m. Elder Orson Pratt made a full confession before the School of his error in opposing doctrines revealed; said whenever he had done so and excused himself because of what was written, his mind became darkened and he felt bad. He asked forgiveness of Pres. Young, of the Twelve and the whole school. Pres. Young expressed his satisfaction with Elder Pratt's confession and preached in relation to Adam etc. Elder Woodruff spoke and felt happy at Bro.Pratt's position and present feelings.

•

[First Presidency and Orson Pratt repudiate certain teachings in Pratt's \*The Seer\*.](#)

- [\[93\]↵](#)

For example, Edward Stevenson made journal entries on March 7, 1880, March 4, 1882, and February 28, 1896 supporting the theory. In the February 28, 1896 entry, Stevenson wrote about a talk about “God” sending his “only begotten son.”

Who is this that speaketh - But Adam God. and speaking of Jesus Christ, his only son, begotten in the way he was begoton.

Brigham's son, Brigham Young Jr., recorded in his diary on October 12, 1897, that

At meeting of all the apostles except Grant and Merill. Pres. Snow led out on Adam being our Father and God. How beautiful the thought—it brot God nearer to us. Bro. Franklin [D. Richards] said it made him thrill through his whole body—it was new & it was inspiring. I followed.

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[Edward Stevenson records in his journal that he said Adam is the God and Father of his spirit and body.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Edward Stevenson understands Brigham Young to have taught that Adam is God; understands Elohim to be the Father/God of Adam and Jesus to be Jehovah.](#)

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[Edward Stevenson said Elohim, Jehovah, Jesus, and Adam/Michael are distinct persons.](#)

- [\[94\]](#)↩

For instance, Joseph F. Smith would reject Adam-God theory as being a true doctrine when queried about it once in 1897 and twice in 1902.

Additionally, he and the rest of the First Presidency would issue two statements that taught that Adam was not God, one issued November 1909 and the other on June 30, 1916.

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[Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Alfred Saxey, states Adam-God may represent Brigham's personal opinion but the teaching is not revealed doctrine and is not binding on Church members.](#)

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[Joseph F. Smith writes to Edward Bunker informing him that Adam-God is one of the "mysteries" and until more is revealed, we only have "wild speculations."](#)

•

[Joseph F. Smith denies that Adam is the "God we worship throughout eternity."](#)

•

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[First Presidency, in statement on man's origins, distinguishes Adam from the God and Father of our spirits.](#)

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[First Presidency teaches “God” and “Father” can be used as titles for people other than God the Father, including Jesus.](#)

85

- [\[95\]](#)↵

President Anthony W. Ivins wrote that

Father Edward Bunker, of Bunkerville in this Stake, had been teaching that some of the ceremonies at the Temple were wrong, an erroneous teaching was given in the lecture at the veil.

On December 13, 1890, it was recorded that “Bishop Bunker had expressed his opinion that some teachings in the Temple were wrong, notably part of the lecture at the veil” and that “All such work would have to be done over again” due to the doctrinal errors in the Lecture at the Veil. Bunker was also recorded as teaching that “In regard to the lecture at the veil, in the Temple it is certainly wrong. It teaches that Eve was an immortal being and was brought here by Adam.” He taught

that Adam was not a resurrected being. In answering questions of Councilor Cannon, expressed his belief that Adam was the Archangel and that Jehovah and Michael were persons of Spirit; that Eloheim was a person of Tabernacle and head of all.

•

[Edward Bunker is accused of rejecting the doctrine in the “Lecture at the Veil.”](#)

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[Edward Bunker is recorded as affirming that he believes some of the theology in the Lecture at the Veil is in error.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[96\]](#)↵

In 1891, Edward Bunker was requested to write a declaration of his beliefs concerning Adam and God to the First Presidency.

On May 22, 1891, the St. George Stake Council investigated Edward Bunker and wrote to the First Presidency about Adam-God theory. They noted that

As a result of the investigation the following was passed as the action of the council: It is the sense of this council that it is an error to teach that Adam was not an immortal or resurrected, being when he came to this earth, also, that we pray to Adam as our God; and it is wrong to teach that Adam is one of the Godhead.

On June 11, 1892, Wilford Woodruff would record how he met with Edward Bunker.

We Met in the Tabernacle at 10 o'clock on the trial of Bishop Bunker on Doctrine. We talked to them Plainly of the impropriety of indulging in Mysteries to Create difficulties among the Saints. They professed to be Satisfied.

George Q. Cannon, his counselor, was also present and told Bunker and the Stake Council that according to the teachings of President Young Adam was our Father and our God, and the father of the Lord Jesus, but it was not necessary for us to argue or contend about this. If we cannot understand it, let it remain without agitation and without discussion; for it would inevitably lead to bad consequences if men indulged in that spirit.

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[St. George Stake Minutes reports that Edward Bunker wrote a declaration of his beliefs to submit to the First Presidency.](#)

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[St. George Stake Council said to the First Presidency that it was erroneous to reject teaching that Adam was immortal or resurrected when he entered the Garden.](#)

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Wilford Woodruff records how he met with Edward Bunker and warned him “of the impropriety of indulging in Misteries to Create difficulties among the Saints.”

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George Q. Cannon addresses various figures, including Jesus, who speak as if they are the Father; the reason is that they represent, and speak for, the Godhead.

87

- [\[97\]↵](#)

Joseph F. Smith, in response to a query by Alfred Saxey concerning Adam-God, wrote that

The Doctrine was never submitted to the Councils of the Priesthood, nor to the Church for approval or ratification and was never formally or otherwise accepted by the Church. It is therefore in no sense binding upon the Church nor upon the consciences of any of the members thereof, except perhaps only so far as some may have confidence in President Young, believing that he had light on the subject which was not given in connection with his public mention thereof. It is thought, even if there is truth in it, that the bare mention made by Prest. Young without indubitable evidence and authority being given of its truth, was unfortunate to say the least.

•

Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Alfred Saxey, states Adam-God may represent Brigham's personal opinion but the teaching is not revealed doctrine and is not binding on Church members.

- [\[98\]↵](#)

Joseph F. Smith was present in Church leadership meetings when Brigham Young taught Adam-God theory. In his journal for October 15, 1870, he recorded:

Prest. Young spoke on the subject of Adam and God. “Whom to know is life eternal.” Who knows him? it is certainly important to know him. he wanted the brethren to meditate on the subject, pray about it and keep it to themselves.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

On July 17, 1871, Smith recorded Brigham teaching that “Eloheim, Yahova + Michael were father, son and grandson. They made this Earth + michael became Adam.”

The minutes for the June 8, 1873 meeting of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets records Joseph F. Smith affirming belief in Adam-God with Brigham present:

The principle doctrine was approved or endorsed by Henry Grow, D B. Huntingdon, & Joseph F. Smith. The latter read a portion of a revelation given to the Church <page 2[01] Doc. & Cov.> affirming that Michael or Adam is the Father of all—the Prince of all, and stated that the enunciation of that doctrine, gave him great joy.

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[Brigham teaches eternal life is knowing Adam and who he is.](#)

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[Brigham teaches Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael are Father, Son, and Grandson, respectively; after the earth was made, Michael became Adam.](#)

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[SLC School of the Prophets says Adam-God is true doctrine, but should be discussed carefully by the Church.](#)

- [\[99\]↵](#)

In February 1902, Edward Bunker, who was serving as a mission president, wrote to Joseph F. Smith asking for clarification as to the doctrinal status of Adam-God. Later that month, Joseph F. Smith responded, noting that

What is called the Adam God doctrine may properly be classed among the mysteries. The full truth concerning it has not been revealed to us; and until it is revealed all wild speculations, sweeping assertions and dogmatic declarations relative thereto, are out of place and improper. We disapprove of them and especially the public expression of such views.



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Joseph F. Smith still affirmed that Adam was an exalted being and in that sense, a “God”:

. . . Adam stands at the head of the human family, presides over them spiritually and temporally, and will come in due time as the Ancient of Days to call his children together, according to the scriptures, both ancient and modern. He will preside over them for ever, and be their God eternally; This, of course, after the Millennial reign of Christ. Christ is not Adam, nor is Adam Christ, but both are eternal Gods, and it may even be said Fathers, since they are the parents of eternal or spiritual children.

