



HEBREW
ROOTS

OF
MORMONISM

DAVID THOMAS

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PREFACE

This is my disclaimer. I do not profess to be an academic or scholar on early Christian history. I do not hold a history or theological degree from a major university. I am not a professor or anyone of any significance in the realm of religious studies. Early Christianity, however, is my passion and this scholarly work is the result.

I have to admit that I do have a bias. I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormon Church). I have a testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and that does color my analysis and conclusions. My desire in this work is to attempt to make sense out of historical Christianity and the place where The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints fits within that history.

The conclusions that I draw in this work are my own and do not reflect the opinions or positions of any church or other religious organization. I have spent the past decade reading and studying early Christianity, developing a thoughtful respect for the second- and third-century converts to the Christian movement. I am drawn to the sacrifices and challenges they faced. Persecution was a constant; death was a common occurrence.

There are many who suggest that the man Jesus is not an historical figure at all. They question the lack of archeological evidence. Josephus includes Jesus of Nazareth as a mere footnote within his historical treatise of the Jewish people.¹ If this Jesus of Nazareth was the founder of such a great movement, why is he merely a footnote to historians of the time?

I believe the answer is rather simplistic—to ancient historians, Jesus was a mortal man, just another Jewish heretic, and his followers were small in number. The Romans used crucifixion with regularity. Hence, Jesus's crucifixion was of no great consequence. To the victor go the spoils. To historians of the time, Jesus's death ended whatever had been the

theological battle between himself and the Jewish leadership. Why would they bother to write about it?

Jesus's resurrection was not widely published throughout Judea or the Galilee. While to Jesus's followers, His appearance after the crucifixion was a manifestation of divine power, to the rest of society, it was a myth propagated by Jesus's followers, who had stolen His body from the tomb.

It was not until the Apostolic ministries that the teachings of Jesus moved out of a regional setting. These ministries are well documented in the annals of history, and there is ample archeological evidences of their lives and teachings.

However, there is a greater reason for the absence of direct evidence of Jesus—the first principle of His gospel is faith. Faith in Him and His existence as our Lord and Redeemer. Consequently, our conversion to the teachings of Christ requires a measure of trust. That is why no one can ever prove by physical means that Jesus was real or that He is God, the Savior of the world. He intentionally made it so.

As a practicing member of the Mormon faith, Jesus Christ, His life and ministry, is essential to what I believe. However, at times I have been troubled by other Christian denominations who do not view the Mormons as followers of Christ. Why would they say such a thing? This book is my attempt to answer that very question.

NOTES

1. Flavius Josephus, 4 vols., *Antiquities of the Jews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 4: 244–65.

INTRODUCTION

**TWO ROADS DIVERGED IN A WOOD, AND I—
I TOOK THE ONE LESS TRAVELED BY,
AND THAT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.**

—ROBERT FROST, “THE ROAD NOT TAKEN”

ARE MORMONS CHRISTIAN?

The Christian world is a broad mosaic of many different faiths, all professing a belief and devotion to Jesus Christ as Savior and Redeemer of mankind. Notwithstanding such, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sometimes referred to as the Mormon Church, is generally characterized by other Christian faiths—principally protestant churches, but also the Roman Catholic Church—in a less than favorable light. Why? What is the cause of such hostility? What are its origins?

The purpose of this book is to test a theological hypothesis as to why, historically, other Christian denominations do not consider the Mormons Christians; for Mormonism is a lot older than it appears, and that is the rub. There came a time in Christianity where there was a divergence in the road—one road led to traditional Christianity and the other led to Mormon Christianity, and as the poet suggests, “that has made all the difference.”

Of course, at the meridian of time when Jesus of Nazareth lived and preached, there were not any Mormons—or were there? Jesus’s disciples were sent abroad to all the world to gather in those who would accept Christianity. However, the church that Christ built was not in Rome but rather in Jerusalem among the Jews. The Hebrews were the original adherents to what historians term the *Jesus Movement*. These Hebrew Christians were the dominant sect in Christianity for three hundred years following the death of the Savior. Yet while the Christian Church grew, the

Hebrew contingent of Christianity remained static. Soon the Hebrews were in the minority among Christians, replaced by the Greeks, Romans, and Jews of the Diaspora. What was once a church of Judea and Israel had become the Church of Rome with side tours to Alexandria and Antioch. As the Church grew, many of its doctrines began to change. Those in Rome adapted, those in Jerusalem did not. The Hebrews remained ensconced in the Apostolic Church, the church according to Peter, James, and John, and not the one preached by the students of Paul. Tension grew between these contingents. The Roman Church designated its major congregations as Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch. Jerusalem was thrown in as an afterthought, not because it was an important city in the Church, but rather out of respect for the city of origin of the faith. Jerusalem and the Hebrew Christians had become the step sister. It was only a matter of time before a confrontation on the future of the Church would come. And come it did, in AD 325 at the Council of Nicaea, when the Roman Church claimed that its doctrines were orthodoxy and those of the Hebrews in Jerusalem were heretical. Soon everything Hebrew would be eliminated by the Church, a mere footnote to history. Or maybe not even a footnote; for the Roman Church never wanted the Hebrew Christian heretical doctrines to ever see the light of day again. The Hebrews were crushed, they either gave up their beliefs, or like Arius, they were exiled and excommunicated.

As renown Christian scholar Bruce Shelley writes,

There were two main cultures, however—the Jewish and the Hellenistic (or Greek). The original disciples were Jews. But many of their early converts, as we have seen, were gentile proselytes of the Jewish synagogues. Thus, two sharply contrasting cultural backgrounds were obvious almost from the start. The two forces, Jewish and Hellenistic, represented two contrasting influences in the thought of the church. To the Jewish Christian, God was one. He had been the God of the Jew for a long time. When they clearly recognized that he was also the true God of all men, they still accepted him as the personal God they had always known. He was recognized by his personal name, Jehovah or Yahweh. His unity was a personal unity. To the Greek believers, on the other hand, the unity of God was an abstraction. They reached their ideas about God by philosophical refinement, by the processes of almost mathematical

thought. No doubt the Hellenists accepted the personal attributes of God in their surrender to Christianity, but the more abstract, philosophical idea was in their blood. Thus, we can see how history and culture made a difference in the way the two peoples thought and spoke.¹

This view of the battle between Hellenized Christians (Greeks) and Hebrew Christians (Jews) is not unique. German scholar F. C. Baur (1792–1860) maintained that earliest Christianity, before the books of the New Testament had been completed, was characterized by a conflict between Jewish Christians, who wanted to maintain distinctive ties to Judaism and so keep Christianity as a particularist religion (it was Jewish), and Gentile Christians, who wanted to sever those ties in order to make it a universalistic religion (it was for everyone).²

Baur asserted that Peter led the Jewish Christians and Paul led the Gentile Christians. He further hypothesized that the books in the New Testament show this battle—Revelation is a Jewish Christian type and Paul's letters are a Gentile Christian type and hence are anti-Jewish in content—the law of Moses is no longer necessary.³

Unlike the other heretical variant in the Roman Church, that of Gnosticism, which kept springing up from surprisingly new sources every few hundred years, the Hebrew version of Christianity was eradicated and did not reappear. That is, until the spring of 1820 in upstate New York.

By this time, the Roman Church had divided since the Reformation took place three hundred years before. Protestant churches like the Presbyterians, Methodists, Unitarians, Baptists, Calvinists, and other evangelical branches of the Church had splintered off from the Roman Catholic Church. Although these branches of the Catholic Church fought between themselves for followers, they all came from the same tree trunk and hence had the same view of the heretical Hebrew Christians. It had been fifteen hundred years since they were wiped off the face of the earth to rise no more.

The reason the Roman Catholic Church and the reformist would have been wary of the old Hebrew doctrines was because of how widespread those doctrines had been in the first three centuries of the Church. It had taken over three hundred years for the Catholic Church to win primacy over the Hebrews. It had been the only serious challenge to the Greeks who would become the Catholics. Yes, Martin Luther and John Calvin had

injured the orthodox superiority of the Catholic Church, but these reformers were not in league with the old Hebrew Christians. With the Hebrews, it had been a fight for the future of the faith, and the Roman Church had almost lost. For if the Hebrews had won, Christianity as we know it today would be much different. There would be reformers—there always are—but many of the grounding doctrines of all Christianity would have been altered.

