

Why was Joe's 5th Lecture Yanked from the D&C? Cuz It Said God Had NO Body

Posted by: **steve benson** ()

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Joseph Smith said so himself. He wrote it and then made sure it was published in the officially canonized scripture of the Mormon Church's 1835 edition of the "Doctrine and Covenants"

You say you don't remember reading such stuff in the "Doctrine and Covenants"? That's because the Mormon Church removed Smith's "Fifth Lecture on Faith" from the "Doctrine and Covenants" in 1921 and never put it back in.

The reason?

Because the "Fifth Lecture on Faith"--which Smith himself demonstrably wrote--stunningly blew the butt off of Smith's own "First Vision" story of supposedly seeing God the Father in flesh-and-bone form.

How could this Marvelous Jerk and a Mixup have happened in God's true church?

Easy.

First, it's not God's true church. It's Fraud's true church.

Second, the "Lectures on Faith" managed to make it into Mormon Church print before Smith's lie-in-progress "First Vision" story did. When the Mormon Church finally realized just how much of a problem Smith's "Fifth Lecture" looloo was for Smith's "First Vision" voodoo, the Church deep-sixed the "Fifth Lecture."

FOR EMPHASIS (and this bears repeating every time you have the opportunity to bring a true-believing Mormon to their Mormon Jesus-fried brain), here's the problem in an A-B-C bombshell:

A. The "Fifth Lecture on Faith" was prepared and approved by Joseph Smith himself as official Mormon Church doctrine--then was later abandoned by the Church because, oops, it savagely undercut Smith's own claim that God the Father had a physical body.

B. The "Fifth Lecture on Faith"--published by the Mormon Church under Smith's

direction in the 1835 edition of its canonized scripture, the "Doctrine and Covenants"--made a sharp distinction between the Elohim and Jesus when it came to the contrasting nature of this Dynamic Father-and-Son Duo in the Treetops--One had a body and the other didn't. No wonder Joe was such a confused 14-year-old kid.

C. RfM's archive describes the existential threat that this "Fifth Lecture" screwup poses to the core of Mormon Church doctrine:

"This 1835 [fifth] lecture makes a sharp distinction between the Elohim and Jesus concerning physical natures. The Father is described as a 'personage of Spirit,' in contrast with the Son who is said to be a 'personage of tabernacle, made or fashioned like unto man. The obvious clash between this view of the Godhead and later statements by Joseph Smith (1838 version of the 'First Vision') himself has been offered as a possible explanation for the 'Lectures on Faith' eventual removal from post 1921 editions of the 'Doctrine and Covenants.'"

Is there actual evidence that Joseph Smith did not believe or teach that he had seen God the Father and Jesus Christ with separate physical bodies in what Smith calls his "First Vision" experience?

Hell, yes. (Read Smith's "Lecture Five").

Does this evidence destroy the foundational claims of the Mormon Church with regard to the very nature of God?

Again, hell, yes. (That's why you won't find the "Fifth Lecture" in the "Doctrine and Coveants" anymore)

Read Joe's lips: The "Fifth Lecture on Faith," totally and yea verily, destroys the very underpinnings of official Mormon Church claims regarding the supposed physically tangible body of God the Father--thus destroying basic elements of Smith's "First Vision" tale.

See how The Fraud all fits together?

Below are the Mormon devils in the details:

The Mormon Church's Officially-Sanctioned Joseph Smith "First Vision" Story

Joseph Smith declared that he personally met (face-to-face, no less) with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ in a grove of trees in 1820 (give or take a few rewrites). Based on that alleged encounter, he further declared that God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ BOTH had separate and distinct bodies of flesh and bones.

Make no mistake about that fiber of Mormon faith. It is so declared on the official website of the LDS Church--wherein reference is made to Lesson 3 of the "Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual," under the heading "I Had Seen a Vision" (p.11). There it explicitly states that "[m]any truths were revealed in the First Vision," including that "[t]he Father AND the Son are real, separate beings WITH GLORIFIED BODIES OF FLESH AND BONES." (emphasis added)

(Sourcing Instructions: Go to "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," <https://www.lds.org/search>. Enter "I Had Seen a Vision" in the search bar, scroll down to, click on "Lesson 2: Joseph Smith's First Vision (1820)," then click on "Transcript." Also, go to the Mormon Church official website. <https://www.lds.org/search?lang=eng&query=I+had+seen+a+vision>, scroll down to, click on "Lesson 3" for its online text of under the heading, "Lesson 3: 'I Had Seen a Vision,' as found in the "Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Class Member Study Guide, 1994, p. 4," where the lesson guide asks, "What are some of the truths we can learn from the First Vision?"; See also, "'I Had Seen a Vision,' Lesson 3--Joseph Smith: History 1:1-26; 'Our Heritage,' pgs. 1-4, <http://www.neumanninstitute.org/dc3.html>)

Moreover (again on the Mormon Church's own official website under the general heading "The Scriptures"), LDS canonized doctrinal teaching regarding the physical bodies of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ are described in the duly-noted "Official Scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"--namely, the "Doctrine and Covenants"--Section 130, verse 22:

"The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us."