89

- [Edward Bunker writes to Joseph F. Smith to ask for clarification as to doctrinal status of Adam-God.](#)

- [Joseph F. Smith writes to Edward Bunker informing him that Adam-God is one of the “mysteries” and until more is revealed, we only have “wild speculations.”](#)

- [\[100\]](#)↵

When Lillie Golsan questioned Joseph F. Smith in 1902 concerning the status of Adam in Latter-day Saint theology, he responded:

First—“Which is the God we worship throughout eternity, Father, Son or Adam?” We are to worship the Father in the name of the Son. Second—“Did Adam live a mortal being twice?” There is nothing in the records names that so states, and it is not a true doctrine.

Joseph F. Smith would also state that, for Latter-day Saints, the authoritative sources of doctrine are

inspired utterances of its prophet, seer and revelator, four standards of doctrine, namely the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price, containing the revelations of God given in times past and present for the guidance, salvation and exaltation of his people. These books have been accepted by the church, in general conference assembled, as its doctrinal standards, and nothing outside of them, whether true or false, has any practical bearing or significance, so far as the conduct of the Church is concerned.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Joseph F. Smith denies that Adam is the “God we worship throughout eternity.”](#)

- [\[101\]←](#)

The relevant portion of the 1909 First Presidency statement reads:

Adam, our great progenitor, “the first man,” was, like Christ, a pre-existent spirit, and like Christ, he took upon him an appropriate body of a man, and so became a “living soul.” The doctrine of the pre-existence,—revealed so plainly, particularly in the latter days, pours a wonderful flood of light upon the otherwise mysterious problem of man's origin. It shows that man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality. It teaches that all men existed in the spirit before any man existed in the flesh, and that all who have inhabited the earth since Adam have taken bodies and become souls in like manner.

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[First Presidency, in statement on man's origins, distinguishes Adam from the God and Father of our spirits.](#)

- [\[102\]←](#)

In the 1916 First Presidency Statement, we read that

Jesus Christ is the Son of Elohim both as spiritual and bodily offspring; that is to say, Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh, and which body died on the cross and was afterward taken up by the process of resurrection, and is now the immortalized tabernacle of the eternal spirit of our Lord and Savior.

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[First Presidency teaches “God” and “Father” can be used as titles for people other than God the Father, including Jesus.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[103\]←](#)

During the April 1922 General Conference, Charles W. Penrose also said that

The Lord said he was Michael, the archangel, and He, the Father, set him here at the head of His race to which we belong. He is “our father, Adam,” and as Adam's body was of the dust of the earth, this earth on which we live, it had to return to dust because of his transgression.

•

[Charles W. Penrose says that Adam-God speculation is going beyond what has been revealed; Adam cannot be God as he worshiped the Father.](#)

- [\[104\]←](#)

In the February 1931 statement “Adam's status in the Garden of Eden,” President Grant taught that Adam was not a resurrected being when he entered Eden. Elsewhere, he taught that Adam benefited from the atonement of Jesus:

Adam, like all of his posterity, became a benefactor through the mission of Jesus Christ. Through the atonement made by our Lord, Adam was redeemed from his transgression and received the resurrection.

•

[Heber J. Grant writes that Adam was not resurrected when he entered the Garden.](#)

- [\[105\]←](#)

In this same talk, Joseph Fielding Smith would also reiterate the doctrine of exaltation:

That you may come up unto the crown prepared for you and be made rulers over many kingdoms, saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Zion, who hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman; who hath appointed Michael your prince, and established his feet, and set him upon high, and given unto him the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is without beginning of days or end of life.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Joseph Fielding Smith notes that, while Adam holds the keys, he does so under the authority of Jesus, who is greater than Adam.](#)

- [\[106\]](#)↵

Milton R. Hunter was quoted as teaching this in a stake conference held on March 20, 1949.

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[Provo Daily Herald reports that Milton R. Hunter calling the Adam-God teaching or that Adam was transplanted from another world as “false and misleading.”](#)

- [\[107\]](#)↵

McConkie taught that, while Adam is not the God, members are to “view Adam in his proper high place as the pre-existent Michael, the first man and presiding high priest (under Christ) over all the earth for all time” and that of all the persons God has exalted “Adam is the chief, presiding (under Christ and the Father) in the patriarchal order over all the rest.”

•

[Bruce R. McConkie calls Adam-God a “theory”; teaches Adam is subordinate to both Jesus and His Father.](#)

- [\[108\]](#)↵

During the April 1965 General Conference, Joseph Fielding Smith would argue that Brigham Young has been “unjustly condemned for a statement he made to the effect that Adam is our God and the only one with whom we have to do,” saying that

we learn by virtue of the law of primogeniture, that all who are saved in the kingdom of God will be subject to Adam, for by divine appointment he holds these keys under the direction of Jesus Christ.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Joseph Fielding Smith, in general conference, said Brigham Young has been misunderstood and he meant Adam had keys.](#)

93

- [\[109\]](#)↵

In a May 11, 1966 letter to Morris L. Reynolds, LeGrand Richards, responded “no” to the question “Is the Adam God Doctrine, as taught in the Journal of Discourses, true?” He added that

The First Presidency of the Church have answered this several times in the Deseret News and otherwise. We look upon Adam as the great patriarch of the race, the Ancient of Days referred to by Daniel in the 7th chapter of Daniel, to whom Jesus will come when He comes in the clouds of heaven. And he was with Elohim the Father, and Jehovah, (Jesus) in the creation of the earth, and hence is the father of us all speaking literally and physically. But we all lived in the spirit world before we were born, and Adam is not our God. We do not pray to him. We pray to the father through His Son, Jesus Christ.

•

[LeGrand Richards informs Morris L. Reynolds that the Adam-God doctrine isn't true.](#)

- [\[110\]](#)↵

In a letter to Morris L. Reynolds dated May 13, 1966, Hugh B. Brown wrote that “The Adam-God doctrine is not the doctrine of the Church” and that “The godhead consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.”

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[Hugh B. Brown said to Morris L. Reynolds that Adam-God is not a doctrine of the Church and the sermons in the Journal of Discourses are not accurate.](#)

- [\[111\]](#)↵

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

In his April 1975 speech "A Self-Inflicted Purging," Vaughn J. Featherstone called Adam-God teachings a "theory" and that supporters of the teaching

don't have time to study faith and repentance. Maybe they ought to get back to basics. And when they understand everything about faith, then they can move on to the next principle.

•

[Vaughn J. Featherstone calls "Adam-God" a "theory" and those who profess belief in it as ignorant of the basics of the Gospel.](#)

- [\[112\]←](#)

In his 1976 book, *Adam: Who Is He?*, Mark E. Petersen wrote that Adam-God theory is "ridiculous" and "is contrary to the word of the Lord" and that

To say that Adam is God is, of course, opposed utterly and completely to the scriptures as well as to our Articles of Faith, in which we say: "We believe in God, the Eternal Father [meaning Elohim], and in His Son, Jesus Christ [meaning Jehovah], and in the Holy Ghost." Adam is not so much as mentioned in that statement on the Godhead, not even by his primeval name Michael.

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[Mark E. Petersen said the Adam-God doctrine as "ridiculous," and that Brigham was misquoted.](#)

- [\[113\]←](#)

Spencer W. Kimball taught this in an October 1976 general conference address.

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[Spencer W. Kimball refers to the Adam-God teaching as a "theory," denounces it, and says it is not "according to the scriptures."](#)

- [\[114\]←](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

As a member of a committee working with Adam-God theory supporters, Elden Watson reported that they were provided with a clarification of President Kimball's views in a private interview:

He said that he did not say that Brigham Young did not make the statements which are attributed to him, nor did he claim that they were falsely reported. Neither did he say that Brigham Young taught false doctrine. What he did say and what he meant is that the Adam-God theory is false, and the Adam-God theory is that interpretation which is placed on Brigham Young's words by present day apostates and fundamentalists--their understanding of what Brigham Young meant is false.

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[Elden Watson argues Brigham used "Adam" as a name/title for both "Adam" and "God the Father," resulting in his being misunderstood.](#)

- [\[115\]←](#)

Mark E. Petersen stated this in his October 1980 conference talk "Adam the Archangel."