It wasn't that the Hebrews were better organizers or more intelligent than the Roman Church. Rather it was the appeal of the Hebrew Christian doctrines, most of which came directly from Jesus Christ through the Apostles Peter, James, and John. These doctrines were popular and spoke of a special relationship of God to mankind. The very nature of God had been at the center of the disagreement between the Greek and Hebrew Christians. The Greek belief in God was framed by the philosophies of the dominant Hellenistic culture of the dark ages, while the Hebrew belief was intertwined with that of the Jews and sons of Israel.

What a surprise for the Christian world when a young boy of fourteen first told of his vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ. Even more surprising and concerning was what Jesus Christ had told the boy; namely, that the Christian churches were off course and that the boy was to lead not a reformation of the Church, but instead a restoration of the original faith. That faith happened to be Hebrew Christianity and the boy was Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith tells of the enormous persecution that he came under almost immediately. He couldn't understand why. Not even Martin Luther was hunted as he was, and Luther's *95 Theses* had been a declaration of war against the Catholic Church. What made Smith's discovery so much more threatening? As previously stated, the answer is simple: of all the variants of Christianity that the Roman Catholic Church and its reformist offspring feared, it was not the new-age cultists or the Gnostic branches; rather, it was the one belief system that nearly defeated Hellenistic Christianity in the fourth century—the Hebrew Christians were back. The doctrines of the Hebrews came to young Joseph through a religious record of Jews and other descendants of Israel who fled Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian conquest, had wandered in the desert, voyaged to the new world guided by God, and lived the doctrines of Hebrew Christianity. After Christ's Resurrection, the Apostle John tells us of a conversation wherein Jesus

referred to other sheep He had that were not of this fold (meaning those followers in Jerusalem) and that He needed to visit them as well. Those were the descendants of those who came to the new world six hundred years before. Christ visited the Americas. The mythology of the American Indians, Aztecs, Mayans, and others, told of a white god who had visited their ancestors and had promised to return one day. It is for this reason that the Native Americans welcomed Columbus and Cortez to their shores. They thought that these white men were the returning Savior promised in their traditional stories. This religious record of the doctrines of Hebrew Christianity and the culture and wars of this civilization are contained in the Book of Mormon. This book is a history book of sorts, similar to the Holy Bible. Wherein, as we will see, the Bible has been altered over time and thus the doctrines of the Hebrews therein have been modified or deleted in their entirety, the Book of Mormon is a pure version of Hebrew cosmology. Its history is of two great nation states, the Nephites and the Lamanites. The history runs approximately one thousand years, from 600 BC to approximately AD 400, ending with the complete destruction of the Nephite nation. It was the Nephites who kept the records of their fathers before them. On the eve of the destruction of their nation, the records of one thousand years of history and religious doctrines were abridged by the Prophet General Mormon and then entrusted to his son, Captain Moroni. Moroni wandered for some twenty years, hiding from the Lamanites who continued to hunt down stragglers of the old Nephite nation. He finally buried the abridged records (which were on golden plates engraved in reformed Egyptian, the language of their fathers) in a hill called Cumorah, which is located today by Palmyra, New York. There the pure Hebrew Christian doctrines stayed safe until the Lord was ready. Until the long winter night of the Apostasy, foretold by the Apostle Paul, was over. Fitting that young Joseph went to a grove to pray in the spring, the ending of winter and the beginning of new life.

This is what the other Christian denominations feared. This is why Joseph was forced to hide the plates and was forced to flee time and time again for his life. He and this ancient secret were not safe. It could destroy Hellenistic Christianity. There was no way that the ancient Hebrew religion would ever be allowed to survive. It had to be crushed. The Mormons were driven from New York to Ohio and then to Missouri, where Governor Boggs placed an extermination order on Mormons if any were found in the

state. The Mormons were hunted like animals, and they were forced to leave all of their possessions and to flee north to Illinois. There they established the largest city in the state, Nauvoo, on the banks of the Mississippi River. Nevertheless, it was merely a matter of time before their enemies attacked them again. The Prophet Joseph Smith was murdered in June of 1844 and the Mormons, led by Brigham Young, fled west out of the United States, the only religious organization that ever fled the jurisdictional boundaries of the United States due to religious bigotry and persecution. The First Amendment held no sway to those of other Christian denominations. Extinguishing the Mormons would once and for all destroy the Hebrew Christian doctrines that would be Hellenism's undoing.

This is the reason that although the Mormons are devout and devoted disciples of the Savior, Jesus Christ, they are not accepted in the Christian world. It is said that they believe in Christ, but it's a different Christ from the orthodoxy of Christendom. They are correct, for the Christ preached by the Mormons is the Hebrew Christian Christ, the Christ who came to this mortal sphere, preached how we can return to the Father of our spirits, died on Calvary, and was resurrected. The nature of Christ and God the Father was much different to the Hebrews than it was to the Hellenized Church, the Church of Rome, the Church of the Greeks. It is different from the protestant churches of today as well. It is the return of the true orthodox Christians and the teachings of the Apostles during the meridian of time.

This book's goal is to lay out this history and discuss the battle for Christianity's soul in the early Church and how Mormonism is the restored Church of Jesus Christ, of which the Hebrew Christians were members.

NOTES

1. Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 2nd ed. (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN: 1995), 48–49.
2. Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities* (Oxford University Press, New York: 2003), 171–172.
3. Ibid.

CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

When did Christianity begin? Was it with the birth of Jesus of Nazareth? The Apostle Matthew spends most of his Gospel citing to prophecies from the Old Testament that speak and prophesy of a coming Messiah, whom Matthew asserts is this same Jesus. Consequently, we are left with a legitimate religious question: When exactly did Christianity begin? If the ancient prophets knew of Jesus, didn't they teach His doctrine?

In the early days following Jesus's ascension and before the days of Pentecost, the "Jesus Movement," as it was termed, was thought of as simply a branch of Judaism. In fact, all early converts were Jews. Until Cornelius, most, if not all, of the Apostles, believed that one had to be a Jew or a convert to Judaism before one could be baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ. This ended with Peter's vision of unclean animals, which signified that Christ's gospel was for all peoples, not just the Jews.¹

So if the gospel that Christ taught was not simply for the Jews but for all people, couldn't the same be said of the doctrines taught by the ancient prophets of the Old Testament? They were prophesying of Jesus and His gospel to more than just ancient Israel.

Hence, one may draw the conclusion that Christianity, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is of ancient origin. Certainly that is what Christ's Apostles and the early Apostolic Fathers believed. For example, Paul preached that the gospel was given to Abraham around 2000 BC,² and to Moses,³ as well

as to Old Testament Israel at approximately 1350 BC.⁴ The famous theologian of the second century AD, Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, preached that the prophets of the Old Testament preached of Christ.⁵ The Christian scholar Tatian, as well as Church Father Theophilus, and the famous Christian historian bishop Eusebius all noted that the gospel is older than the Greeks or written languages, and was practiced by Abraham, whom they called a Christian.⁶ According to bishop Athanasius of Alexandria in the fourth century AD, the gospel of Christ was even taught to Adam.⁷

In fact, the Apostle Paul preached that the law of Moses was a lesser law to the gospel, meant to prepare the Jews for the restoration of the gospel during the meridian of time.⁸ What's more, in the Epistle of Barnabas, chapter fourteen, it provides that Moses received the gospel on Mount Sinai when he came down the first time, but broke those tablets when he saw the Hebrews worshiping a golden calf. He returned to the Hebrews after receiving a new tablet, the lesser law, known as the law of Moses.

Early Christianity understood the various dispensations and recognized that the gospel itself was not new. The Apostolic Father Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, testified in approximately AD 108:

For the divine prophets [referring to the ancient Patriarchs and prophets of old] lived according to Jesus Christ. Therefore they were also persecuted, being inspired by his grace, to convince the disobedient that there is one God, who manifested himself through Jesus Christ his son....

Should any one, beginning from Abraham, and going back to the first man, pronounce those who have had the testimony of righteousness, Christians in fact, though not in name, he would not be far from the truth.... They obviously knew the Christ of God, as he appeared to Abraham, communed with Isaac, spoke to Jacob; and that he communed with Moses and the prophets after him.... Whence it is evident that the religion delivered to us in the doctrine of Christ is not a new nor a strange doctrine; but if the truth must be spoken, it is the first and only true religion.⁹

Consequently, it is my belief that Christianity is the original religion of Adam. Some have referred to this theory as "Dispensationalism." A

dispensation is defined as a period of time wherein God has an authorized representative upon the earth. The New Testament equates dispensation with a household stewardship; “that is, God establishes His household on the earth and gives the stewardship for running that household to particular individuals—His prophets.”¹⁰

Between dispensations occurs an apostasy, or a falling away from the pure gospel. The next dispensation begins at the conclusion of this apostasy with direct contact between God and man, generally through the calling of a prophet who restores the ancient religion; namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ADAM’S RELIGION; THE BEGINNINGS OF REVEALED RELIGION

What was Adam’s religion?¹¹ What did he know and believe about his relationship to God, his creator? And what did God expect from Adam? In addressing Adam, I will attempt to stay as close as possible to the written record and avoid conjecture and even informed speculation.