("The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

Section 130," <http://scriptures.lds.org/en/dc/130>)

Evidence of Publication of the "Fifth Lecture on Faith" in the 1835 Edition of the "Doctrine and Covenants"

A photographic copy of p. 53 of the 1835 edition of the then-official version of the Mormon Church's "Doctrine and Covenants" states in no uncertain terms that God the Father does NOT have a body of flesh and bones but, rather, is a personage of spirit. Without any ambiguity whatsoever, this officially Joseph Smith-sanctioned version of the LDS "Doctrine and Covenants" declares the following about the entities of "the Father and the Son," comparing and contrasting their individual--and in this case, different--forms:

"The Father being a PERSONAGE OF SPIRIT, glory and power, possessing all perfection and fullness; 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 or likeness of man, and in his image; . . ." (emphasis added).

(Jerald and Sandra Tanner, "The Godhead," Chapter 7, in "The Changing World of Mormonism," at: <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech7.htm> ; for a complete version of the 'Fifth Lecture,' see "Lecture Fifth of Faith, Section V," <http://www.centerplace.org/hs/dc/lec-005.htm>)

The Final-Fate Removal of the "Fifth Lecture on Faith" (Along with Its Companion Lectures) from the "Doctrine and Covenants"

What subsequently happened to this "Fifth Lecture on Faith" (and its buddies in that official doctrinal series) is described in Jerald and Sandra Tanner's book, "The Changing World of Mormonism":

". . . [I]n 1921, they [the 'Lectures on Faith'] were completely removed and have not appeared in subsequent editions."

Why did this happen? The Tanners explain, citing Joseph Fielding Smith who was

making up non-inspired fibs as he went along:

"John William Fitzgerald, who wrote his [Masters] thesis at BYU, asked Joseph Fielding Smith why they were removed from the 'Doctrine and Covenants.' One of the reasons given was that they were not complete as to their teachings regarding the Godhead.

"Actually, these lectures were considered complete with regard to their teachings concerning the Godhead at the time they were given. On p. 58 of the 1835 edition of the 'Doctrine and Covenants' the following question and answer appear: 'Q. Does the foregoing account of the Godhead lay a sure foundation for the exercise of faith in him unto life and salvation? A. IT DOES.'" (emphasis added)

So, what, then, is the logical explanation for the officially doctrinal "Lectures on Faith" being subsequently and in wholesale fashion excised from the present, officially canonized scriptures of the Mormon Church?

The reason is as plain as the non-fleshly nose on the original-but-now-surgerized Mormon Father God's face:

"The truth of the matter is that they [the 'Lectures on Faith'] contradict what is presently taught by [Mormon] Church leaders with regard to this subject. To avoid 'confusion and contention' over the Godhead the Mormon leaders slyly removed the 'Lectures on Faith' from the 'Doctrine and Covenants.' This was done in spite of the fact that Joseph Smith himself had considered them important enough to include. Since these lectures were about 70 pages long, this amounted to a major deletion.

"On p. 345 of his thesis, 'A Study of the Doctrine & Covenants,' Mr. Fitzgerald supplies this information:

"The 'Lectures on Faith' were voted on unanimously by the Conference assembled August 17, 1835, to be included in the forthcoming book of doctrine and covenants. The writer could find no documentary evidence that they were voted on by a General Conference of the Church to be omitted in the 1921 and all subsequent editions of the 'Doctrine [and] Covenants.'"

(Tanner and Tanner, "The Godhead," Chapter 7, in "The Changing World of Mormonism," <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changech7.htm>)

Handwriting Analysis Ties Joseph Smith to the Creation of the "Fifth Lecture on Faith"

A 1990 article published by BYU's Religious Studies Center reported that Joseph Smith's fingerprints, so to speak, were all over the "Fifth Lecture":

". . . One of the authorship studies of the 'Lectures on Faith' was done by Alan J. Phipps as a master's thesis in 1977. He compared the frequency of use of certain 'function words' in the 'Lectures' with the use of the same words in the writings of several persons who may have had a hand in writing the Lectures, i.e., Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, William W. Phelps and Parley P. Pratt. He concludes:

"The study showed that . . . Joseph Smith's use of function words matched closely those in 'Lecture Five,' with some evidence of his having co-authored or edited Two, Three, Four, and Six. . . . The data and tests appear, therefore, to assign the authorship of the 'Lectures on Faith' mainly to Sidney Rigdon, with 'Lecture Five' and perhaps some parts of the other lectures, except One and Seven, to Joseph Smith (66-67)."