•

[Mark E. Petersen teaches Adam is not the Father of our spirits; instead, he is an angel.](#)

- [\[116\]←](#)

In a June 1, 1980 address to BYU students called "The Seven Deadly Heresies," McConkie referred to Adam-God as a "heresy" kept alive by those who wish to obtain "converts to cultism":

Heresy six: There are those who believe or say they believe that Adam is our father and our god, that he is the father of our spirits and our bodies, and that he is the one we worship. . . . It is contrary to the whole plan of salvation set forth in the scriptures, and anyone who has read the Book of Moses, and anyone who has received the temple endowment, has no excuse whatever for being led astray by it. Those who are so ensnared reject the living prophet and close their ears to the apostles of their day.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Bruce R. McConkie lists Adam-God as a “deadly heresy.”](#)

- [\[117\]](#)↵

Bruce R. McConkie stated this opposition to Adam-God theory in a February 19, 1981 letter to Eugene England.

96

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[Bruce R. McConkie said in a letter Brigham taught Adam is the Father of our Spirits and it's a false doctrine.](#)

- [\[118\]](#)↵

It's possible that McConkie softened his position that Brigham taught Adam-God theory. Elden Watson reported that he met in private with Elder Bruce R. McConkie as part of a group to discuss a statement McConkie made that Brigham's teachings about Adam were “not true.”

After discussing his view that the confusion about Brigham Young's teachings was due to Brigham's sometimes referring to God the Father as “Adam,” Watson said he was told by Elder McConkie

to keep teaching what we had been teaching, because it was he that was wrong. He said if he had known of our views, he never would have said what he did in his letter to Eugene England, and we had his permission to tell anyone we wanted that Elder McConkie had said he was wrong in saying that Brigham Young had taught that Adam was God.

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[Elden Watson argues Brigham used “Adam” as a name/title for both “Adam” and “God the Father,” resulting in his being misunderstood.](#)

- [\[119\]](#)↵



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

In his article "How to Start a Cult," McConkie condemned members of groups who believed in Adam-God, stating that

"THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM" Among several small, quarrelling, cultist groups there are many similar heretical views. A number of different organizations worship Adam as God, . . . the accepted cultist practice of: . . . Worshiping Adam as God . . .

•  
[Bruce R. McConkie said the doctrine of Adam-God "heretical" and a "cultic practice."](#)

- [\[120\]](#)↵

President Hinckley's response to non-LDS reporter Lawrence Wright's question about Adam-God theory was that he was

"not going to worry about what [Brigham Young] said about those things."

•  
[Lawrence Wright said Gordon B. Hinckley said he did not know what Brigham Young meant in some of his Adam-God teachings.](#)

- [\[121\]](#)↵

Joseph F. Smith said in 1902, "We are to worship the Father in the name of the Son."

In a June 30, 1916 doctrinal exposition entitled "The Father and the Son," the First Presidency stated that "Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh. . . . Jehovah . . . is Jesus Christ the Son of Elohim."

In his 1976 book, *Adam: Who Is He?*, Mark E. Petersen wrote that Adam-God theory is "ridiculous," "contrary to the word of the Lord," and that

To say that Adam is God is, of course, opposed utterly and completely to the scriptures as well as to our Articles of Faith, in which we say: "We believe in God, the Eternal Father [meaning Elohim], and in His Son, Jesus Christ [meaning Jehovah], and in the Holy

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Ghost." Adam is not so much as mentioned in that statement on the Godhead, not even by his primeval name Michael.

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[Joseph F. Smith denies that Adam is the "God we worship throughout eternity."](#)

98

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[Mark E. Petersen said the Adam-God doctrine as "ridiculous," and that Brigham was misquoted.](#)

•

[First Presidency teaches "God" and "Father" can be used as titles for people other than God the Father, including Jesus.](#)

- [\[122\]↔](#)

Brigham Young taught that Adam and Eve, along with all other "Adams" and "Eves," were exalted, received the power "of propagating their species in spirit," and after coming "into the garden" they continued

to eat and drink of the fruits of the corporeal world, until this grosser matter is diffused sufficiently through their celestial bodies to enable them, according to the established laws, to produce mortal tabernacles for their spiritual children.

Brigham would also teach that the Father and God of Jesus was also "God the Father of your spirits and my spirits [sic] he is the and framer of body he is the and framer of body the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is he I tell you who he is Father Adam Michael the Ancient of Days . . . "

Samuel Rogers, in a journal entry dated April 16, 1852, wrote that he understood Brigham Young to be teaching the Saints that

our spirits were begotten before that Adam came to the Earth and that Adam helped to make the Earth, that he had a Celestial body when he came to the Earth and that he

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

brought his wife or one of his wives with him, and that Eave was also a Celestial being, that they eat of the fruit of the ground until they begat children from the Earth

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[Brigham said exalted beings will grow their species “in spirit” as an “Adam” and “Eve.”](#)

99

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[Brigham identifies Adam/Michael with the God and Father of Jesus Christ; Holy Ghost is not the Father of Jesus.](#)

•

[Samuel Rogers interprets Brigham as teaching that Adam is God in his first public “Adam-God” sermon.](#)

- [\[123\]←](#)

The Church's Gospel Topics Essay on “Becoming Like God” teaches that

Latter-day Saints see all people as children of God in a full and complete sense; they consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential. Each has an eternal core and is “a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents” . . . Latter-day Saints have also been moved by the knowledge that their divine parentage includes a Heavenly Mother as well as a Heavenly Father . . . .

•

[The Church writes a text verifying belief in Heavenly Parents.](#)

- [\[124\]←](#)

The Lecture at the Veil taught that “In the creation the Gods entered into an agreement about forming this earth.”

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics

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[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

• [\[125\]](#)↵

During the April 2000 General Conference, Russell M. Nelson taught that “The Creation did not happen by chance. It did not come ex nihilo (out of nothing).”

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[Russell M. Nelson teaches God created from preexisting matter; not out of nothing \(ex nihilo\).](#)

• [\[126\]](#)↵

In an October 8, 1854 sermon, Brigham Young taught that “Every world has had an Adam, and an Eve: named so, simply because the first man is always called Adam, and the first woman Eve.”

•  
[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

• [\[127\]](#)↵

The Church's Gospel Principles manual teaches that Adam and Eve's part in our Father's plan was to bring mortality into the world. They were to be the first parents. (See D&C 107:54–56.)

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[Gospel Principles manual presents traditional understanding of Adam, Eve, and their relationship to God.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[128\]](#)↵

On April 9, 1852, Brigham taught that

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.

101

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[Brigham Young teaches that Adam is the only God with whom we have to do and he was transplanted from another planet to this earth with Eve.](#)

- [\[129\]](#)↵

In the 2015 *Old Testament: Seminary Teacher Manual*, Adam is identified as the Ancient of Days:

What did Daniel see would happen to the “thrones,” or worldly governments? Explain that Joseph Smith revealed that the “Ancient of days” (verse 9) is Adam (see D&C 27:11; *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 104)

•

[Old Testament Seminary Manual provides overview of traditional LDS understanding of Daniel 7, with the Ancient of Days being Adam and the Son of Man being Jesus.](#)

- [\[130\]](#)↵

Brigham Young taught on July 24, 1853:

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of the Father? “Yes.” Do you believe the Son was begotten by the Father, as the Apostles said he was? Here I shall have to disagree with you, to begin with; for I believe the Father came down from heaven, as

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

the Apostles said he did, and begat the Saviour of the world; for he is the ONLY-begotten of the Father, which could not be if the Father did not actually beget in person.

•

[Brigham Young teaches that the Father came down “in his tabernacle” to beget Jesus.](#)

102

- [\[131\]↵](#)

The Church's *Gospel Principles* manual teaches that

Jesus Christ was chosen and foreordained to be our Savior. Many scriptures tell about this (see, for example, 1 Peter 1:19–20; Moses 4:1–2). One scripture tells us that long before Jesus was born, He appeared to a Book of Mormon prophet known as the brother of Jared and said: “Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. . . . In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name” (Ether 3:14).

•

[Gospel Principles manual teaches that Jesus was foreordained to be our Savior in the premortal life.](#)

- [\[132\]↵](#)

On August 28, 1852, Brigham taught that

After men have got their exaltation and their crowns—have become Gods, even the sons of God—are made Kings of kings and Lords of lords, they have the power then of propagating their species in spirit . . . Power is then given to them to organize the elements, and then commence the organization of tabernacles. . . . The faithful will become Gods, even the sons of God; but this does not overthrow the idea that we have a father.