As Moses records in Genesis:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let him 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.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.¹²

Adam surely believed that he was created in the image and likeness of God.¹³ This was not figurative, as Adam relates in Genesis 5:1–3, for his son Seth was described to be in Adam’s image and likeness in the same way that God described Adam. Thus to Adam, God was not a spirit without

form, but was in the image and likeness of a man. If we were describing Adam's religion, this would be the first tenant of it—that God is in the form of a man.

Next, God gave Adam dominion over the earth and its creatures. The vegetation and animals were for his benefit.¹⁴ But for what purpose? Why was God elevating Adam above all other creations? As Adam would soon find out, mankind and its dominion over this planet has a central role in God's plan that would play an important part of Adam's religion. But Adam was alone.¹⁵

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.¹⁶

Marriage and procreation became an essential tenant of Adam's religious faith, because man was commanded to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.¹⁷ It should be noted that at this time Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden in the presence of God. Hence, they were immortal beings and could not die so long as they stayed in the Garden and continued to partake of the fruit of the tree of life.¹⁸ We will not deal with the great theological debate about how or why the Fall of Adam took place except to suggest that Adam and Eve were given a commandment by God to multiply and replenish the earth, meaning to bear children. Something that apparently could not be accomplished while they remained in the Garden of Eden.

The biblical story of Adam and Eve commences with being tempted by the serpent, eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and ultimately being cast out of the Garden of Eden into the mortal world.¹⁹ They became fallen and subject to mortality and sin.²⁰ Following

their banishment from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve began to seek direction from God. According to James Ussher, it is 4004 BC.²¹

And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not: for they were shut out from his presence.

And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

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 then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.

And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed and all mankind, even as many as will.²²⁻²³

ELOHIM AND JEHOVAH

Here, we must temporarily depart from our story of Adam in order to investigate the contents of what the Angel had instructed Adam; namely, that he was to “do all that thou doest in the name of the Son (Jehovah), and thou shalt repent and call upon God (Elohim) in the name of the Son (Jehovah) forevermore.” Thus, Adam’s future interaction with God the Father (Elohim) would be through the Son (Jehovah).

The Old Testament begins with the words “breshit bara Elohim.” Hebrew scholars have long disputed the origins of *Elohim*. While most

agree that it refers to the God of Israel, the confusion arises from the use of “Yahweh” (“Jehovah” in Latin) to also describe God in the Old Testament. Are the uses of these two names for God synonymous or are we talking about two different divine beings? Biblical scholars suggest that these are one and the same God, just differentiated from each other by varying traditions in the region. These are referred to as the “E” and “J” traditions. The name of Elohim was typically used in the Kingdom of Israel (the Northern Kingdom), which was under the leadership of the tribe of Ephraim. While Jehovah was utilized in the Kingdom of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) under the banner of the tribe of Judah. As one may recollect from history, the twelve tribes of Israel, which occupied the Land of Canaan in the tenth century BC, split into two kingdoms as the result of internal divisions over taxes under the rule of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam. Consequently, the traditions diverged over time, giving rise to differing names for the same Deity. In fact, it is reported that Elohim was a derivative of the Canaanite pagan god “El,” the patriarchal creator god or father god. Elohim would then be the plural form and indicate a polytheistic belief in multiple Gods or perhaps the “sons of El,” the father god. Over time, with a Judaic turn toward monotheism, it was eventually replaced with “Yahweh” or Jehovah, a singular God. However, other biblical scholars point to the use of Elohim not as multiple gods, but as one supreme father god with many attributes. To avoid confusion, Protestant scholars in the King James Version of the Bible replaced “Elohim” with “God” and “Jehovah” with “Lord.”²⁴

So which is it? Are *Elohim* and *Jehovah* one and the same or do they refer to different divine entities? It is of some import that the Apostle John noted that God (Elohim) created heaven and earth in and through the Word, who he identified as Jesus Christ (Jehovah).²⁵ Jesus Christ constantly referred to His Father in Heaven—Elohim. In fact, he prayed to Elohim, His Father, for support in the Garden of Gethsemane and, while suffering on the cross, asked Elohim to “forgive them for they know not what they do.”²⁶ Finally, Christ referred to himself as Jehovah. “Before Abraham, I am.”²⁷

Of most significance is Christ’s reference to himself as “the Son of Man.” Elder James E. Talmage discussed this concept in detail in his *book Jesus the Christ*.

In applying the designation to Himself, the Lord invariably uses the definite article. “The Son of Man” was and is, specifically and exclusively, Jesus Christ. While as a matter of solemn certainty He was the only male human being from Adam down who was not the son of a mortal man, He used the title in a way to conclusively demonstrate that it was peculiarly and solely His own.... There is ... a more profound significance attaching to the Lord’s use of the title “the Son of Man”; and this lies in the fact that He knew His Father to be the one and only supremely exalted Man, whose Son Jesus was both in spirit and in body—the Firstborn among all the spirit children of the Father, the Only Begotten in the flesh—and therefore, in a sense applicable to Himself alone, He was and is the Son of the “Man of Holiness,” “Elohim,” the Eternal Father. In His distinctive titles of Sonship, Jesus expressed His spiritual and bodily descent from, and His filial submission to, that elected Father. As revealed to Enoch the Seer, “Man of Holiness” is one of the names by which God the Eternal Father is known; “and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ.” We learn further that the Father of Jesus Christ thus proclaimed Himself to Enoch: “Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name: Man of Counsel is my name; and Endless and Eternal is my name, also.” (Moses 6:57; 7:35). “The Son of Man” is in great measure synonymous with “The Son of God,” as a title denoting divinity, glory, and exaltation; for the “Man of Holiness,” whose Son Jesus Christ reverently acknowledges Himself to be, is God the Eternal Father.²⁸

The designation of the “Son of Man” is used some forty times in the New Testament. It is mentioned specifically to reference Christ in Acts 7:56, Revelation 1:13 and Revelation 14:14. Prior to Christ’s birth, Daniel references the visit of Christ, the Son of Man, to the Ancient of Days (Adam) at Adam-ondi-Ahman in Doctrine and Covenants 49:6, 58:65, 65:5 and 122:8. What is of interest is that all ninety specific references in the Old Testament to the “son of man” are in lower case and denote mortal man. Jehovah uses such a title to address the Prophet Ezekiel. Hence, only Jehovah is referred to as the capitalized “Son of Man.”

Thus, it appears clear: Elohim is God the Father and Jehovah is God the Son. It is only logical that Adam and Enoch referred to God as Elohim, but the Hebrews began referring to God as Jehovah, because there came a time when Jehovah exclusively became the spokesman to the Hebrews on behalf of His father, Elohim.

This leads to an important and quintessential question: who or what is Elohim? Adam knew him to be in the image of a man, Man of Holiness, for he is an exalted man.

MANKIND AND THE GOSPEL

In Genesis, as we have already discussed, God says that he created man in his own image. Throughout the scriptures, both Elohim and Jehovah refer to us as spirit children. In fact, mankind is referred to as either the “children of God” or as the “sons and daughters of God” some twenty-seven times in the Old and New Testaments (King James Version). Is this figurative? Or is it literal? Certainly Adam and the Hebrews viewed it as literal.

If it is literal, that would mean that we are members of an elite race. God’s race. A race of creators. “As man is God once was; as God is now, man may become.”²⁹ Are we really to believe such a thought. Is that what Adam believed? For just as a cub grows up not to be a dog, but a bear, and a kitten grows to be a cat, so we grow to be like our Father in Heaven, Elohim. Is that possible?