("Authorship and History of the Lectures on Faith," by Larry E. Dahl, BYU Religious Studies Center, in "The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective," Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate, Jr. [Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990], pp. 1-21, <http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/lectures-faith-historical-perspective/authorship-and-history-lectures-faith>; the study is also cited in "Looking at the Endowment and the Atonement Through a Different Lens," by Gaye Strathearne, in "Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture," vol. 13, (Orem, Utah: The Interpreter Foundation, 2015), p. 22, <https://books.google.com/books?id=jTqyBgAAQBAJ&pg=PA22&dq=%22Authorship+and+History+of+the+Lectures+on+Faith+4Oyu7TQAhWs6oMKHYwpD8wQuwUllzAB#v=onepage&q=%22Authorship%20and%20Historical>

Joseph Smith Helped Prepare the "Fifth Lecture on Faith" for Official Publication in the "Doctrine and Covenants"

The Tanners amplify on the makeover of Mormonism's Father God in their book, "Mormonism: Shadow or Reality":

"In 1835 the 'Lectures on Faith,' which were originally delivered before a class of the Elders, in Kirtland, Ohio, were printed in the 'Doctrine and Covenants.' In these lectures

it was definitely stated that God the Father was a personage of spirit.

"In the 'Fifth Lecture' we find this statement about the Godhead:

". . . [T]he Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power, possessing all perfection and fulness, the Son . . . a personage of tabernacle . . .' ('Doctrine and Covenants,' 1835 Edition, p. 53) . . .

"President Joseph Fielding Smith admits that Joseph Smith helped prepare these lectures:

"Now the Prophet did know something about these "Lectures on Faith," because he helped to prepare them, and he helped also to revise these lectures before they were published . . .' ('Doctrines of Salvation,' Vol. 3, p. 195).

"These 'Lectures on Faith' were printed in all of the early editions of the 'Doctrine and Covenants,' but they have been removed from recent editions."

Flim-Flam-in-a-Jam "Reasons" Given by Mormon Apologists for the Deletion of the "Fifth Lecture on Faith" (Along with All the Others) from the "Doctrine and Covenants"

"John William Fitzgerald, in his thesis, 'A Study of the Doctrine and Covenants,' states as follows:

"The reasons for the omission of these 'Lectures' from the 'Doctrine and Covenants' beginning in the 1921 edition and all the subsequent editions as given to the writer by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith were as follows:

"(a) They were not received as revelations by the prophet Joseph Smith.

"(b) They are instructions relative to the general subject of faith. They are explanations of this principle but not doctrine.

"(c) They are not complete as to their teachings regarding the Godhead. More complete instructions on the point of doctrine are given in section 130 of the 1876 and all subsequent editions of the 'Doctrine and Covenants.'

“(d) It was thought by Elder James E. Talmage, chairman, and other members of the committee who were responsible for their omission that to avoid confusion and contention on this vital point of belief, it would be better not to have them bound in the same volume as the commandments or revelations which make up the 'Doctrine and Covenants' ('A Study of the Doctrine and Covenants,' M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, p. 344).

"The reasons Joseph Fielding Smith gave John William Fitzgerald as to why the 'Lectures on Faith' were removed from the 'Doctrine and Covenants' are very interesting.

"Reason (a), that they 'were not received as revelations,' could hardly be considered at all. If every section that is not a revelation was removed from the 'Doctrine and Covenants,' it would be a much shorter book. There are at least nine, if not more, sections from the 'Doctrine and Covenants' that are not revelations; they are Sections 102, 113, 121, 123, 128, 131, 134 and 135.

"Reason (b), that they were not doctrine does not agree with the statement on page 256 of the 1835 edition of the 'Doctrine and Covenants.' This statement reads as follows: '. . . [T]he lectures were judiciously arranged and compiled, and were profitable for doctrine'

"Joseph Smith himself signed a statement which was printed in the preface to the 1835 edition of the 'Doctrine and Covenants.' In this statement we read: 'The first part of the book will be found to contain a series of 'Lectures' as delivered before a theological class in this place, and in consequence of their embracing the important DOCTRINE OF SALVATION, we have arranged them into the following work.' (emphasis added)

"Reason (c), 'that they are not complete as to their teachings regarding the Godhead' is getting much closer to the truth than the first two reasons. A more correct way of wording this, however, might be, 'they contradict what is now taught concerning the Godhead in the Mormon Church.' . . .