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[Brigham said exalted beings will grow their species “in spirit” as an “Adam” and “Eve.”](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[133\]↵](#)

The Church's Gospel Topics essay "Becoming Like God" states that

Humankind's divine nature and potential for exaltation have been repeatedly taught in general conference addresses, Church magazines, and other Church materials

and that

Latter-day Saints tend to imagine exaltation through the lens of the sacred in mortal experience. They see the seeds of godhood in the joy of bearing and nurturing children and the intense love they feel for those children

Elder Bruce C. Hafen explained in 2021:

The story of the life of Christ is the story of giving the Atonement. And the story of Adam and Eve is the story of receiving the Atonement. Their story is our story, too. We can look at them and say, "That's the story of my life." And when we're in the temple, we can naturally think of ourselves as if we were Adam and Eve.

•

[The Church writes a text verifying belief in Heavenly Parents.](#)

•

[Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen said the New Testament is Christ giving the atonement and the temple shows Adam and Eve receiving the atonement.](#)

- [\[134\]↵](#)

In an 1854 poem, Eliza R. Snow spoke of "Father Adam, our God . . . And Jesus, our Brother, who died for us all."

In the December 15, 1855 issue of *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Franklin D. Richards wrote concerning "God the Father, Michael or Adam" that

This is the God with whom we have to do, and who stands at our head to do battle with the powers of darkness and assist us, His children, to overcome, that we may receive a like glory with Himself and live in His presence.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

In a sermon dated March 8, 1857, Brigham Young would address the various ways the term "God" is used in the Scriptures. He quoted John 17:3 and said, "It is said to be eternal life, 'to know the only wise God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent'" and that this "God" was "Father Adam."

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[Eliza R. Snow delivers a poem identifying "Father Adam" as "our God" that is reprinted in the LDSMS.](#)

104

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[Franklin D. Richards teaches that Adam is our God; God experienced all our temptations and sufferings in His mortal probation, and our destiny is to live with Him forever.](#)

•

[Brigham Young discusses the various uses of the term "God"; ultimately, our God is "Father Adam" who will gather us to him with innumerable angels.](#)

- [\[135\]←](#)

In a May 11, 1966 letter to Morris L. Reynolds, LeGrand Richards wrote that

We look upon Adam as the great patriarch of the race, the Ancient of Days referred to by Daniel in the 7th chapter of Daniel... he was with Elohim the Father, and Jehovah, (Jesus) in the creation of the earth... But we all lived in the spirit world before we were born, and Adam is not our God. We do not pray to him. We pray to the father through His Son, Jesus Christ.

•

[LeGrand Richards informs Morris L. Reynolds that the Adam-God doctrine isn't true.](#)

- [\[136\]←](#)



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

In an 1854 general conference address, Brigham referred to Adam as “Yahovah Michael.” Elsewhere, he referred to the God and Father of Adam as both “Elohim” and Jehovah.” In a November 11, 1867 sermon he said

We obey the Lord, Him who is called Jehovah, the Great I AM, I am a man of war, Eloheim, etc.

In a June 17, 1871 journal entry, Joseph F. Smith recorded Brigham saying Jehovah was the Father of Adam and Elohim was his “heavenly grandfather”:

Eloheim, Yahova + Michael were father, son and grandson. They made this Earth + Michael became Adam.

This would be retained in the Lecture at the Veil (1877), where, according to John L. Nuttall, Brigham taught that “this earth was organized by Elohim, Hehovah, and Michael who is Adam our common father. Adam and Eve.”

•

[Brigham teaches Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael are Father, Son, and Grandson, respectively; after the earth was made, Michael became Adam.](#)

•

[Brigham said every earth has its own Adam and Eve and that saints don't have to understand Adam's status.](#)

•

[L. John Nuttall records Brigham Young's Lecture at the Veil: Adam came to Eden with a Celestial body, is the Father of our Spirits, and the Father of Jesus.](#)

- [\[137\]](#)↩

Bruce McConkie taught on February 17, 1981 that Elohim “is God the Eternal Father,” Michael “is a spirit son of the great Elohim,” and that Jehovah “is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Firstborn of the Father, the Savior and the Redeemer.”

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Bruce R. McConkie dicusses the relationship between Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael.](#)

- [\[138\]↵](#)

In a sermon dated February 19, 1854, George D. Watt recorded Brigham Young teaching that “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” is “Father Adam Michael the Ancient of Days . . .”

Wilford Woodruff recorded on April 10, 1852 that Heber C. Kimball also taught that the “Father of Jesus Christ was Adam.”

•

[Brigham identifies Adam/Michael with the God and Father of Jesus Christ; Holy Ghost is not the Father of Jesus.](#)

•

[Wilford Woodruff records Heber C. Kimball teaching”God and Father of Jesus Christ was Adam.”](#)

- [\[139\]↵](#)

In a doctrinal exposition entitled “The Father and the Son,” the First Presidency stated that “Elohim is literally the Father of the spirit of Jesus Christ and also of the body in which Jesus Christ performed His mission in the flesh. . . . Jehovah . . . is Jesus Christ the Son of Elohim.”

•

[First Presidency teaches “God” and “Father” can be used as titles for people other than God the Father, including Jesus.](#)

- [\[140\]↵](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Though Adam is usually thought to be the first man, some Latter-day Saints have speculated if there were humans or humanoid populations on this earth before him. Joseph Smith once noted that his brother Hyrum preached that “There were prophets before Adam.”

In an October 6, 1854 sermon, Orson Hyde interpreted the command to “replenish the earth” as evidence that the earth had been previously populated:

When God said, Go forth and replenish the earth; it was to replenish the inhabitants of the human species, and make it as it was before.

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[Joseph reports Hyrum Smith taught there were humans on this earth prior to Adam.](#)

•

[Orson Hyde teaches the world was once populated before Adam was placed on it.](#)

- [\[141\]](#)↵

The November 1909 First Presidency statement “The Origin of Man” teaches that

Adam, our great progenitor, “the first man,” was, like Christ, a pre-existent spirit, and like Christ, he took upon him an appropriate body of a man, and so became a “living soul.”

Under the section “Adam” in *Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce R. McConkie notes that “Father Adam was one of the most noble and intelligent characters who ever lived” and that

By his diligence and obedience there, as one of the spirit sons of God, he attained a stature and power second only to that of Christ, the Firstborn. None of all the billions of our Father's children equalled him in intelligence and might, save Jesus only. He sat in the council of the gods in the planning of the creation of this earth, and then, under Christ, participated in the creative enterprise. (Abra. 3:22-26.) He was foreordained to come to earth as the father of the human race, and when Lucifer and one-third of the hosts of heaven rebelled, Adam (with the exalted title of Michael the Archangel) led the hosts of the righteous in the war in heaven. (Rev. 12:7-9.)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Bruce R. McConkie discusses Adam in Latter-day Saint theology, including his being the Ancient of Days; Adam was also “one of the most noble and intelligent characters who ever lived.”](#)

108

•

[First Presidency, in statement on man's origins, distinguishes Adam from the God and Father of our spirits.](#)

- [\[142\]←](#)

According to D&C 27:11, “Michael, or Adam” is “the father of all, the prince of all . . .” This was reiterated in D&C 116:

Spring Hill is named by the Lord Adam-ondi-Ahman, because, said he, it is the place where Adam shall come to visit his people, or the Ancient of Days shall sit, as spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

•

[Joseph identifies Adam with both “Michael” and the “Ancient of Days.”](#)

•

[Joseph identifies Adam with the “Ancient of Days” from the book of Daniel.](#)

- [\[143\]←](#)

In Daniel 10:13, 21, Daniel describes the archangel Michael as “one of the chief princes” and “[our] prince.” Daniel 12:1-3 says Michael will “stand up” and the dead will be resurrected and judged.

Jude 9 records a dispute between the archangel Michael and the Devil concerning the “body of Moses.” This event is not found in the Old Testament.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

In the Book of Revelation, Michael is prophesied to lead the armies of God to victory over the Devil's armies.

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[Daniel 10:13, 21 describes the archangel Michael as “one of the chief princes” and “your \[our\] prince.”](#)

109

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[Daniel 12 discusses Michael's role in the end-times: he will be “the great prince” and when he will stand up, the dead will be resurrected.](#)

•

[Jude 9 recounts the Archangel Michael being in dispute with the Devil concerning the body of Moses.](#)

•

[Revelation 12 discusses Michael's role in the end-times; he will lead the armies of God against the Devil and his armies and be victorious.](#)

- [\[144\]](#)↩

In D&C 27:11, Joseph identified Adam with “the ancient of days”:

And also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days;

This is reiterated in D&C 116:

Spring Hill is named by the Lord Adam-ondi-Ahman, because, said he, it is the place where Adam shall come to visit his people, or the Ancient of Days shall sit, as spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

Joseph repeated this teaching in a sermon dated to between June 26 and August 4, 1839:

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Daniel 7. speaks of the Ancient of Days, he means the oldest man our Father Adam, Michael. He will call his children together and hold a council with them to prepare them for the coming of the Son of man. He (Adam) is the father of the human family and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this great council.