After being cast out of the Garden, Adam no longer spoke directly with God the Father; rather, his interactions were with the Son, Jehovah. In seeking guidance from Jehovah, Adam and Eve learned of the importance of prayer; namely that they could communicate directly with Elohim.³⁰ They learned that they should worship Elohim and follow His commandments in order that they might return to His presence at the conclusion of their mortal lives. Obviously, they also fully understood that as fallen human beings they would sin (violate Elohim’s commandments) and that would prevent them from returning to Elohim; for “no unclean thing can dwell with God.”³¹ It is this predicament that dictated the need for a Savior, one who could take upon Himself the sins of mankind so that all, including Adam and Eve, would have the opportunity to return to the

presence of Elohim.³² Consequently and most important, Adam learned of Jesus Christ and the role Christ would play in redeeming all mankind from the Fall of Adam. In fact, this central event was so important that Adam was commanded to make a sacrificial offering to Elohim and this offering was in similitude of the offering that would be made by the Son of God, Jesus Christ.³³

Adam said to Seth, his son, you have heard, my son, that God is going to come into the world after a long time, (he will be) conceived of a virgin and put on a body, be born like a human being, and grow up as a child. He will perform signs and wonders on earth, will walk on the waves of the sea. He will rebuke the winds and they will be silenced. He will motion to the waves and they will stand still. He will open the eyes of the blind and cleanse the lepers. He will cause the deaf to hear, and the mute to speak ...[The Messiah said to me] For your sake I will be born of the Virgin Mary. For your sake I will taste death and enter into the house of the dead. For your sake I will make a new heaven, and I will be established over your posterity. And after three days, while I am in the tomb, I will raise up the body I received from you. And I will set you at the right hand of my divinity.³⁴

So Adam was the first Christian.

It is of some consequence that we learn through the holy scriptures that Adam knew of Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus he understood that the Holy Ghost is a testator who bears witness of the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. With this knowledge, Adam understood the nature of the Godhead: God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

Obviously, Adam also knew that Satan was in the world—the antagonist to God the Father. He knew this from his dealings with Satan in the Garden of Eden.³⁵

Adam began to preach these things he had learned, which he termed the *gospel*, to his children.³⁶

And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon

God to write by the spirit of inspiration.³⁷

Thus, the birth of holy scripture. Unfortunately, Adam's recordings do not survive to this day; otherwise, we would have much more of what Adam believed directly from his own hand.

Adam also spoke in Moses 6:7 of having some form of the priesthood; the power of God to act in His name on earth—for example, the power to perform sacred ordinances prescribed by God. We certainly know that such sacred ordinances were performed.³⁸

And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water.

And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.

And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever.³⁹

So Adam was baptized and received the Holy Ghost.⁴⁰ Central to Adam's understanding of the mortal world was the principal of "agency" or "free will"—that man was free to choose for himself his own destiny, whether that be for good or evil.⁴¹

Obviously, there was more to the religion of Adam than this, but this is what has been recorded. Mormons believe that Adam had the "fulness of the gospel," which would have included many more tenants than those I have listed here.

So what happened to this ancient religion after Adam?

Remember the concept of "dispensationalism." At the close of a dispensation or period of time when the gospel of Jesus Christ is upon the earth, there occurs an apostasy. According to Christian scholar Scott R. Petersen, an apostasy has four main characteristics: (1) rejection of living prophets, (2) loss of divine authority, (3) loss of pure doctrines, and (4) loss of specific authority to perform sacraments and rites. The general consensus

of biblical scholars have settled upon five significant dispensations occurring prior to the birth of Jesus Christ; those being Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses.⁴² Each new dispensation is commenced by the visitation of God to a prophet through whom a restoration of the gospel is accomplished.

DISPENSATION OF ENOCH

Of Enoch, Genesis only states that he “walked with God.”⁴³ The year, 3317 BC.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the absence of biblical information, through other sources we know that Enoch was ordained to the priesthood by Adam and that Enoch was visited by God who spoke with Him.⁴⁵

Enoch, my son, prophesy unto this people, and say unto them— Repent, for thus saith the Lord: I am angry with this people, and my fierce anger is kindled against them; for their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off.

And for these many generations, ever since the day that I created them, have they gone astray, and have denied me, and have sought their own counsels in the dark.⁴⁶

It certainly appears that an apostasy had occurred. Enoch was called by God to restore the gospel. As recorded in Moses 6:37, Enoch preached the gospel to the inhabitants of the land, telling them to (1) have faith in Jesus Christ who would come into the world in the “meridian of time,” (2) repent of their sins, (3) be baptized in the name of this Christ, and (4) receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.⁴⁷ Enoch himself was baptized.⁴⁸ Enoch further taught about the nature of Christ. He stated that Christ existed before this mortal life in a premortal existence.⁴⁹ There he was referred to as the “Son of Man.”⁵⁰

Enoch became one of the Lord’s great prophets, inspiring an entire people to live together in harmony and righteousness. In due time, Enoch and his people were taken from the earth into heaven:

“Therefore I now took away Zion, to visit the world in its own time more speedily.” The wicked who remained behind did not repent of their sins, nor did they refrain from perverting the true gospel.⁵¹

DISPENSATION OF NOAH

By the time of Noah, approximately 2349 BC,⁵² the Old Testament teaches us that the descendants of Adam had fallen into apostasy again; namely, that “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”⁵³

And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth: both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.⁵⁴

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”⁵⁵ Once again, following an apostasy, God appears to a prophet to usher in a new dispensation. This time, God commanded Noah to build an ark and save his family and various assorted animals. Such flood stories appear in nearly every culture (including ancient cultures) the world over. Following the flood, Noah built an altar and offered animal sacrifice to the Lord—just as Adam had done before him.⁵⁶ Also just as Adam and Enoch before him, Noah was baptized.^{57–58} The pattern that had been established of an apostasy followed by a new dispensation where a restoration occurred was continuing through Noah.

Noah’s sons then spread out over the earth. It is regarded that Japheth went to Europe (Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Greece, and Italy), that Shem cultivated the Middle East (Babylon, Sumaria, Palestine, and Persia), and Ham founded Africa (Egypt). It was some years later that the Tower of Babel was constructed (approximately 2242 BC),⁵⁹ supposedly by Nimrod, a descendent of Ham, and the languages of the earth were confounded.⁶⁰

Since we cannot here treat them individually, we must be content to note that the archetype of all usurpers is Nimrod, who claims

kingship and priesthood by right of “the cosmic garment of Adam,” which his father Ham stole from Noah.... Early Jewish and Christian traditions report that it was Nimrod who built the Tower of Babel, the first pagan temple, in an attempt to contact heaven; it was he who challenged the priesthood of Abraham; it was he who built the first city, found the first state, organized the first army, ruling the world by force; he challenged God to an archery contest and, when he thought he had won, claimed to be no less than God’s successor.⁶¹

Once again, an apostasy had occurred at the time of the Tower of Babel, and with the confounding of the languages and migration throughout the world, the religion of Adam was taken here and there and spread throughout the known world. Is it any wonder that you find similarities in all religions of ancient origin and those of modernity? The commonality lies in a time of migration, for they all sprung from the same tree trunk, that of Adam. Hence, when we read about common religious beliefs or historicity between the Mayan and Egyptian civilizations, we are reading about something that is older than either one.

The same comparative studies that discovered the common pattern in all ancient religions—a phenomenon now designated as “patternism”—have also demonstrated the processes of diffusion by which that pattern was spread throughout the world—and in the process torn to shreds, of which recognizable remnants may be found in almost any land and time. It would now appear that the early [Christian] fathers were not far from the mark in explaining the resemblances [between all religions]: the rites do look alike wherever we find them; however, modern Christians may insist on denying the fact, for they all come from a common source. The business of reconstructing the original prototype from the scattered fragments has been a long and laborious one, and it is as yet far from completed.⁶²

DISPENSATION OF ABRAHAM

Abram means “exalted father.” He is the founding patriarch of the Israelites (Hebrews), Ishmaelites (Arabs), Edomites (descendants of Esau, son of Isaac, which had its principal stronghold at Petra), as well as the Midianites (descendants of Median, son of Abraham’s wife Keturah). Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are sometimes referred to as the “Abrahamic religions” because of the progenitor role that Abraham plays in their religious traditions. In both the Jewish tradition and the Quran, he is referred to as “our Father,” for he is considered the father of their various races. This naturally follows from the name “Abraham,” which means “father of many nations.” For Jews and Christians, this Abraham is their father through his son Isaac, by his wife Sarai; for Muslims, he is a prophet of Islam and the ancestor of Muhammad through his other son Ishmael, born to him by Sarai’s handmaiden, Hagar.

