

“FOR ALL WHO SEEK TO UNDERSTAND THE TEACHINGS OF  
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.”

—J. W. MARRIOTT JR.



AN  
**AMERICAN**  
A  
**MORMON** AND  
A  
**CHRISTIAN**

WHAT I BELIEVE



S E N A T O R  
**ORRIN**  
**HATCH**

*Foreword by* JERRY BORROWMAN

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# PART 1



WHERE DID WE  
COME FROM?

## CHAPTER 1



# OUR LIFE BEFORE BIRTH

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.*

—WORDSWORTH

MANY YEARS AGO, while serving a mission for my church, I met a wonderful woman in Ohio who had been diligently praying for answers to life's great questions. One day, while sitting in church, she saw a spiritual messenger who showed her two keys. One key was bronze and the other was silver. The messenger asked her which key she desired. She told him, "Silver, because it stands for redemption." The messenger looked pleased with her answer.

That evening she was sitting in her humble home, reading her church literature, when the same messenger appeared, this time with two coins. Again, one was bronze and the other was silver. When he asked which coin she would

take, she gave the same answer. He again looked pleased, and he told her to “cling to the little black book” that would be given her, and she would find the answers to her prayers.

The very next day, my missionary companion and I knocked on her door, taught her a lesson on the gospel, and gave her a copy of the Book of Mormon, which at that time was bound in black.

That first day, she felt that she knew us, even though she had never met us before in this life. She was amazed at her feelings toward us, and when we taught her the gospel plan, she understood why.

How many times have we met people who we seem to know but can't remember having met them before? Isn't that a strange feeling? Probably all of us have had that experience. Why do we have it? I believe it is because we met them before we were born.

## THE PREMORTAL EXISTENCE OF THE HUMAN RACE

Paul wrote to the Hebrews, “Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11). Jesus Christ, of course, is the one who sanctifies, and we who become Christians are the ones who are sanctified. Therefore, Christ is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters. But what is the “one” that we are all of? The New International Version of the Bible makes it clear: “Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the *same family*.” That is why Jesus calls us his brothers and sisters.

Revelation 3:14 calls Jesus “the faithful and true witness, *the beginning of the creation of God*.” If he was the beginning of God's creation, then God must have created others after him.

Paul calls the Savior “the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn of every creature*” (Colossians 1:15). Paul also calls Jesus “the *firstborn among many brethren*” (Romans 8:29). If Jesus is the firstborn, others must have been born after him, his “brethren” (and sisters).

Since Jesus is the beginning of God's creation, the Firstborn among many brothers (and sisters), and since he identifies those brothers and sisters as us,

we must conclude that we, too, are the children of our Heavenly Father.

The Bible teaches these truths in many other places. For example, when Mary went to embrace the Lord after his resurrection, he said to her, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and *your* Father; and to my God, and *your* God” (John 20:17). Similarly, the Savior began the Lord’s Prayer with the words “*Our* Father which art in heaven” (Matthew 6:9).

Consider Numbers 16:22: “They fell upon their faces, and said, O God, *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?”

In John 3:13 the Savior taught, “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” The main point here is that Christ came down from heaven, but neither he nor any of us could return unless we first “came down from heaven.” Therefore, we must have been in heaven with our spiritual Father, God, in a premortal existence.

An interesting extension of that argument is found in Ecclesiastes 12:7 (speaking of death): “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall *return* unto God who gave it.” How can we return to a place we have not been? Put another way, how could we return to the God who gave us life if we had not been with him before the world was created?

Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:9, “We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” Surely God is the Father of our spirits.

Jeremiah wrote, “The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations*” (Jeremiah 1:4–5). How much clearer could it be? How could Jeremiah have been known and preordained by God before his mother conceived him? If Jeremiah was ordained a prophet before the world was created, was he there alone, or were we there with him?

On one occasion, Jesus “saw a man which was *blind from his birth*. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that

he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (John 9:1–3). When could the man have sinned if he was “blind from his birth?” The disciples knew of the premortal, spiritual existence where he might have sinned. Otherwise, they would not have asked that question.

Paul, on Mars Hill, preached to the men of Athens who worshiped at a statue dedicated to the “unknown god.” He told them that they were superstitious and that he would tell them about the real God: “Whom . . . ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you” (Acts 17:23). Paul did so, ending his discourse with these words: “As certain . . . of your own poets have said, *For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device*” (verses 28–29).