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[Joseph identifies Adam with both “Michael” and the “Ancient of Days.”](#)

•

[Joseph identifies Adam with the “Ancient of Days” from the book of Daniel.](#)

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[William Clayton records Joseph teaching Adam being the “Ancient of Days” who presides over the spirits of all men and holds keys of the gospel.](#)

- [\[145\]](#)↵

The “Ancient of Days” is first described in Daniel 7:9:

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

•

[Daniel 7 records a vision of the “Ancient of Days,” “the Son of Man,” and “the Most High.”](#)

- [\[146\]](#)↵

In D&C 78:14, Joseph Smith taught that Michael is our “prince” and that Christ has

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

set him upon high, and given unto him the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is without beginning of days or end of life.

In D&C 88:112-115, Michael will play a role in fighting, and eventually overthrowing the Devil and his armies:

And Michael, the seventh angel, even the archangel, shall gather together his armies, even the hosts of heaven. And the devil shall gather together his armies; even the hosts of hell, and shall come up to battle against Michael and his armies. And then cometh the battle of the great God; and the devil and his armies shall be cast away into their own place, that they shall not have power over the saints any more at all. For Michael shall fight their battles, and shall overcome him who seeketh the throne of him who sitteth upon the throne, even the Lamb.

111

- [Joseph, in a revelation, discusses Michael's role in the end-times, fighting and overthrowing the Devil and his armies.](#)

- [Joseph said in a revelation Michael had "the keys of salvation."](#)

- [\[147\]↵](#)

In a sermon from the summer of 1839, Joseph Smith taught that Adam "held the Keys [of the first presidency] from generation to Generation" and that, as the Ancient of Days, "he will call his children together. & hold a council with them, to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man" and that Adam "presides over the Spirits of all men."

- [Joseph teaches that Adam obtained the keys of the First Presidency before he came to Eden.](#)

- [\[148\]↵](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

On October 5, 1840, Joseph taught that God “set the ordinances to be the same for Ever and ever and set Adam to watch over them to reveal them from heaven to man or to send Angels to reveal them.”

•

[Joseph teaches that God set Adam to watch over and reveal the ordinances from heaven to man either directly or by angels.](#)

112

- [\[149\]↵](#)

In a discourse from March 1841, Joseph taught that

The Great God has a Name By wich he will be Called Which is Ahman— also in asking have Referance to a personage Like Adam for God made Adam Just in his own Image.

Section XCVI of the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants identifies Jesus Christ as “Son Ahman,” and Joseph is recorded by William Clayton as teaching the Council of Fifty that

the meaning of the word 'Ahman' which signifies the first man or first god, and 'Ahman Christ' signifies the first mans son.

•

[Joseph teaches that “Ahman” is the name of God; can be applied to persons like Adam who are made in God's image.](#)

•

[Joseph identifies Jesus Christ as “Son Ahman.”](#)

•

[William Clayton records Joseph teaching that “Ahman” signifies the “first man” or “first God,” and “Aham Christ” signifies the first man's son.](#)



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[150\]](#)↵

In the “King Follett Discourse” delivered on April 7, 1844, William Clayton recorded Joseph Smith teaching

What did Jesus say — as the father hath had power in himself even so hath the son power. to do what why what the father did To lay down his body and took it up again. Jesus what are you going to do— to lay down my life as my father did that I might take it up again. If you deny it you deny the bible

113

•

[Joseph teaches that, just as Jesus laid down his life and was resurrected, so too did the Father.](#)

- [\[151\]](#)↵

In Joseph's June 16, 1844 sermon, sometimes called the “Sermon in the Grove” or “The Discourse on the Plurality of the Gods,” he taught that

If Abraham reasoned thus — if Jesus Christ was the son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that he had a Father also. Where was there ever a son without a father? and where was there ever a father without first being a son? Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor?

•

[Joseph teaches God the Father had a father just as Christ does.](#)

- [\[152\]](#)↵

In a revelation from March 1832, Joseph Smith taught that Adam is our “prince” and holds “the keys of salvation” under the “direction of the Holy One” (D&C 78:16).

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[Joseph said in a revelation Michael had “the keys of salvation.”](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[153\]←](#)

In D&C 29:40, the Lord, through Joseph Smith, taught that

the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment, wherein he became subject to the will of the devil, because he yielded unto temptation.

Verse 41 teaches that Adam fell “because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead,” but that God sent “angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption” through Jesus (v. 41). We also learn that Adam, as with the rest of mankind, will be resurrected in the future; he was not in a resurrected state prior to the Fall:

43 And thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation—that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe;

•

[In a revelation, Joseph Smith said Michael \(Adam\) is Distinct from the Father of Jesus; Adam will be resurrected in the future.](#)

- [\[154\]←](#)

In Moses 5:6-10, Adam offers sacrifice and is promised redemption by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, which his sacrifices are in “similitude” of:

6 And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. . . And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

•

[In Moses 5, Adam offers sacrifices and is promised redemption.](#)

- [\[155\]←](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

In Moses 6:52, God the Father commands Adam to

repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you.

115

[In Moses 6, Adam is commanded to repent of his transgressions and be baptized for the remission of sins.](#)

- [\[156\]](#)↵

According to Alma 42, God granted unto Adam “a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God” after Adam and Eve “were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord.”

[Alma 42 teaches that Adam had a “probationary period,” that he died, and will be resurrected in the future.](#)

- [\[157\]](#)↵

In D&C 78:16 teaches that Christ

hath appointed Michael your prince, and established his feet, and set him upon high, and given unto him the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is without beginning of days or end of life.

[Joseph said in a revelation Michael had “the keys of salvation.”](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Culley K. Christensen defends belief in Adam-God doctrine in light of the Adam being baptized in LDS Scripture.](#)

- [\[158\]](#)↵

Daniel 7:22-25 reads:

22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. 23 Thus he said, The Fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing time.

•

[Daniel 7 records a vision of the “Ancient of Days,” “the Son of Man,” and “the Most High.”](#)

- [\[159\]](#)↵

Joseph Smith identified the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7 as Adam/Michael. In Daniel 7, the “Ancient of Days” is said to judge the world and, when the Son of Man (Jesus) returns, he will give to Jesus “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom . . . which shall not pass away.”

•

[Daniel 7 records a vision of the “Ancient of Days,” “the Son of Man,” and “the Most High.”](#)

•

[Joseph identifies Adam with both “Michael” and the “Ancient of Days.”](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics

- [\[160\]](#)↵

Biblical scholar Dragos Andrei Giulea wrote that

in Dan 7:26—the verse which describes the destruction of the last king who suppressed the saints of the Most High (possibly the one like the son of man, as Dan 7:22 seems to distinguish the Ancient of Days from the Most High)—is not clear enough which of the two divine characters is the author of this destruction

117

The ambiguity is noted by scholars who believe that the “Ancient of Days” is the same person as the “Most High.” John H. Walton wrote that

there is grammatical cause to draw a distinction in v. 22 between the “Ancient of Days” and the “Most High” (an epithet generally used for Yahweh). Since the Most High, (מְלִיכִים) does not occur until after the introduction of the “Son of Man,” it is alternatively possible that as a result of the Son of Man being granted authority (v. 14), he thereby qualifies for the epithet “Most High.” This creates the expected correspondence between the kingdom being given to the son of man in v. 14 and to the Most High and his holy ones in v. 27.

In a handbook for translators of the Book of Daniel, Contesse and Ellington warned that

In some languages it will be necessary to avoid giving the impression that the **Ancient of Days** and the **Most High** (later in this verse) refer to two different beings.