Terah, a direct descendant of Noah through Shem, fathered Abram, one of three sons in the City of Ur of the Chaldees. Abram married Sarai, his half sister. Terah is reported to have been a craftsman in the art of manufacturing idols for king Nimrod, the same who built the famed Tower of Babel. Following the death of one of Terah’s sons, Abram left Ur with his father heading toward Canaan, but instead settled in Haran with another of his brothers, where Terah died at the age of 205.⁶³

When Abram was seventy-five years old, God told him to leave the land of his birth and go “to the land that I will show you,” where Abram would father a great nation. So Abram left Haran with Sarai, Lot (his nephew), and all of their followers and flocks. They settled in Canaan, where God gave the land to Abram and his descendants. After some time, there was a famine in the land and Abram traveled west to Egypt for food with his wife Sarai, who was purported to be a great beauty. Abram knew that the Egyptian aristocracy would attempt to court Sarai due to her beauty. If they knew that Abram was her husband, his life would be in danger. Consequently, Abram and Sarai pretended to be brother and sister, which was true as Sarai was Abram’s stepsister. However, when Pharaoh attempted to marry Sarai, Abram came forward and told Pharaoh the truth. Instead of killing Abram, Pharaoh compensated Abram with great wealth for having disgraced Abram by courting his wife. By today’s standards, the term would be “hush money.”⁶⁴

Following the period spent in Egypt, Abram, Sarai, and his nephew Lot return to Canaan where due to a dispute over grazing rights, Abram and Lot separated. Lot took the land lying east of the Jordan River and near to Sodom and Gomorrah, while Abram lived in Canaan, moving south to Hebron.⁶⁵

It is here in 1921 BC⁶⁶ that Abram is called of God. He is visited by Jehovah and enters into a covenant with Him.⁶⁷ Sound familiar? In that covenant, God promises Abram that (1) Christ would come through his lineage, and that (2) his posterity would be given the land of Canaan upon which to live.⁶⁸ Additionally, Abram was given the promise of eternal increase; namely, that after this life he would continue to have seed in the eternities, which is referred to as celestial or eternal marriage.⁶⁹ Abram and his posterity were further called by God to preach this gospel to all nations.⁷⁰ Of particular interest, is that Abram, whose name was changed by Jehovah to Abraham, paid tithes,⁷¹ was given revelations,⁷² prophesied,⁷³ was a polygamist and had many wives,⁷⁴ entertained angels,⁷⁵ and was commanded by Jehovah to sacrifice Isaac in order to test his faithfulness, ultimately being stopped by an angel.⁷⁶

Abraham prophesied and was a prophet.⁷⁷ As were his progeny, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.⁷⁸ In furtherance of his calling as a Prophet of Jehovah, Abraham used the Urim and Thummim, which are seer stones, to receive revelations.⁷⁹ A higher priesthood, called the Melchizedek Priesthood, after Melchizedek, king of Salem, who was a High Priest after the Order of the Son of God, was bestowed upon Abraham.⁸⁰ Through this priesthood, Abraham was able to perform ordinances and give blessings to his family. As part of Abraham's leadership, he ordained other men to be patriarchs in the priesthood of God,⁸¹ he taught that missionary work was vital in order to preach the gospel to all nations,⁸² and he instituted the prayer circle as an appropriate way to speak with Elohim through Jehovah.⁸³ Ultimately, circumcision was given by Jehovah to Abraham as a sign of the covenant, which is referred to as the Abrahamic covenant.⁸⁴

This covenant was then passed from Abraham to Isaac and then to Jacob. Thereafter, the pattern continues as another apostasy occurs following the death of Joseph, Jacob's son who was sold into Egypt by his brothers.

DISPENSATION OF MOSES

For four hundred years, the Hebrews (the children of Israel) were slaves to the Egyptians.⁸⁵ Moses was born in 1571 BC.⁸⁶ He is called of God from a burning bush.⁸⁷ He becomes a great prophet of God and attempts to restore the Adamic religion to the Hebrews after freeing them from Pharaoh. But when he returns from Mount Sinai the first time, the Hebrews are worshipping a golden calf—they are not ready to live the gospel in its fulness as practiced by Adam, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. Instead, they are given a second set of commandments, because Moses destroys the first set.⁸⁸ This second set is referred to as the “law of Moses,” and it is separate and apart from the Abrahamic covenant and the sign of that covenant, circumcision. Often the two have been confused.

According to the Apostle Paul, the law of Moses was to be a schoolmaster to the Jews in preparation for the fulness of the gospel, the religion of Adam, which would be given to them in a yet future setting by the Messiah.⁸⁹ The Hebrews believed that a new covenant would come to replace the old. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.”⁹⁰ Little did they know that although to them it would be a new covenant, to history, it is very old. It is the first set of tablets that Moses received.

The law of Moses, the Ten Commandments, were instituted as the law (“Torah”) and Moses built the first temple, a traveling one at that, to house the ark of the covenant, the throne of God on earth. To ensure the continued adherence to the Torah and provide a historical backdrop, Moses authored the Pentateuch, which composes the first five books of the Old Testament. In it, Moses recites the history of the world from Adam to Abraham (Genesis), and describes the exodus of the Hebrews from Egyptian captivity (Exodus), as well as a handbook for the Levitical priests (Leviticus) and a history of the wanderings of the children of Israel in the Sinai desert

(Deuteronomy). Moses also instituted a governing council of twelve men who were chosen to represent each of the twelve tribes (notice the similarity with establishment in the meridian of time of Christ's Twelve Apostles).⁹¹ In remembrance of their exodus, Moses instituted the Passover, which not only signified their deliverance by Jehovah, but also was in similitude of Christ's future sacrifice and became the functional equivalent of the Christian sacrament of the Lord's Supper.⁹²

Following their release from captivity, the Hebrews conquered Canaan, the land of their inheritance according to the Abrahamic covenant. Thereafter, they divided into tribal areas, with each tribe representing one of the sons of Jacob (whose name had been changed by God to "Israel"). The Hebrews continued to worship Jehovah, the name of God that Moses received while he stood on holy ground next to a burning bush on Mount Sinai.⁹³ Notice that the name of God is no longer "Elohim" or "Man of Holiness," as revealed to Adam and Enoch, but is "Jehovah," who has become the God of the Old Testament. One aspect of Hebrew belief with respect to God and the creation of this earth was a belief in a Council of Gods (more than Elohim and Jehovah) who created the world.⁹⁴ Hence, although it is commonly understood that the Israelites were monotheists (namely; the belief in one God), there were always elements of polytheism (the belief in multiple Gods). To the Hebrews, this belief system recognized a Father God and then a hierarchy of lesser Gods, which is consistent with their doctrinal acceptance of deification, as will be discussed later.

Just as Abraham paid tithes, so the Israelites continued this tradition.⁹⁵ The Hebrews instituted a strict health code⁹⁶ and continued in their traditional spiritual fasts.⁹⁷ The Hebrews also looked to Jehovah to perform miracles for their benefit.⁹⁸

The nation of Israel ventured through three kings: Saul, David, and Solomon. Solomon built the first permanent temple. "A temple, good or bad, is a scale-model of the universe. The first mention of the word *templum* is by Varro, for whom it designates a building specifically designed for interpreting signs in the heavens—a sort of observatory where one gets one's bearings on the universe."⁹⁹ It is the temple where the ancients could make contact with God and other worlds. Hence, the notion

that temples were the dwelling places of the Gods is a false notion. These were communication centers, not divine habitations.¹⁰⁰

This is perhaps the reason that temples generally resembled mountains because the original communication center used by the ancients to contact God was on a mountain. Nibley notes a long list of holy mountains utilized for this purpose.¹⁰¹ One such example is Moses, who spoke with God at Mount Sinai. It is in these sacred temples that a ritual drama was played out before the Hebrews.¹⁰² Obviously, the temple was important enough that Moses had the tabernacle (temple) carried during their wanderings in the Sinai.¹⁰³ Once a more permanent location was identified, Solomon's temple was built.¹⁰⁴ It is of some interest to note that a baptismal font placed on twelve oxen was built inside the temple,¹⁰⁵ for the Israelites still believed in the importance of baptism.¹⁰⁶ Ordinances such as ritual washings and anointings were also practiced,¹⁰⁷ as were vicarious ordinances for the dead to assure their salvation in the afterlife.¹⁰⁸

It was the Levite priests who were given the sacred duty to officiate in the temple.^{109–110} The priesthood of God was exercised by the Levites.¹¹¹ Individual Levitical priesthood offices included three ranks: Nethinim, Levite, and Priest.¹¹² Additionally, there appear to be three other offices in the priesthood: high priest,¹¹³ Seventy,¹¹⁴ and elder.¹¹⁵ The Hebrew temple ceremony (Jewish initiation rite) required the wearing of ritual clothing (sacred garments).¹¹⁶ An important aspect to temple worship was a belief in the bodily resurrection.¹¹⁷ As a natural corollary to that was the tradition of a pre-existence.¹¹⁸ The resurrection required that the human be immortal—living as spirits before the world was created, coming to a mortal sphere, and then being resurrected after mortal death to live forever, which leads into a discussion of the afterlife; the Hebrews believed in three degrees of glory in the afterlife.

