



WIN Program: Witnessing in Neighborhoods

Advanced Class on Mormonism

Week Seven: LDS Quotations about the Birth of Jesus and An Outsider Takes a Look at the LDS' View of the Birth of Jesus

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The LDS View of the Birth of Jesus

Journal of Discourses, Vol.1, p.50, Brigham Young, April 9, 1852

The question has been, and is often, asked, who it was that begat the Son of the Virgin Mary. When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. *He was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.*

Journal of Discourses, Vol.8, p.115, Brigham Young, July 8, 1860

While brother Joseph was referring to the providences of God, I was led to reflect that there is no act, no principle, no power belonging to the Deity that is not purely philosophical. **The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood--was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers.**

Journal of Discourses, Vol.11, p.268, Brigham Young, August 19, 1866

This matter was a little changed in the case of the Savior of the world, the Son of the living God. *The man Joseph, the husband of Mary, did not, that we know of, have more than one wife, but Mary the wife of Joseph had another husband.* _On the manger, was begotten, not by Joseph, the husband of Mary, but by another Being. Do you inquire by whom? **He was begotten by God our heavenly Father.**

Brigham Young, Desert News, 10/10/1866

“The man Joseph, the husband of Mary, did not, that we know of, have more than one wife, but Mary, the wife of Joseph, had another husband-God the Father.”

Orson Pratt, The Seer, p.158

“The fleshly body of Jesus required a Mother as well a Father. Therefore, the Father and Mother of Jesus, according to the flesh, must have been associated together in the capacity of Husband and Wife: hence the *Virgin Mary must have been, for the time being, the lawful wife of God the Father*: we use the term lawful Wife, it would be blasphemous in the highest degree to say that He overshadowed her or beget the Savior unlawfully.”

“He had a lawful right to overshadow the *Virgin Mary in the capacity of a husband*, and beget a Son, although she was espoused to another: for the law which He gave to govern man and women was not intended to govern Himself, or to prescribe rules his own conduct.”

Journal of Discourses, Vol.8, p.211, Heber C. Kimball, September 2, 1860

In relation to the way in which I look upon the works of God and his creatures, I will say that I was naturally begotten; so was my father, and also my Saviour Jesus Christ. *According to the Scriptures, he is the first begotten of his father in the flesh, and there was nothing unnatural about it.*

Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.546 ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

See BELOVED SON, CHRIST, SON, SON OF GOD. Christ is the Only Begotten (Moses 1:6, 17, 21, 33; 2:1, 26-27; 3:18; 4:1), the Only Begotten Son (Jac. 4:5, 11; Alma 12:33-34; 13:5; D. & C. 20:21; 29:42; 49:5; 76:13, 25; John 1:18; 3:16), the Only Begotten of the Father. (Moses 5:9.) These name-titles all signify that our Lord is the only Son of the Father in the flesh. Each of the words is to be understood literally. Only means only; Begotten means begotten; and Son

means son. *Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers.*

Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.742 SON OF GOD

God the Father is a perfected, glorified, holy Man, an immortal Personage. And Christ was born into the world as the literal Son of this Holy Being; he was born in the same personal, real, and literal sense that any mortal son is born to a mortal father. There is nothing figurative about his paternity; he was begotten, *conceived and born in the normal and natural course of events, for he is the Son of God, and that designation means what it says.* (1 Ne. 11.)

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.2, JESUS CHRIST

Ancient and modern scriptures use the title Only Begotten to emphasize the divine nature of Jesus Christ. *Latter-day Saints recognize Jesus as literally the Only Begotten Son of God the Father in the flesh* (John 3:16; D&C 93:11; Moses 6:52). *This title signifies that Jesus' physical body was the offspring of a mortal mother and of the eternal Father* (Luke 1:35, 1 Ne. 11:18). *It is LDS doctrine that Jesus Christ is the child of Mary and God the Father, "not in violation of natural law but in accordance with a higher manifestation thereof"* (JC, p. 81).