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[Dragos Andrei Giulea notes that Daniel 7:22 “seems to distinguish the Ancient of Days from the Most High.”](#)

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[John H. Walton notes that, in the Aramaic of Daniel 7, there is a possible distinction between the “Ancient of Days” and the “Most High.”](#)

•

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[René Péter-Contesse and John Ellington caution translators of Daniel about confusing the "Ancient of Days" with the "Most High."](#)

- [\[161\]](#)↵

Some modern scholars believe Seth is the "Son of Man" and Adam is the "Ancient of Days." A Gnostic text called the Apocryphon of John can be read as supporting this theory:

[24] "And the two archons he set over principalities so that they might rule over the tomb. And when Adam recognized the likeness of his own foreknowledge, he begot the likeness of the son of man. He called him Seth according to the way of the race in the aeons. Likewise the mother also sent down her spirit which is in her likeness and a copy of those who are in the pleroma, for she will prepare a dwelling place for the aeons which will come down. And he made them drink water of forgetfulness, from the chief archon, in order that they might not know from where they came. Thus the seed remains for a while assisting (him) in order that, when the Spirit comes forth from the holy aeons, he may raise up and heal him from the deficiency, that the whole pleroma may (again) become holy and faultless."

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[E. P. Sanders' translation of the Testament of Abraham \(A\), a text some scholars believes identifies the "Ancient of Days" in Daniel 7 with Adam.](#)

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[Apocryphon of John \(AD 180\) identifies Seth as the "Son of Man," and by implication, Adam as the "Ancient of Days" from Daniel 7.](#)

- [\[162\]](#)↵

Due to the common belief at the time that the "Ancient of Days" was God the Father, some Latter-day Saints believed Joseph calling Adam the Ancient of Days was evidence that he supported Adam-God theory. For instance, Helen Mar Whitney Kimball, a plural wife of Joseph's, said that Joseph taught that when Daniel

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

speaks of the Ancient of days—he means the oldest man, our father Adam, Michael. . . . He (Adam) is the father of the human family and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. . . .

•

[Adam Clarke identifies the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9 with “God Almighty.”](#)

119

•

[Helen Mar Kimball Whitney said Joseph was the “author” of the Adam-God “doctrine.”](#)

- [\[163\]↵](#)

Andrew Chester noted that chapters 11-13 of the Testament of Abraham can be read so that

the Ancient of Days is interpreted as Adam, the One like a Son of Man as Abel (the 'wondrous man'), the Holy Ones as the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the Most High as the Master God.

•

[Andrew Chester argues the Testament of Abraham interprets the “Ancient of Days” to be Adam.](#)

•

[E. P. Sanders' translation of the Testament of Abraham \(A\), a text some scholars believes identifies the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7 with Adam.](#)

- [\[164\]↵](#)

In his 1848 commentary on Daniel 7:9, Adam Clarke wrote that

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics

*The Ancient of days*] God Almighty; and this is the only place in the sacred writings where God the Father is represented in a *human form*.

Matthew Henry, a popular Protestant commentator on the Bible, wrote in 1839:

The Judge is the *Ancient of days* himself, *God the Father*, the glory of whose presence is here described. He is called the *Ancient of days*, because he is God *from everlasting to everlasting*

120

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[Adam Clarke identifies the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9 with “God Almighty.”](#)

•

[Matthew Henry, a popular Protestant commentator on the Bible, identifies the “Ancient of Days” with “God the Father.”](#)

- [\[165\]↵](#)

Under the entry for “Ancient of Days,” the *Lexham Bible Dictionary* reads

**ANCIENT OF DAYS** (אֲתִיק יוֹמַיָּא, *attiq yomayya*). A title for God in the book of Daniel (Dan 7:9; 7:13; 7:22).

In the Anchor Bible commentary on Daniel, Louis F. Hartman wrote the following note to Daniel 7:9:

9. *an Ancient One*. Literally, “one advanced in days” (*’attîq yômîn*), i.e. an old man; the Hebrew equivalent is *bā bayyāmîm* (Gen 24:1). Like Akkadian, *etēqu*, the basic meaning of the root *’tq* in Aramaic is “to move forward, to advance”; however, the word *yômîn* could be dropped after *’attîq*, which then by itself came to mean “old.”

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[Lexham Bible Dictionary Interprets “Ancient of Days” to be a title for God \(the Father\).](#)

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics

[Louis F. Hartman, in Anchor Bible Commentary on Daniel, summarizes background to term 'attîq yômîn \("Ancient One/Ancient of Days\).](#)

- [\[166\]↵](#)

One reason God is associated with the Ancient of Days is that Daniel borrowed language used to describe the chief deity in the Canaanite pantheon, El. El's title is *ab šnm* ("Father of Years"). In his study of El in the Ugaritic tablets (Canaanite religious texts from 1350-1150 BC), Marvin Pope wrote that

El's seniority over all the other Ugaritic gods is everywhere implicit, whether the title *ab šnm* is to be taken as "Father of Years" or as "Father (of) Shunem

The earliest text that identifies the "Ancient of Days" with God is *1 Enoch*, a composite text dating from between the second century B.C. to the first century A.D.

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[Mavin H. Pope discusses the Canaanite deity El's title \*ab šnm\* \("Father of Years"\) and it being the background to Daniel 7's "Ancient of Days."](#)

•

[1 Enoch 14 interprets the Ancient of Days to be God.](#)

- [\[167\]↵](#)

Chapter 43 of the Eastern Orthodox "Councils of Moscow" from 1667 teaches that the "Ancient of Days" in Daniel 7 is Jesus, not the Father:

if the Prophet Daniel says that he has seen the Ancient of Days sitting on the throne of judgment, that is not taken to mean the father, but the Son at his Second Coming, who will judge all the nations with His fearsome judgment.

Jacob of Serug (451-521), a Syrian Christian theologian, identified Jesus, not the Father, as the "Ancient of Days" in one a text addressed to Mary:

"O virgin full of wonder, who grants me that you come to me,

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

because your Son is the Lord and the Prime mover who cannot be dishonoured.

“O maiden in whom the Ancient of days willed to be carried, how can I encompass a greeting from your lips?

John Bellamy, an eighteenth century Hebraist, argued that Jesus is both the “Son of Man” and the “Ancient of Days”:

This Son of Man is Jesus Christ, whom John describes as the Ancient of Days is described in Dan. vii. 9, “Clothed with a garment down to his feet; the hairs of his head were white like wool; his eyes were as a flame of fire; his voice as the sound of many waters; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” That this is Christ, who here says “I am Alpha and Omega,” you allow; and that this Jesus Alpha and Omega, is the same Alpha and Omega, God Almighty, in ver. 8 . . .

•

[Jacob of Serug interprets the “Ancient of Days” to be Jesus.](#)

•

[Council of Moscow, an Eastern Orthodox council, identifies Jesus, not the Father, with the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7.](#)

•

[John Bellamy \(18th century Hebraist\) said the “Son of Man” and the “Ancient of Days” are the same person.](#)

•

[Revelation 1, borrowing from language for both the Son of Man and Ancient of Days in Daniel 7, describes the heavenly Jesus.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[168\]](#)↵

Abraham ibn Ezra, a Jewish commentator from the twelfth century, identified the “Ancient of Days” as Michael:

מיכאל שר הגדול כאשר יפרש והוא עתיק יומין

(English: Michael, the great prince . . . Ancient of Days.)

Biblical scholar Peter Schäfer has argued that the late Rabbinic Midrash, “Re'uyot Yehezqel” identifies Michael (who the text also identified with Metatron) with the “Ancient of Days,” too.

Commenting on this text, Schäfer noted that

the quotation of Daniel 7:9f. in our Re'uyot Yehezqel passage complicates matters. The verse speaks of the “Ancient of Days,” no doubt God, who takes his seat on his heavenly throne and has thousands and myriads of angels serving him. Hence, if we apply this to the Prince in zevul, we can only conclude that the Prince Michael/Metatron is identified with the Ancient of Days, that is, with God; in other words, that Michael/Metatron is not only a second divine power next to God but even serves as God’s surrogate.