For an Israelite example we need only turn to a document known as the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. Within this text, the “Testament of Levi” purports to report the words of Levi who was

the head of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This document states that Levi ascended through three heavens, accompanied by an angel of the Lord. The lowest or “first heaven” was “dark” because it “sees all the injustices of humankind.” The “second heaven” was much brighter and more lustrous than the first. Finally, Levi ascended to “the uppermost heaven” which was even “more lustrous and beyond compare.” In this place, which the angel called “the Holy of Holies,” Levi saw God seated upon His throne. ¹¹⁹

Prophets who communed with Jehovah helped to guide the successive monarchs because the Hebrews believed that prophets acted as spokesmen for Jehovah and, therefore, could provide essential guidance to the leaders of their nation. ¹²⁰ The belief in direct revelation between God and man was an essential element to their religious underpinnings. ¹²¹ Israelite prophets cited an instrument called the Urim and Thummim as a device used to translate and receive prophesy. ¹²² Prophets, like Moses, and Hebrew scribes recorded their histories and dealings with Jehovah in many diverse and numerous scrolls or sticks, so called because the leather or papyrus, which could be as long as one hundred feet, was wound around a wooden stick for ease in use. These scrolls comprised the learnings of the Israelite culture.

One key component of the culture, as discussed by Isaiah, was a belief in a Messiah, a Savior of the chosen people of God. This Savior would be the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. ¹²³ Some scholars believe that the Israelites simply adopted this concept of a Messiah from the Persians, who were practicing adherents of Zoroaster. Zoroastrians believed in multiple messiahs, one at the beginning of civilization, another in the meridian of times, and the last before the end of the world. It is for this reason that most scholars agree that the wise men from the east who visited the baby Jesus some two years after his birth were Zoroastrian priests who recognized the sign in the night sky (as Zoroastrians practiced star gazing) of the coming of the Messiah in the meridian of time. ¹²⁴ Thus to some, the resultant Hebrew belief in a messiah. ¹²⁵

Eventually the twelve tribes divided into two nations: the Northern Kingdom retained the name of Israel and was governed by descendants of

Ephraim, Joseph's son who was given the birthright (the "higher priesthood"); the Southern Kingdom was named Judah, after the main tribe residing in the region. Of note is the catalyst that sparked the separation of the two nations. During the final years of king Solomon's reign, he began heavily taxing his people. After Solomon's death, his son, Rehoboam, ruled in his stead. Because Rehoboam continued with the same policy of heavy taxation, the northern ten tribes rebelled, forming their own nation. In 750 BC, the Assyrians from the north came and conquered Israel, carrying away the northern tribes, who became known to history as the "lost ten tribes of Israel." Some of these northern tribesmen escaped south to Judah. ¹²⁶

It was during this dispensation that the Hebrews began referring to themselves as the sons and daughters of God, in a literal, not figurative sense. ¹²⁷ Thus the belief in deification—the idea that the Hebrews, as the chosen people of Jehovah, could become gods, like Elohim. ^{128–129} The Israelites understood Jehovah to be a glorified and perfected man who naturally was married to a glorified and perfected woman. "From our Old Testament alone we should never have guessed that Israel associated a goddess with Yahweh, even popularly, but the conclusion is irresistible, and we are justified in assuming that she played her part in the mythology and ritual of Israel." ¹³⁰ To the Hebrews this was only natural, after all, didn't God say that man was created in His form and image (male and female)? Isn't it logical that Eve was created in the form and image of a female goddess, the wife of God? For this reason, marriage was considered a sacred covenant between a man and a woman. What's more, the Hebrews preached the concept of eternal marriage (that is, marriage that survives this mortal life). ¹³¹ This practice is historically shown in the coronation rites of ancient Near Eastern royalty. ¹³²

By 284 BC, the written record of the Jews had become unmanageable and to many Jews living at Alexandria unreadable, as Greek had become the common language to the masses. By tradition, it is said that seventy-two elders (Jewish scholars) were sent to Alexandria from Jerusalem and made a Greek translation of the most important scrolls in seventy days. This compilation became known as the "Septuagint." It included not only what is in our present day Old Testament, but also many texts that we refer to today as the "Apocrypha." For example, the First and Second Books of Esdras,

the Book of Tobit, the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, and Bel and the Dragon.¹³³ The Israelite Prophet Ezekiel, in the late sixth century BC, foresaw not only the Septuagint (Old Testament), but also the full Bible (Old and New Testaments together). He referred to this Bible as the stick of Judah, which would come forth in the meridian of time. However, he also spoke of another Stick, the Stick of Joseph, which would come forth in the last dispensation of the fulness of times.¹³⁴

So what is the meaning of writing upon a “stick”? Evidence from the period suggests that the Babylonians “wrote upon wax-filled writing boards or wooden tablets. These tablets were hinged on one edge so that two or more of them could be connected together and folded shut.” Hence the “sticks” may refer to these wax-filled writing boards that are hinged together forming our equivalent of books. “In the verses that follow this passage the Lord explains that the ‘sticks’ of Joseph and Judah represent the divided kingdoms of Israel (‘stick of Joseph’—Northern Kingdom; ‘stick of Judah’—Southern Kingdom). The Lord states in verses 21 and 22 of Ezekiel 37 that the joining together of the inscribed ‘sticks’ is symbolic of the gathering together of Israel’s scattered children and their reunification as ‘one nation.’”¹³⁵

Already known to Ezekiel at the time of this prophecy was the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In 722 BC, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians and, as has already been discussed, became the lost ten tribes.¹³⁶ That left the Southern Kingdom—Judah, which was in the grip of widespread apostasy. In fact, the Old Testament confirms a “four hundred year gap in Jewish history (between Malachi and John the Baptist) when no prophecy is recorded and when the Lord gave stewardship to no recognized prophets upon the earth.” This is further corroborated by the text of 1 Maccabees 4:46. The Jewish temple had been sacked and desecrated following the Babylonian captivity, the altar having been used for pagan ritual sacrifice. Hence, after the reoccupation of the area by the Jews, the temple needed to be rededicated to Jehovah and more specifically, the desecrated altar needed to be destroyed and, thereafter, rebuilt and rededicated. However, Judas Maccabaeus, who lived in the second century BC, reports that this rededication could not be accomplished because there was no authorized representative of Jehovah (a

prophet) upon the earth to perform the ceremony. Hence, the rededication had to wait.¹³⁷

One hundred and fifty years after the carrying away of the Northern Kingdom, in around 600 BC, the Babylonians captured Judah and sacked Jerusalem and its temple. It is during this time of unrest that Mormons believe that a small party of Hebrews from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh crossed the Arabian desert and ultimately went to the Americas. Their experiences and history is documented in the Book of Mormon. As for the Jews, they were subsequently incorporated into the Persian Empire when Cyrus conquered Babylon. Thereafter, Darius allowed the Jews to return to their homeland of Canaan and rebuild their temple. With the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great, Canaan and the Jews came under the jurisdiction of the Greeks. Upon Alexander's untimely death, his southern general, Ptolemy, who had become sovereign of Egypt, took control of Jerusalem in 301 BC. A century later in 198 BC, Antiochus III of Syria, defeated the Egyptians in a battle near Caesarea Philippi and occupied Palestine. This set the scene for the Maccabean War, where the Jews revolted against the Seleucid Dynasty in Syria and set up the Hasmonean Dynasty under Mattathias ben Johanan. It was due to a power struggle within the Hasmonean Dynasty and the invitation by Hyrcanus II to the Romans to assist him in regaining the throne from the Syrians that ultimately led to the occupation of Palestine by the Romans in 63 BC. Although the rule of kings would continue through Herod the Great (37–4 BC), the Jews were again under the rule of another foreign empire.¹³⁸ They had again fallen into apostasy.¹³⁹

Obviously, there are many other doctrines contained in the Old Testament that are not addressed here. However, I have attempted to illustrate the kinds of doctrines that were taught. Once the prophets were gone, Malachi being one of the last, Israel was without spiritual leadership. Some years later, the Jews began in earnest to seek for their deliverer, the Messiah, who would save them from the Romans.