We can also learn much from the penetrating questions God asked his servant Job: “*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*” (Job 38:4–7)

Have we met before? I believe we have. Where did we come from? We came from God. We lived with him as brothers and sisters before we were born into this mortal existence. Jesus Christ is our Elder Brother. Our Heavenly Father loves us and cares about us. He cares about you. You are one of his children.

## CHAPTER 2



# THE GODHEAD

*The earth, the sun and stars, and the universe itself, and the charming variety of the seasons, demonstrate the existence of a Divinity.*

—PLATO

*If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him.*

—VOLTAIRE

WHAT DO WE KNOW about the Father of our spirits, about our Father in Heaven? What can we learn about him from the scriptures? Jesus himself prayed to the Father, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). If our eternal life depends on knowing the truth about God, then we must begin searching for that truth.

## THE ATHANASIAN CREED

Within a few centuries after Jesus and his apostles had left the earth, the Council of Nicea, in AD 325, promulgated the Nicene Creed, which was soon followed by the Athanasian Creed: “We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither con-founding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the

Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; and yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God.”

In my humble opinion, this statement is a mass of inconsistencies and contradictions that has little to do with what the scriptures say God is like. We cannot understand God, our Eternal Father, unless we embrace his words in the scriptures. No other source, including the debated concepts of the Council of Nicea, is adequate.

Some churches teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one being, essence, or substance, like water, steam, and ice—three different aspects of the same thing. They also teach that God is a spirit without body, parts, or passions. Are these teachings biblically correct? No!

## THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST ARE THREE SEPARATE BEINGS

Stephen, the first Christian martyr, having told the Jews they had crucified their Messiah, was stoned to death. However, before he died, he had a marvelous vision: “He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55–56).

How clear the scriptures are! Stephen saw God the Father and Jesus standing at his Father’s right hand. In addition, Stephen was filled with the Holy Ghost so he could see spiritually. This scripture flies in the face of the Athanasian

Creed, showing three distinct beings in the Godhead. Several other scriptures prove this as well.

Matthew 3:16–17, for example, describes the Savior’s baptism: “Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here again, the Bible mentions three separate beings—God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Jesus also spoke some profound truths to Mary: “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17). Here Jesus refers to his Father as our Father and his God as our God, clearly delineating the separate status and function of God the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ his Son.

In Hebrews 1:1–3 we read: “God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Christ was the heir of all things, made the worlds under the Father’s direction, spoke to us at the direction of the Father, and was in the express image of God. Clearly, the Father and the Son are two separate and distinct beings with different missions and functions.

In John 14:16–17, Christ speaks of the Holy Ghost: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

Christ identifies this “Comforter” in John 14:26, just a few verses later: “The Comforter, *which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name*, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

Clearly, the Comforter, or the Holy Ghost, is a spirit sent from God to earth to comfort us after Christ left the earth. He is the “Spirit of truth,” will “teach”

us all things, and will “bring all things” that Christ said to our remembrance.

In John 16:13–14 we read: “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: *for he shall not speak of himself*; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. *He shall glorify me*: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

In John 16:7–8 Jesus said, “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

There actually is a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost—three separate and distinct beings, each with a different mission and function.

## GOD AND CHRIST HAVE PERFECT BODIES OF FLESH AND BONES

Most churches teach that God is a spirit without a body. However, a number of scriptures disprove that idea.

Genesis 1:26–27: “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Every person is born with a body of flesh and bones. And since we are created in the image of God, God also must have a body of flesh and bones.

Some argue that these verses refer to our spiritual bodies and not our physical bodies. However, look at Genesis 5:1–3: “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, *and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.*”

Seth, of course, had a body of flesh and bones as well as a spirit, yet he was begotten in the image and likeness of his father, Adam, who also had a body of flesh and bones and a spirit and who was created in the image and likeness of

God. Therefore, God must be a tangible being with a perfect body of flesh and bones as well as a spirit.

Look at Genesis 32:30, which gives the words of the Prophet Jacob: “I have seen God *face to face*, and my life is preserved.”

Exodus 24:9–10 says: “Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there was *under his feet* as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he *laid not his hand*: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.”