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[Ibn Ezra, in his 12th century commentary on Daniel 7:14, identifies the “Ancient of Days” with Michael.](#)

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[Peter Schäfer argues that Re'uyot Yehezqel \(Late Rabbinic Midrash\) identifies Michael/Metatron with the “Ancient of days” in Daniel 7.](#)

- [\[169\]](#)↵

Yefet ben Ali, a tenth century Karaite Jewish interpreter, argued that the “Ancient of Days” was just a high-ranking angel:

The Ancient of days is an angel whose task it shall be to judge the nations on the day of Judgment

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

• [Yefet ben Ali \(10th century Karaite Jewish interpreter\) argues the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel is an angel, not God.](#)

- [\[170\]](#)↵

In his 1861 book *The Ancient of Days: Or, The Times of the Jews*, John Cumming argued that the “Ancient of Days” could not be the father or Son:

The Ancient of Days here described by the Holy Ghost, is not the Lord God Almighty, as many of the present day would have us believe. . . . The Ancient of Days cannot be God the Father, for Moses saith, thou sawest no similitude, thou only heardest a voice . . . that Jesus Christ the Son of God does not wax old is evident from this scripture, 'thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,'

Cumming then noted that

Judgment is given to the Ancient of Days, and by the Ancient of Days, must necessarily be means the Jews, and the whole figure is the church of Christ, Jew and Gentile, who govern the whole world during the Millennium, and there is no personal Lord Jesus Christ among them for the space of thirteen hundred and thirty-five years,

and elsewhere, when addressing Daniel 7:9, he noted, “I beheld till the Ancient of Days did sit.' Is not the Jewish nation meant by this term?”

• [John Cumming argues the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7 is not a person but instead a corporate personality.](#)

- [\[171\]](#)↵

Many fundamentalists have defended Adam-God theory as true doctrine. These include individuals such as Jacob Vidrine, Steven Sego, Fred Collier, Leroy S. Johnson, Drew Briney, Culley K. Christensen and the “Independent Mormon Fundamentalist Friends.”

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Jacob Vidrine, fundamentalist Mormon, provides an introduction to Adam-God and its origins.](#)

•

[Steven Segó defends belief that “Adam” is “God” in light of the book of Genesis.](#)

125

•

[Independent Mormon Fundamentalist Friends lists “Adam-God” as part of their basic beliefs.](#)

•

[Fred C. Collier records a revelation that explicates various Adam-God teachings.](#)

•

[Drew Briney gives overview of importance to Adam-God teachings to truth claims \(or lack thereof\) of modern LDS Church from a Fundamentalist perspective.](#)

•

[Ogden Kraut, a defender of Adam-God, discusses the role of Adam in salvation history.](#)

•

[Leroy S. Johnson \(fundamentalist Mormon leader\) teaches that Adam was once a man like we are and earned the right to produce spirit children after receiving his exaltation.](#)

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Culley K. Christensen defends belief in Adam-God doctrine in light of the Adam being baptized in LDS Scripture.](#)

- [\[172\]↵](#)

A two-part article of *The True Latter-day Saints' Herald* in 1860 was critical of Brigham Young's Adam-God theory but retained a high view of Adam, quoting Joseph Smith's revelations that Adam "has the keys of salvation, under the counsel and direction of God" and that he would fight the Devil at the end of the Millennium.

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[RLDS Periodical said Brigham's teachings on Adam and God is evidence of the LDS Church worshiping a false god.](#)

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[RLDS periodical discusses Brigham Young's teachings concerning Adam and God; concludes LDS Church worships Adam and the teaching is idolatrous.](#)

- [\[173\]↵](#)

In his 1856 book *The Book of the Law of the Lord*, James J. Strang wrote that hem did not believe made Adam was God and that he had not possessed an immortal, resurrected body in Eden prior to the fall:

12. God alone hath immortality. Adam, the first of men, the Ancient of Days, the great Prince, . . . The change which is sealed upon all the sons of Adam, shall come upon the faithful, who stand on the earth, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel. And he, the Prince of the Kings of the earth; who in the days to come, shall speak with the voice of a trumpet, and the dead shall hear his voice and live; died once, that he might live forevermore. He praised God, who along hath immortality, that he would not leave him in the place of the dead; he preached the gospel to the spirits in prison, and obtained the key of life everlasting; but God alone liveth forever: the eternal ages are unto him as moments to us; infinites, as units to the mathematician. Our God alone hath immortality. Thou shalt love him with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[James J. Strang in his \*Book of the Law of the Lord\* distinguishes Adam from God, who “alone hath immortality.”](#)

- [\[174\]](#)↩

Early followers of James J. Strang did believe that the “Ancient of Days” would play an important role in the end times. In the December 1846 edition of the Strangite periodical *Zion’s Reville*, F. Merryweather taught that

3d. Dan. 7, v. 21, the Little Horn, or Roman power, was to make war with, and prevail against the saints until the Ancient of Days came. . . . There is to be a war between the Catholic Church and the saints, in which the Catholic Church will prevail until the Ancient of days shall come.

In the December 7, 1847 issue of another Strangite periodical, *Gospel Herald*, John Edward Page taught that

We do not believe the saints will possess the “*dominion of the kingdom of God*” until the “*setting*” of Adam, “the ancient of days,” and the “house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.”

He added:

When the Lord makes bare his arm in the literal gathering of the Jews to Jerusalem and brings Israel from the “north country,” and the house of Joseph as a mass receive the gospel, then let the saints begin to look for the sudden advent of the ancient of days, and the saints to possess the “dominion” of the kingdom of God.

•

[Frederick Merryweather presents a discussion of Daniel 7 from a “Strangite” perspective: the “Ancient of Days” will prevail against the “Little Horn,” the “Roman Power” is the Catholic Church.](#)

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[John Edward Page provides a "Strangite" interpretation of Daniel 7, which said Saints won't receive dominion until the Ancient of Days arrives.](#)

- [\[175\]](#)↵

In a letter to Alfred Saxey dated January 9, 1897, Joseph F. Smith wrote that Brigham "no doubt expressed his personal opinion or views upon the subject" and that "What he said was not given as a revelation or commandment from the Lord." Smith also added that

The Doctrine was never submitted to the Councils of the Priesthood, nor to the Church for approval or ratification and was never formally or otherwise accepted by the Church. It is therefore in no sense binding upon the Church nor upon the consciences of any of the members thereof, except perhaps only so far as some may have confidence in President Young, believing that he had light on the subject which was not given in connection with his public mention thereof. It is thought, even if there is truth in it, that the bare mention made by Prest. Young without indubitable evidence and authority being given of its truth, was unfortunate to say the least.

•

[Joseph F. Smith, in a letter to Alfred Saxey, states Adam-God may represent Brigham's personal opinion but the teaching is not revealed doctrine and is not binding on Church members.](#)

- [\[176\]](#)↵

Joseph Fielding Smith explained that Brigham clearly taught that Adam was not God, and that people that who say otherwise misrepresent Brigham.

. . .Brigham Young did not confuse Adam with Jesus Christ or the Father whom he worshipped. There is a volume published containing the saying of President Brigham Young in which his doctrine concerning the Father and the Son, and Adam's relationship to them is clearly declared in many pages. But when men desire to malign and misrepresent such things count for nothing.

•

[Joseph Fielding Smith writes that Brigham Young did not teach the Adam-God theory.](#)



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- [\[177\]←](#)

Mark E. Petersen argued that Brigham's April 9, 1852 sermon was misquoted:

Elder Charles C. Rich was not present on the day when President Young gave an address that was wrongly reported as saying Adam was our Father in heaven. (See JD 1:51.) The sermon was delivered April 9, 1852, and Elder Rich returned April 21. In a copy of the Journal of Discourses Elder Ben E. Rich, son of Elder Charles C. Rich, referred to the misquotation as it appears in the Journal of Discourses, and in his own hand corrected the statement to read as follows: "Jesus our Elder Brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character who talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in heaven." In this same statement Ben E. Rich wrote "As corrected above is what Prest. Young said, as testified to me by my father, C. C. Rich."

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[Mark E. Petersen said the Adam-God doctrine as "ridiculous," and that Brigham was misquoted.](#)

- [\[178\]←](#)

In his February 19, 1981 letter to Eugene England, McConkie wrote that Brigham Young did teach that "Adam was the father of our spirits, and all the related things that the cultists ascribe to him" but that these teachings are "not true. He expressed views that are out of harmony with the gospel."

He wrote that God "permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church and that such teaching is part of the sifting process of mortality." He also wrote that

Brigham Young erred in some of his statements on the nature and kind of being that God is and as to the position of Adam in the plan of salvation, but Brigham Young also taught the truth in these fields on other occasions. And I repeat, that in his instance, he was a great prophet and has gone on to eternal reward. What he did is not a pattern for any of us. If we choose to believe and teach the false portions of his doctrines, we are making an election that will damn us.