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.2, JESUS CHRIST

For Latter-day Saints, the paternity of Jesus is not obscure. *He was the literal, biological son of an immortal, tangible Father and Mary, a mortal woman (see Virgin Birth).* Jesus is the only person born who deserves the title "the Only Begotten Son of God" (John 3:16; Benson, p. 3; see Jesus Christ: Only Begotten in the Flesh). *He was not the son of the Holy Ghost; it was only through the Holy Ghost that the power of the Highest overshadowed Mary (Luke 1:35; 1 Ne. 11:19).*

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.4, VIRGIN BIRTH

Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, was a virgin at the time of Jesus' birth. Of Old Testament prophets, Isaiah alone foretold this circumstance (Isaiah 7:14), but Book of Mormon prophets also foresaw the virgin birth. Nephi described Mary as "a virgin, most beautiful and fair" and "mother of the son of God, after the manner of the flesh" (1 Ne. 11:15, 18). *Alma declared that Christ "shall be born of Mary...a virgin...who shall...conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God" (Alma 7:10).*

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.4, VIRGIN BIRTH

In fulfillment of these prophecies, Gabriel "was sent from God...to a virgin...and the virgin's name was Mary," and Gabriel announced to her that she would "bring forth a son, and...call his name Jesus." To her question, "How shall this be?" *Gabriel answered, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee...therefore [the child]...born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:26-35).* Thereafter, Joseph married Mary but "knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son" (Matt. 1:25). *Thus, Jesus was born of a mortal mother who was a virgin.*

Bruce R. McConkie, The Promised Messiah, p.467 - p.468

We have spoken plainly of our Lord's conception in the womb of Mary; in reality the plain assertions are found in the revealed word, and we have but certified that the words mean what they say and cannot be spiritualized away. And as it is with reference to our Lord's mother, so it is as pertaining to his Father. **The scriptures say that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son.**

The problem is that the intellectually led ministry and laity of the day assume, as *Satan leads them to do, that a name-title of this sort is simply figurative and does not have the same literal meaning as when the words are spoken in ordinary conversation.* Perhaps again the best service we can render, on the issue here involved, is somehow to get the message across that words mean what they say, and that if Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father, it means just that.

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p.468

Some words scarcely need definition. They are on every tongue and are spoken by every voice. The very existence of intelligent beings presupposes and requires their constant use. Two such words are father and son. Their meaning is known to all, and to define them is but to repeat them. Thus: A son is a son is a son, and a father is a father is a father. I am the son of my father and the father of my sons. They are my sons because they were begotten by me, were conceived by their mother, and came forth from her womb to breathe the breath of mortal life, to dwell for a time and a season among other mortal men.

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p.468 - p.469

And so it is with the Eternal Father and the mortal birth of the Eternal Son. The Father is a Father is a Father; he is not a spirit essence or nothingness to which the name Father is figuratively applied. **And the Son is a Son is a Son; he is not some transient emanation from a divine essence, but a literal, living offspring of an actual Father. God is the Father; Christ is the Son. The one begat the other.** Mary provided the womb from which the Spirit Jehovah came forth, tabernacled in clay, as all men are, to dwell among his fellow spirits whose births were brought to pass in like manner. There is no need to spiritualize away the plain meaning of the scriptures. **There is nothing figurative or hidden or beyond comprehension in our Lord's coming into mortality. He is the Son of God in the same sense and way that we are the sons of mortal fathers. It is just that simple.** Christ was born of Mary. **He is the Son of God—the Only Begotten of the Father.**

Alexander B. Morrison ["I Am the Resurrection and the Life,"](#) *Ensign*, Apr 1995, 36

"He, the literal Son of God, offspring of a virgin mother and the mighty Father-God Elohim, preached his wondrous gospel of love, was betrayed by one of his closest associates, was subjected to the cruel mockery of a farcical trial, and died on a cross between two thieves on Golgotha's hill.

President Ezra Taft Benson ["First Presidency Message Joy in Christ,"](#) *Ensign*, Mar 1986, 3-4

He was the Only Begotten Son of our Heavenly Father in the flesh—the only child whose mortal body was begotten by our Heavenly Father. **His mortal mother, Mary, was called a virgin, both before and after she gave birth.** (See 1 Nephi 11:20.)

Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., *Doctrines of Salvation, Vol.1, p.18*

“CHRIST NOT BEGOTTEN OF HOLY GHOST. I believe firmly that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. He taught this doctrine to his disciples. *He did not teach them that he was the Son of the Holy Ghost, but the Son of the Father.* Truly, all things are done by the power of the Holy Ghost. It was through this power that Jesus was brought into this world, but not as the Son of the Holy Ghost, but the Son of God. Jesus is greater than the Holy Spirit, which is subject unto him, but his Father is greater than he! He has said it. Christ was begotten of God. *He was not born without the aid of Man, and that Man was God!*”

Ezra Taft Benson. [Five Marks of the Divinity of Jesus Christ](#), *New Era*, Dec 1980, 44

Given as an LDSSA fireside address in the University of Utah Special Events Center on Sunday, December 9, 1979

Some six hundred years before Jesus was born, Nephi had a vision. He saw Mary and described her as “a virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.” He then saw her “carried away in the Spirit; ... for the space of a time.” When she returned she was bearing a child in her arms, “even the son of the Eternal Father!” (1 Ne. 11:15, 19–21.)