"Reason (d), that to avoid 'confusion and contention on this vital point of belief, it would be better not to have them bound in the same volume,' is probably the true reason they were left out. Certainly it would cause confusion and contention in the Mormon Church if one of the elders started to teach that God is a personage of spirit . . . , as the 'Lectures on Faith' taught."

(Tanner and Tanner, "Lectures on Faith," in "Mormonism--Shadow or Reality?," pp.

166–67, <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/lecturesonfaith.htm>)

Scholars Blast the Mormon Church for Its Dishonest Revision of Official LDS God Doctrine

Such blatant and deceptive remakes by the LDS Church of its official doctrine on the very essence of the Mormon God Elohim have not gone unnoticed by non-LDS scholars. (Sometimes it takes a :} "non" to know a non-truth teller when he sees one).

James E. Walker, in his article "Re-imagining Elohim: Rethinking the Mormon Doctrine of God for the 21st Century," observes:

"Today the Mormon Church maintains the Father has a body of flesh and bones. Consequently, these 'Lectures on Faith' have been removed from recent editions of the 'Doctrine and Covenants.'"

Walker explains their removal as part of the Mormon Church's phased-in re-making of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ in ways that "could be described as experimental, temporary or transitional."

Writes Walker:

"In 1834–35, less than five years after the publication of the 'Book of Mormon,' the 'Lectures on Faith' were delivered to the School of the Elders in Kirtland, Ohio. The lectures, probably written by Joseph Smith, were printed as the first part of the 'Doctrine and Covenants' in every edition of that LDS scripture from the first edition in 1835 to 1921, when they were removed.

"The Fifth Lecture teaches that Christ is a distinct and separate Person from the Father. . . . Also, the lecture makes a sharp distinction between the Elohim and Jesus concerning physical natures. The Father is described as a 'personage of Spirit,' in contrast with the Son who is said to be a 'personage of tabernacle, made or fashioned like unto man.'

"The obvious clash between this view of the Godhead and later statements by Joseph Smith himself has been offered as a possible explanation for the 'Lectures on Faith' eventual removal from post 1921 editions of the 'Doctrine and Covenants.'

['Encyclopedia of Mormonism' author and LDS apologist] Larry E. Dahl writes:

"Many have pointed to the content of 'Lecture 5' concerning the Godhead, suggesting that it contains incomplete, if not erroneous doctrine--doctrine which was corrected or clarified in 1843 by Joseph Smith (D&C 130:22-23). The argument is that the 'Lectures' were removed to avoid these inconsistencies. Some have claimed that the removal of the 'Lectures' from the 'Doctrine and Covenants' constitutes de-canonization of material once affirmed by the Church as scripture.'

". . . [T]he fact that they [the 'Lectures on Faith'] were printed with the 'Doctrine and Covenants' for over 80 years coupled with their subsequent removal and relative obscurity raises interesting questions. Did the 1921 change in the 'Doctrine and Covenants' reflect an earlier re-imagining of Elohim? A strong case can be made for this hypothesis."

(James K. Walker, President, Watchman Fellowship Lecture, "Re-imagining Elohim: Re-thinking the Mormon Doctrine of God for the 21st Century," delivered at CESNUR 2004 International Conference, "Religious Movements, Conflict and Democracy: International Perspectives," Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 17-20 June 2004, at:

http://www.cesnur.org/2004/waco_walker.htm)

Mormon Church Publication of Joseph Smith's "Fifth Lecture on Faith" Preceded Its Publication of Smith's "First Vision" Story

The "Fifth Lecture on Faith" was written before a finalized, LDS Church-approved version of Joseph Smith's "First Vision" was even available to the at-large early Mormon Church membership.

As RfM contributor "Deconstructor" devastatingly points out:

"In 1835 the 'Doctrine and Covenants' was printed at Kirtland, Ohio, and its preface declared that it contained 'the leading items of religion which we have professed to believe.' Included in the book were the 'Lectures on Faith,' a series of seven lectures which had been prepared for the School of the Prophets in Kirtland in 1834-35.

"It is interesting to note that, in demonstrating the doctrine that the Godhead consists of two separate personages, no mention was made of Joseph Smith having seen them,

nor was any reference made to the first vision in any part of the publication. . . .