THE MERIDIAN OF TIME

Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem at the meridian of time (Ussher approximates this to be around 5 BC).¹⁴⁰ He called twelve Apostles and preached the “Goods News,” the gospel of Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus of Nazareth? He is the promised Messiah, the Christ. But more than that, he told the Jews, “verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”¹⁴¹ Christ proclaimed that he was none other than Jehovah himself, the great “I am” of the Old Testament. What was the response of the Jews to this declaration? “Then took they up stones to cast at him.”¹⁴² It was blasphemy!

Notwithstanding heavy opposition by the Sanhedrin, Christ proceeded to preach in the tradition of the rabbis and set up His Church upon the earth. Of utmost importance to understand, this gospel was the same restored religion that Jesus Christ, as Jehovah, had given to Adam four millennia earlier.

THE ORIGINAL CHURCH

During the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, the Apostles appeared at times like a group of school boys vying for the attentions of their teacher and mentor. In like manner, they also appeared somewhat dense to the doctrines and lessons that Christ had taught them and showed varying degrees of faith in their divine calls. They were certainly not ready to lead Christ’s Church.

Following Christ’s crucifixion, the Apostles were in disarray and appeared to be on the brink of desertion. However, things changed after the Resurrection of the Savior and His subsequent forty day ministry. The Apostles appeared to have gained a stronger testimony of the divinity of Christ. Additionally, they were privileged to learn privately from the Master the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

After Christ’s ascension, the Apostles waited for the Comforter, whom Christ promised would come and teach them all things that they should do. That Comforter, the Holy Ghost, did come—on the day of Pentecost. Thereafter, the Apostles embarked on their missions to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world. They went from city to city preaching the gospel, baptizing with water and conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost on those who accepted the gospel, and setting up small congregations

throughout the Roman Empire. The Church, under the direction of the senior Apostles (Peter, James, and John), grew at a remarkable pace.

The main body of the church remained at Jerusalem until at least AD 50, when the Jerusalem Council was held. Thereafter, Peter and John departed to Antioch, in modern-day Turkey, there to set up a new headquarters of the Church. Ultimately, Peter would go on to Rome a decade later and be martyred, while John would spend his days in Ephesus (with a detour courtesy of Rome to the prison colony at the Isle of Patmos).

Christian scholars from all faiths agree that following Peter's death up until the third century AD, the history of Christ's Church is sketchy at best. Through the writings of some of the Apostolic Fathers, Heresy Hunters, and Apologists, we obtain most of our knowledge.¹⁴³ One thing is certain, however, the Church splintered into three general groups within the whole.

It is irrefutable fact that the first Christians were Jewish Christians, and consequently their theology made use of Jewish thought forms and Jewish categories.... The Jews of the diaspora provided the initial basis for church growth during the first and early second centuries. However, by the mid-second century we can speak of three major movements within Christianity: Jewish Christianity, Hellenistic or Gentile Christianity, and Gnosticism.¹⁴⁴

These three distinct sects within the Christian movement are said to have had their origins in the specific teachings of the Apostles. The Jewish or Hebrew Christians were said to have been adherents of the head Apostle Peter, as well as of the Apostle James the Just, the bishop of Jerusalem, while Hellenistic or Pauline Christians were followers of the Apostle Paul (Saul of Tarsus). The Gnostics looked to the Apostle John.¹⁴⁵ It will be important to our understanding of the fate of Christianity to fully comprehend who each of these groups were and what they believed before going into what happened to them and to Christianity.¹⁴⁶

NOTES

1. Acts 10

2. Galatians 3:8.

3. 1 Corinthians 10:1–5.

4. Hebrews 4:2.

5. Ignatius, Magnesians 8 in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) (hereinafter, "ANF"), 1–62.

6. Theophilus, Theophilus to Autolytus 3:29; in ANF, 2:120–121; Tatian, Address to the Greeks 31 in ANF, at 2:77; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 1–4, 6–10; Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel* 1:5, vol. 1 25–26
7. Athanasius, De Decretis Nicaena Synodi 5, in Scott R. Petersen, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?* (CFI, Springville, UT: 2005), 39, citing J.P. Migne, *Petrologiae Graedae* (Paris: 1857).
8. Galatians 3:19.
9. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1:26–28, quoted in Petersen, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?*, at 37–38.
10. Petersen, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?*, 18.
11. In deciding how to address the historicity of Adam’s religion and the general lack of information found in the Bible, I have decided to use all available resources, including the canonized scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha.
12. Genesis 1:26–28.
13. Adam believed in the premortal life of man. (Genesis 2:4–5).
14. Genesis 1:19.
15. Genesis 1:20.
16. Genesis 2:21–24.
17. Genesis 1:28.
18. Genesis 3:22.
19. Genesis 3.
20. Sacred garments were given to Adam and Eve; namely, animal skins to clothe their nakedness (Genesis 3:21).
21. James Ussher, *The Annals of the World* (Green Forest, Arkansas: Larry and Mario Pierce, Master Books, 2003), 17.
22. Moses 5:4–9.
23. Adam was taught and protected by three visitors from God. Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (Salt Lake City, UT Deseret Book, 1987), 69, citing the Book of Adam.
24. See generally, Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1979), 224.
25. John 1:1–3, 14.
26. John 17; Luke 23:34.
27. John 8:58.
28. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1916), 108.
29. Quote of Lorenzo Snow, President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
30. See also “Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan,” 26:18–19 in Rutherford Platt, *The Forgotten Books of Eden* (New York: Alpha House, 1927), 18.
31. 1 Nephi 10:21.
32. Moses 6:59.
33. See also “Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan,” 68–69 in Platt, *The Forgotten Books of Eden*, A7-A3.
34. Petersen, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?*, 23, quoting Testament of Adam 3.1–4. See also “Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan,” 14, 42, 49 in Platt, *The Forgotten Books of Eden*, 13, 28, 33.
35. Genesis 3:1–13.
36. Moses 5:58.
37. Moses 6:5.

38. “Adam finding he needed help, solicited divine assistance with prayers and sacrifices.... That was the beginning of the ordinances of God.” Clementine Recognitions IV, 11, in Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 65.
39. Moses 6:64–66.
40. See also Apocalypse of Adam 8.9–11, 17, cited in Petersen, *Where Have all the Prophets Gone?*, 22 and in James Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament*, 2 vols (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1998) (hereinafter, “OTP”), 1:719.
41. 2 Enoch 30:12–15 in OTP, 1:152; Epistle of the Apostles 39; Petersen, *Where Have all the Prophets Gone?*, 24–25.
42. Petersen, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?*, 19–21.
43. Genesis 5:22, 24.
44. Ussher, *Annals of the World*, 18.
45. Doctrine and Covenants 107:48–49.
46. Moses 6:27–28.
47. Moses 6:52, 62.
48. Moses 7:11.
49. 1 Enoch 48:3 in OTP, 1:35.
50. *Ibid.*, 37–71.
51. Petersen, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?*, 30.
52. Ussher, *Annals of the World*, 19.
53. Genesis 6:5.
54. Genesis 6:7.
55. Genesis 6:8.
56. Genesis 8:20.
57. Moses 8:23–24.
58. An interesting tale told anciently was that Canaan, the son of Ham, stole Adam’s sacred garment given to Noah. (Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 366).
59. Ussher, *Annals of the World*, 22.
60. Genesis 11:1–9.
61. Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 366.
62. *Ibid.*, 366–67.
63. Genesis 11.
64. Genesis 12.
65. Genesis 13.
66. Ussher, *Annals of the World*, 25.
67. Genesis 12:1–9.
68. Genesis 17; 22:15–18; Galatians 3.
69. Doctrine and Covenants 132:29–50; Abraham 2:6–11.
70. Matthew 3:9, Abraham 2:9–11.
71. Genesis 14:20, 28–30.
72. Genesis 15:1.
73. Genesis 15:13.
74. Genesis 16:1–4; Genesis 25:1–10; Genesis 29:23–35; Genesis 30:3–4, 8–9; 2 Chronicles 13:21; 1 Kings 11:1–3; 2 Samuel 2:2; 2 Samuel 12:7–8; Genesis 16:1–3, 25:1–10.
75. Genesis 18.
76. Genesis 22.
77. Genesis 20:1–7.
78. Genesis 26:2–3, 24; Genesis 32:24–30; Genesis 35:1; Genesis 37:5–10; Genesis 41:16–40.