Thus the testimonies of appointed witnesses leave no question as to the paternity of Jesus Christ. *God was the Father of His fleshly tabernacle and Mary, a mortal woman, was His mother.* He is therefore the only person born who rightfully deserves the title the Only Begotten Son of God.

I am bold to say to you young people tonight: Jesus Christ is the Son of God in the most literal sense. The body in which He performed His mission in the flesh *was sired by that same Holy Being we worship as God, our Eternal Father.* He was not the son of Joseph, nor was He begotten by the Holy Ghost. He is the Son of the Eternal Father!

Ezra Taft Benson, [Five Marks of the Divinity of Jesus Christ](#), *Ensign*, Dec 2001, 8

From a fireside address given at the University of Utah Special Events Center on 9 December 1979.

Some 600 years before Jesus was born, Nephi had a vision. He saw Mary and described her as “a virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.” He then saw her “carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time.” When she returned, she was “bearing a child in her arms, ... even the Son of the Eternal Father” (1 Ne. 11:15, 19–21).

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Francis M. Gibbons, [The Savior and Joseph Smith— Alike Yet Unlike](#), *Ensign*, May 1991, 32

While the Savior’s spiritual status is beyond compare, his role as the Only Begotten of the Father does create a common physical ground upon which he meets with the Prophet Joseph Smith and other men. *The Savior was born of a mortal mother but was sired by the Eternal Father.* Therefore, he shared an element of mortality with the Prophet Joseph Smith because of his

mother, Mary. Yet he also had within him the power to lay down his life, or to take it up again, because of his Eternal Father.

Jeff Coons compiled the LDS quotations.

<http://www.christianwitnesses.net/117112.html>

An Outsider Takes a Look at the LDS' View of the Birth of Jesus

Outsider: In the following LDS sources, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost. Take notice, there is no indication of a physical relationship between God the Father and the Virgin Mary. Even the Book of Mormon in Alma 7:10 says that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost.

“A short time later, this same angel, Gabriel, appeared to Mary and announced that she would be the mother of the Son of God. She exclaimed, ‘How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?’ ([Luke 1:34](#)). Gabriel then stated that ‘**the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God**’ ([Luke 1:35](#)).

Merrill J. Bateman, “A Season for Angels,” *Ensign*, Dec 2007, 10–15

Although the name of the angel who appeared to Joseph is not given, it may well have been Gabriel who had the assignment. When Joseph learned that Mary, his espoused wife, was with child, he contemplated a private disengagement. But then an angel appeared in a dream, telling him not to fear to take Mary as his wife, ‘**for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost**’ ([Matthew 1:20](#)). The angel also told Joseph that the child was to be named Jesus (see [Matthew 1:21](#)).”

Ezra Taft Benson, “Five Marks of the Divinity of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Dec 2001, 8

“The paternity of Jesus Christ is one of the mysteries of godliness. It may only be comprehended by the spiritually minded. The Apostle Matthew recorded, ‘Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: **When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost**’ ([Matt. 1:18](#)). Luke renders a more *plain meaning to the divine conception*. He quotes the angel Gabriel saying to Mary: ‘**The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing [being] which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God**’ ([Luke 1:35](#); emphasis added). Alma’s testimony, given fourscore years before the Savior’s birth, beautifully reconciles the testimonies of Matthew and Luke: ‘**He shall be born of Mary, ... she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God**’ ([Alma 7:10](#); emphasis added).”

Outsider: What does it mean that “Father of His fleshly tabernacle”? According to following quotations, the birth of Jesus was “the result of natural action” “and there was nothing unnatural about it.” Brigham Young says Jesus was not begotten by the Holy Ghost.

Ezra Taft Benson, “Five Marks of the Divinity of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Dec 2001, 8

“Thus the testimonies of appointed witnesses leave no question as to the paternity of Jesus Christ. *God was the Father of His fleshly tabernacle, and Mary, a mortal woman, was His mother*. He is therefore the only person born who rightfully deserves the title ‘the *Only Begotten Son of God*.”

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Outsider: How do mortal men beget children? Is it not by sex? Since Jesus was begotten “in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers” and “there was nothing unnatural about it”, His birth had to have been by sex. How could Jesus be “the literal, biological son of an immortal, tangible Father and Mary, a mortal woman” and there not be sex involved? Since the birth of Jesus was by sex, is it any wonder that Jesus was born “in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers.”

Jeff Coons compiled the LDS quotations.

<http://www.christianwitnesses.net/117154.html>