Exodus 33:9–11 is quite explicit: “As Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshiped, every man in his tent door. *And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.*”

On the cross, the Savior said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Then he died. What was it that left his body? It was his spirit. James 2:26 tells us this is what death is—the separation of the body and the spirit: “*The body without the spirit is dead.*” Yet three days later, Christ’s spirit came back into his body, and he became a resurrected being.

Later, Christ appeared to his apostles in the upper room: “Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; *for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*” (Luke 24:36–39).

Even though the apostles thought him to be only a spirit, Christ as a resurrected being showed them that his spirit had reunited with his body of flesh and bones.

Would Christ ever die again? What is death? According to the scriptures, death is the separation of the spirit from the body.

Romans 6:9 is relevant: “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.” In other words, Christ would never die again. That means his spirit would never again leave his resurrected, perfect

body of flesh and bones.

Philippians 3:20–21 makes sense of the resurrection: “Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

Paul in that verse describes a perfect resurrected body that would have power even over the physical elements. Thus, it is easier to understand how Christ could have suddenly appeared to the apostles in the upper room.

If Christ, as a resurrected being—with his spirit in a perfect body of flesh and bones—is in the express image of God the Father, then what kind of being must the Father be? He also must be a perfect being, a spirit clothed with a perfect body of flesh and bones.

This analysis gives even greater meaning to these scriptures:

1 Corinthians 3:16–17 talks about the importance of our bodies: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

We are brought here to earth, outside the presence of God, to gain an earthly body in form similar to his. However, our bodies are mortal and will remain so until the resurrection, when they will be changed to be like his “glorious body . . . whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Philippians 3:21).

James 3:8–9 reveals that we are created in the similitude of God: “The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.”

Again, the fact that we are made after the similitude of God lends great weight to the above arguments. These teachings also help us to better understand God. We can now visualize him as a supreme heavenly being who is perfect and is a real Father in Heaven.

Arguing that God does not have a body, some people cite John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Of course God is a spirit. *All* of us are spirits, but we are clothed with bodies of

flesh and bones.

So is God. So is the resurrected Christ.

Again consider John 4:24, but every time you see the word “spirit” insert “without a body”: “*God is a Spirit (without a body): and they that worship him must worship him in spirit (without a body) and in truth.*” This passage becomes confusing if read in this manner. But turn it around and put “with a body” after the word “spirit”: “*God is a Spirit, with a body: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit, with a body, and in truth.*”

Now the verse makes sense. If God were only a spirit, if we wanted to worship him in spirit, we would have to hang up our bodies outside the church house so we could go in and “worship him in spirit.”

Some cite John 17:20–22 to show that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one being. Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying for the eleven apostles (Judas had left to betray him). There Christ said, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”

Some use these verses to argue that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one being and not three separate beings. But remember that Christ was praying not only for “these alone,” meaning the apostles, but “for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” That includes you, me, and every other person who believes in the New Testament: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” Clearly, Christ wanted the apostles, you and me, and every other Christian to be one as he and his Father are one. Did he mean one big, amorphous being with arms and legs sticking out all over? The image is interesting but incorrect. He wanted us to be one in purpose, faith, and works, as he and his Father are.

The same concept applies to John 10:30: “I and my Father are one.” “One” means unified in purpose, faith, dedication, and action.

God is a being of body, parts, and passions.

God has a face, for in Exodus 33:11, he spoke to Moses face to face.

God has a voice, for his voice was heard by Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:8); by

Cain (Genesis 4:9); by Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (Numbers 12:4); and by the Israelites as a body (Deuteronomy 5:22).

God is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Deuteronomy 6:15).

God can show anger (Deuteronomy 6:15; Judges 2:14; 3:8; 1 Kings 13:3–5; Isaiah 30:27).

God can be provoked to anger (Jeremiah 7:19–20; 1 Kings 22:53).

God has wrath against unrighteousness (Romans 1:18; Revelation 15:1, 7).

God is merciful and shows mercy (Exodus 20:6; 34:6, 7; Deuteronomy 4:31; 7:9).

In Nehemiah 9:17, God is described as gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and kind. (See also Psalm 116:5; James 5:11.)

God is literally our spiritual Father. Through his Son, he created this earth so we could come here, outside his presence, to be tested, make our own choices, and ultimately, upon conditions of righteousness, return to his presence as resurrected beings. (See 1 Corinthians 15:20–22.)

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