79. Abraham 3:1–4.
80. Genesis 14:18–20; Hebrews 7:11–12; Petersen, *Where Have all the Prophets Gone?*, 33.
81. Genesis 49:1; Genesis 27:27–30. There has been wide speculation that this Melchizedek was none other than Shem, the son of Noah, who would not die until 1846 BC. Ussher, *Annals of the World*, 27.
82. Matthew 3:9; Abraham 2:9–11.
83. “Apocalypse of Abraham,” chapter 12 in OTP, 1:695; The Testament of Job 46:1–5, in H. F. P. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 644–46.
84. Genesis 17:17–27; 22:15–18.
85. Exodus 1.
86. Ussher, *Annals of the World*, 34.
87. Exodus 3:4–6.
88. Exodus 20.
89. Galatians 3:24.
90. Jeremiah 31:31–33; Ezekiel 37:21–28.
91. Numbers 1:4–16, 44; Joshua 4:4.
92. Exodus 12:12–14.
93. Exodus 3:14.
94. Psalm 82:1; Job 15:8; Job 25:14; Proverbs 3:32; Psalm 111:1; Jeremiah 6:11; Jeremiah 15:17; Ezekiel 13:9; Psalm 55:14; Psalm 83:3; Psalm 89:5–7; Proverbs 15:22; Jeremiah 23:18, 22; Psalm 64:2.
95. Leviticus 27:30–34; Deuteronomy 12:5–6; Deuteronomy 14:22–23; Deuteronomy 26:12–14; Malachi 3:3–10; Proverbs 3:9–10.
96. Numbers 6:1–4, 8; Judges 13:13–14; Leviticus 10:8–11; Daniel 1:8; Leviticus 11:1–47; Deuteronomy 14:2–21; Isaiah 5:11–12; Isaiah 28:7–8.
97. Isaiah 58:3–7; Psalm 35:13; Nehemiah 9:1–3.
98. Genesis 41:16–40; Exodus 7–12; Exodus 14:21–27; Joshua 3:9–17; Joshua 6:1–27; Joshua 10:12–14; 1 Kings 18:21–40; Numbers 16:28–33; 2 Kings 1:9–12; 2 Kings 2:6–8, 11–12, 14; 2 Kings 4:3–7, 20–36; 2 Kings 5:1–14; Daniel 2; Daniel 3:16–27; Daniel 6.
99. Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 358.
100. *Ibid.*, 359.
101. *Ibid.*, 360.
102. *Ibid.*, 362.
103. Exodus 25:8–9; 35:21; 40:30–38.
104. 1 Kings 6.
105. 1 Kings 7:21–25; 2 Chronicles 4:2–4; Jeremiah 52:20.
106. Isadore Singer and Cyrus Adler, *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901–1906), 2:499.
107. Exodus 40:12, 15.
108. Psalm 16:9–11; Isaiah 24:21–22; Obadiah 1:21; Malachi 4:5–6.
109. 1 Chronicles 6:10.
110. Hebrew temples: (1) Moses’s tabernacle (Sinai); (2) Solomon’s temple (ark of the covenant in the temple, built 1005 BC by King David and destroyed 600 BC by Nebuchadnezzar); (3) Zerubabel’s temple (built around 500 BC, ark no longer present); (4) Herod’s temple (rebuilt Zerubabel’s temple around 1 BC and destroyed by Titus AD 60).
111. Exodus 29:9.
112. Matthew B. Brown, *All Things Restored* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2006), 78.

113. Ezra 7:5.
114. Exodus 24:1, 9; Numbers 11:16; Ezekiel 8:11.
115. Deuteronomy 31:9; Joshua 8:33.
116. Testament of Job 46–51; Exodus 28:1–4; 29:29, 45; 31:10; 35:19–21; 39:27–29; 40:12–15; Leviticus 16:4; 1 Chronicles 15:27; Daniel 7:9.
117. See 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 14:14, 19:26; Isaiah 25:8, 26:19; Ezekiel 37:12; Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14.
118. See Numbers 16:22, Job 38:7, Ecclesiastic 12:7, Jeremiah 1:5, Zechariah 12:1; Wisdom of Solomon 8:19–20.
119. Brown, *All Things Restored*, 123.
120. See Amos 3:7; Numbers 11:29; Exodus 3:1–4; 7:1; Deuteronomy 18:15–21; Joshua 1:1–9; Judges 6:8–24; 1 Samuel 3:20–21; 2 Chronicles 35:18; 2 Samuel 7:2; 1 Kings 12, 14:2, 16:7, 18:22; 2 Kings 2:14, 6:12, 14:25, 19:2, 20:1, 11:14; 2 Chronicles 12:5, 15, 13:22, 15:8; Ezra 5:1–6; 1 Haggai 1:1–3, 12; 2 Chronicles 36:12; Jeremiah 28:1; Zechariah 1:1–7; Daniel 1:17; Joel 1:1; Obadiah 1; Micah 1:1; Habakkuk 1–3; Malachi 1–4.
121. Numbers 11:29, 12:6; Proverbs 29:18; Amos 3:7.
122. Exodus 28:30–31; Leviticus 8:7–8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:5–8; Nehemiah 7:65; Ezra 2:62–63.
123. Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms* (British Museum 1914, New York: AMS, 1977), 482; William G. Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati*, Yale Judaica Series, 18 vols (Yale University Press, 1968), 2:677–679.
124. Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 42–43, 74–75.
125. Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 482; Braude, *Yale Judaica Series*, 2:677–679.
126. See 1 Kings 12.
127. See Job 1:6, 38:7, Psalm 82:6, Isaiah 45:11, Hosea 1:10, Numbers 16:22, Deuteronomy 14:1, Malachi 2:10.
128. See Genesis 1:26, 3:22; Leviticus 19:2; Psalm 8:6, 82:6.
129. “In an early Jewish document the concept of deification can be found.” Brown, *All Things Restored*, 124. God the Father is a “God of gods, and Lord of lords.” Deuteronomy 10:17; Joshua 22:22; Psalm 136:2–3.
130. Theodore Robinson, “Hebrew Myths,” *Myth and Ritual* (Oxford University Press 1933), 185. See also Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1992), 52, 57.
131. Genesis 2:18, 21–24; Ezekiel 16:8, 10–13; Isaiah 61:10.
132. Matthew Brown, *The Gate of Heaven: Insights on the Doctrines and Symbols of the Temple* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 1999), 135–38, 160, n. 153.
133. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Bible Dictionary* (Salt Lake City, 1989), 771.
134. Ezekiel 37:15–20.
135. Brown, *All Things Restored*, at 187–88.
136. 2 Kings 17:6.
137. Petersen, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?*, 37.
138. S. Kent Brown & Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, *The Lost 500 Years*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2006), 35–74.
139. Deuteronomy 9:7, 25; 29:25; 30:15–19; Judges 3:7; 1 Kings 11:2; 14:22; 2 Kings 17:7; 21:2; Psalm 106:36; Isaiah 2:8; 39; 24:5; 29:13–14; 59:2; Jeremiah 2:17; 7:11; 35:11; Ezekiel 2:3; 11:12; 22:26; Hosea 4:6; 17; Amos 8:11; Micah 3:11; Matthew 13:15; 15:9
140. Ussher, *Annals of the World*, 779.
141. John 8:58.

142. John 8:59.
143. Apostolic Fathers: Clement (AD 30–100), bishop of Rome from AD 90–100. Ignatius (AD 30–108), bishop of Antioch from AD 80–108, Polycarp (AD 69–155), bishop of Smyrna from AD 100–155. Apologists (defended the faith against outsiders): Justin Martyr (AD 100–165), Tatian (AD 110–180), Tertullian of Carthage (AD 150–225), Cyprian bishop of Carthage (AD 249–58), Eusebius bishop of Caesarea (AD 325). Polemicists (defended the faith against heresies): Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 140–202), Hippolytus (AD 165–235), Clement of Alexandria (AD 155–220), Origen of Alexandria and Caesarea (AD 185–254).
144. Barry Bickmore, *Mormonism in the Early Jewish Christian Milieu* (FAIR Conference 1999). Jewish Christian teaching was the “first form of Christian theology.”
145. Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible* (Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1985), cited in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Christianity.
146. When referring to the Apostolic Fathers, I am referring to various authoritative figures in the early Church. These include the three bishops immediately following the Apostles: Clement, bishop of Rome; Ignatius, bishop of Antioch; and Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. Additionally, there are Justin Martyr, the First Apologist; Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons; Clement of Alexandria; Tertullian of Carthage; Origen of Alexandria and Caesarea; Cyprian, bishop of Carthage; Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea. Richard Lloyd Anderson, “Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp: Three bishops between the Apostles and the Apostasy,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1976.

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