

# The Nature of God

Kyle Eggleston

Sunday, March 29, 2026

Joseph Smith said:

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make himself visible—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another.<sup>1</sup>

God has passions like we do. He has body parts like we do. Joseph didn't always think this way of course, there was a time when he thought God was a spirit. His teachings changed over the course of time though. In the Lectures on Faith, Joseph described God as thus:

There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things . . . They are the Father and the Son: The Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power: possessing all perfection and fulness: The Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, made, or fashioned like unto man, or being in the form and likeness of man, or, rather, man was formed after his likeness, and in his image;<sup>2</sup>

He states that God is a personage of spirit. This is not the case. It is later contradicted by Smith who says that God and Jesus have a body of flesh and bone but the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit that can dwell in the hearts of men.<sup>3</sup>

The Lectures on Faith were considered to be doctrine, but the difference in teachings of the nature of God was so great that the church leaders didn't want

---

<sup>1</sup>King Follett Discourse, Joseph Smith, April 7, 1844'

<sup>2</sup>Lecture The Fifth The Godhead, Lectures on Faith, Joseph Smith

<sup>3</sup>Doctrine and Covenants 130:22

there to be any confusion among the saints. So the lectures were not deemed as doctrine.

Elder James E. Talmage, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who led the committee that revised the 1921 Doctrine and Covenants, felt that it would be best to “avoid confusion and contention on this vital point of belief.”<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Smith first stated that God was a spirit, then changed his teachings to reflect that God was a man of flesh and bone. One would think that he would have gotten it right, if he saw God and Jesus in person in 1820. That his experience wouldn't change over time. So there *is* some confusion on the subject at hand.

There are some discrepancies in the Book of Mormon when it comes to the topic of if God and Jesus are the same person. The accepted answer is they are one in purpose not body. They are not the same individual. But the wording feels a little off at times, like Joseph was trying to get the right pattern down when he was ... for lack of a better term ... writing the book.

1 Nephi 11:18 is a good example of this. From the 1830 Book of Mormon:

Behold, the virgin which thou seest, is the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh.

And then from the 1837 Book of Mormon:

Behold, the virgin whom thou seest, is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

See how the words “the son of” were added in the 1837 version? Apologists say that Joseph was cleaning up grammar and making similar changes. But that can be talked about in another topic, loose vs tight translation which I will be sure to discuss later on. Because that deserves an article all by itself.

There are other places where such changes occurred as well. You can do a search for them on the internet, they're easy to find. I personally feel Joseph was trying to figure out the right way to convey The Father and The Son. It first started out with them being the same individual, and then progressed from there to two separate individuals that we know of today.

Circling back around to the Fifth Lecture, in Lectures on Faith, it is interesting to note that Joseph didn't include the Holy Ghost in the Godhead and stated that there were only two personages in the Godhead. The Father and The Son. This of course was later changed by Doctrine and Covenants 130's revelation.

---

<sup>4</sup>Larry E. Dahl, “Authorship and History of the Lectures on Faith,” in *The Lectures on Faith: In Historical Perspective*, Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990), 18.