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# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

[Bruce R. McConkie said in a letter Brigham taught Adam is the Father of our Spirits and it's a false doctrine.](#)

- [\[179\]](#)↵

Watson summarized his thesis in the section titled “Two Adams”:

Brigham Young believed that one of the names of God, our Heavenly Father is Adam, and in many of President Young's discourses he referred to God the Father using that name. There are therefore two Adams, and although President Young did not use the designation, it will be simpler for us in the following discussion to distinguish between the two individuals by referring to them as Adam Sr. (When referring to God, our Heavenly Father) and Adam Jr. (When referring to the embodied archangel, Michael, who partook of the forbidden fruit, fell, and became the father of Cain, Able and Seth etc.).

•

[Elden Watson argues Brigham used “Adam” as a name/title for both “Adam” and “God the Father,” resulting in his being misunderstood.](#)

- [\[180\]](#)↵

In his article “Teachings of Brigham Young” in *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (1992), Hugh W. Nibley wrote that

Brigham Young recognized that many people were not prepared to understand the mysteries of God and godhood. “I could tell you much more about this,” he said, speaking of the role of ADAM, but checked himself, recognizing that the world would probably misinterpret his teaching (*JD* 1:51).

In his essay “Before Adam,” Nibley taught that “one of our biggest stumbling blocks is not knowing how Adam relates to other beings, earthly and heavenly. That is the root of the Adam-God misunderstanding.”

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[Hugh W. Nibley writes that Brigham Young believed the people were not prepared to understand some of his teachings concerning God and Adam.](#)

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

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[Hugh W. Nibley claims that the “root of the Adam-God misunderstanding” is misunderstanding how Adam relates to earthly and heavenly beings.](#)

131

- [\[181\]](#)↵

During a private car ride with Dan Peterson in the 1990s, Hugh Nibley is said to have affirmed his belief in Adam-God but would not answer any questions about it, stating only “I made a covenant with the Lord, that I wouldn't talk about it.”

Boyd J. Petersen reported a similar interaction with Nibley on an episode of the Mormon Matters podcast in 2013:

I asked him, . . . “Why haven't you talked about that? The anti-Mormons get us on that all the time? And he said, . . . “I don't talk about that.” And so the implication to me . . . that he probably believed in it. He never confessed it, but he also said in several of his Brigham Young writings that he felt like Brigham Young was a better theologian than he's been given credit for. So. . . my gut feeling is that he had very strong sympathies for that theology.

•

[Daniel C. Peterson summarizes his perspectives on Adam-God theory and remembers an experience with Hugh W. Nibley.](#)

•

[Boyd J. Petersen reports his belief that Hugh Nibley had strong sympathies for the Adam-God theory, but said he wouldn't talk about it.](#)

- [\[182\]](#)↵

When questioned by non-LDS reporter Lawrence Wright on what Brigham meant by his sermons on Adam-God, Hinckley responded that

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

We don't speculate on that a lot. Brigham Young said if you went to Heaven and saw God it would be Adam and Eve. I don't know what he meant by that

President Hinckley added that he was

“not going to worry about what [Brigham Young] said about those things.”

•

[Lawrence Wright said Gordon B. Hinckley said he did not know what Brigham Young meant in some of his Adam-God teachings.](#)

• [\[183\]](#)↵

Latter-day Saint researcher Matthew Brown argued that during the presidency of Brigham Young

the Adam–God Theory was being advocated there was never any consensus about it among the top two Priesthood quorums of the Church

Instead, after the death of Brigham in 1877

a consensus had finally been reached among those who presided over and administered the kingdom. And the consensus was against the Adam–God Theory.

•

[Matthew B. Brown argues in article on FAIR Website that Brigham Young did teach Adam-God but was not dogmatic about it as he himself struggled with many aspects of it.](#)

• [\[184\]](#)↵

Brian C. Hales noted in 2006:

It may be that the puzzle pieces given to us by President Brigham Young indeed fit the puzzle in some unobvious way. Maybe the picture is three-dimensional and we just don't know it yet. Perhaps, the puzzle pieces are inadequately cut, suffering from inadequate detailing by the President himself. In the Doctrine and Covenants we are promised that “the day shall come when you shall comprehend even God, being quickened in him and

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

by him" (D&C 88:49) and that at a future time "nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth" (D&C 121:28-29).

•

[Brian C. Hales gives an overview of various approaches to Adam-God.](#)

133

- [\[185\]](#)↵

In his 2013 *Joseph Smith's Polygamy: History and Theology*, Brian C. Hales wrote that "nowhere does Brigham explain how his teachings correspond to Joseph Smith's multiple instructions regarding." Concerning Moses 6:50-52, Hales noted that

In these verses, God, who "made the world, and men before they were in the flesh" talks to Adam, indicating they could not be the same being and that Adam is not the father of our spirits. Adam is admonished to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ, indicating that Christ is superior. All of Joseph Smith's teachings, as well as those found in the standard works, are consistent with these statements. Since President Young never attempted to correlate his scattered teachings about Adam to statements made by Joseph Smith (or as found in the scriptures), it seems that drawing absolute conclusions regarding his actual meaning, without additional clarification from Brigham Young himself is unwise and, in reality, impossible.

•

[Brian C. Hales said Brigham did not elaborate on his teachings concerning Adam and God and restoration scriptures contradict Adam being the Father of our spirits.](#)

•

[In Moses 6, Adam is commanded to repent of his transgressions and be baptized for the remission of sins.](#)

- [\[186\]](#)↵

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Jonathan A. Stapley did not offer an opinion on how to reconcile the teachings of Brigham with current teachings about Adam and God.

However, in his 2021 article “Brigham Young's Garden Cosmology,” Jonathan A. Stapley noted that

the basis of Young's garden cosmology was biological reproduction—a significant revision of Smith's exalted and gendered dyad of kinds and queens, priests and priestesses. It is perhaps not a coincidence that Young began teaching his garden cosmology at the same time he publicly announced plural marriage. Perhaps his garden was a refraction of eternity through plural marriage's prism—a way to render on the grandest of scales the procreative relationships that occupied the Saints greatest sacrifices. In doing so, he gave a narrative history to queens, priestesses, and a Mother god, and he unified humanity within the family of God.

•

[Stapley's article examining the “Garden \(of Eden\) cosmology” that informs Brigham Young's understanding of Adam, God, and “spirit birth.”](#)

- [\[187\]](#)↵

Dan Peterson said in 2023:

I'd read a lot of the accounts . . . trying to explain what [Adam-God] means. They don't seem to be compatible with my understanding of the gospel. . . . And, frankly, some of the interpretations I've read don't seem to need to fit even with other statements from Brigham. . . . Quite often Saints today will say, wow, he was just wrong but I can't quite say that anymore.

•

[Daniel C. Peterson summarizes his perspectives on Adam-God theory and remembers an experience with Hugh W. Nibley.](#)

- [\[188\]](#)↵

For example, Joseph called Heavenly Father “Jehovah” multiple times throughout the Doctrine and Covenants, including in the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple. On

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

March 9, 1841, he taught that “Ahman” is the name of God, though it could be applied to all those made in his image, such as Adam:

The Great God has a Name By wich he will be Called Which is Ahman— also in asking have Referance to a personage Like Adam for God made Adam Just in his own Image Now this a key for you to know how to ask & obtain

•

[Joseph Smith calls the Father “Jehovah” 4 times during his dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple.](#)

•

[Joseph teaches that “Ahman” is the name of God; can be applied to persons like Adam who are made in God's image.](#)

- [\[189\]↵](#)

Brigham Young understood “Adam” to be a name and title that could be applied to many people. For example, Brigham taught in 1845 that

Adam signifies the first man or Eve the woman. Adam[']s name was more Ancient than he was[;] it was a name [of a man] long before him who enjoyed the priesthood

In a journal entry dated February 16, 1847, Willard Richards recorded Brigham teaching that

. . .we are all father adams . . . as soon at the time times I shall pass the chain to father adam. . . . I want to stop your calling me father Young. in the Priesthood. the term properly applies to father adam, & to our father in heaven.

•

[Brigham recorded as teaching that Adam's name predated Adam; it is a name of a man long before him who held the priesthood.](#)

•

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Willard Richards records Brigham Young teaching that “we are all father Adams”; the title “Father” only properly applies to “Father Adam” who is “our Father in heaven.”

- [\[190\]](#)↵

Jesus taught in John 17:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

•

Jesus, in John 17:3, teaches that “life eternal” is to know “the only true God” and Jesus Christ.

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