"The 'Lectures on Faith' were written in 1834 as part of Joseph Smith's curriculum for the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio, and they were included in the 1835 edition of the 'Doctrine & Covenants.'

"So, why is Joseph Smith saying [in the 'Fifth Lecture'] that God is a spirit, but Jesus Christ has a body? If Smith had seen the First Vision 12–15 years earlier, he would have said they both have bodies, right? The reason is because the final version of the 'First Vision' story had not been written yet. It also corroborates the fact that the membership hadn't heard the story either."

("Early Mormons Didn't Know About the 'First Vision,'" by "Deconstructor," posts on Recovery from Mormonism bulletin board, under "NO EVIDENCE That Early Church Members Knew About the First Vision," 27 January 2004, and "More Problems with Your Apologetics," 27 January 2004,
<http://www.exmormon.org/mormon/mormon317.htm>)

A Former Mormon Explains Why the "Fifth Lecture on Faith" Drops a Theological A-Bomb on Joseph Smith's "First Vision" Story

Former Mormon Bill Kempton, in his article, "Dear Bishop--I'm Leaving the Fold," explains how the "Fifth Lecture on Faith" completely undermines Joseph Smith's "First Vision" story:

". . . [A]ll 'Doctrine and Covenants' before 1921 contained the doctrine of the 'Fifth Lecture on Faith' that was bound in scripture as doctrine in 1835. The 'Fifth Lecture' basically stated that the Father is only a spirit, that only Jesus has a body, and the Holy Ghost is not a person but the same Mind (or essence) of the Father and the Son; and the Father and the Son are not two gods but one Deity, which is very similar to the Catholic Trinity How could Joseph Smith bind this doctrine in scripture if he really saw two flesh and bone persons in 1820? . . . I decided to research this matter further .

. .

"The earliest LDS members held in their hands the 'Doctrine and Covenants,' which contained the doctrine of the 'Fifth Lecture' until 1921. LDS members believed that only Jesus had a body of flesh and bone, and the Holy Ghost was not a person!

"That was the straw that broke the camel's back for me. I had found the murder weapon with fingerprints on it, a video of the crime taking place and a taped confession. It was the final nail that was hammered into the coffin of my Mormon testimony.

"I learned that the foundation of Mormonism, the 'First Vision,' was unfounded. This led me to realize that like a house on a bad foundation, the LDS Church was founded on fiction, suspicious hearsay, and supported not by facts but subjective emotionalism."

(Bill Kempton, "Dear Bishop--I'm Leaving the Fold," 6 August 2006 (updated 2009), http://www.postmormon.org/exp_e/index.php/pomopedia/Dear_Bishop_Im_Leaving_the.

As Kempton asks in earlier observations entitled, "The First Vision: Fact or Fiction?":

"Is the early Mormon's testimony of the 'Doctrine and Covenants' (that stated that the Father is only a spirit . . .) any less valid than the Mormon testimony today regarding the true nature of the Godhead? If the first Mormons believed in the 'Fifth Lecture on Faith,' that was doctrine in scripture for decades, what guarantee does the Mormon today have that what they believe to be absolutely true doctrine won't be changed tomorrow?"

The answers to those inquiries are quite simple and historically undeniable:

Reworked, reinvented Mormon Church "history" is, at its corrupted and bedrock core, totally invalid.

God, you have no body to transport you through tree tops,

And, Joe, you have no leg to stand on.

So, both of you, sit down and shut up.

** (Related thread: "Vacillating, Befuddling and Constantly Adrift Official LDS Doctrine on God," by Steve Benson, 19 November 2016, <http://exmormon.org/phorum/read.php?2,1907020,1907022#msg-1907022>)

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Vacillating, Befuddling and Constantly Adrift Official LDS Doctrine on God

Posted by: **steve benson** ()

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BYU professor of history, Thomas G. Alexander, in his ground-breaking research, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," lays down an expansive trail of the Mormon Church's historically incomplete, self-negating, wavering, flip-flopping, morphing, perplexing and indeterminate official stances on the core bedrock of its much-ballyhooed "divinely-revealed" doctrine, namely: THE VERY NATURE OF GOD.

Details, details.

Judging from the wild swings over time in official LDS Church doctrine on the supposed nature of God and humanity's supposed relationship to that God, it is evident that Mormonism's purported "prophets, seers and revelators" of God's allegedly "one and only true church" don't know what the hell they're talking about.

Indeed, they seem to have missed the memo from Jesus:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3)

God Who?

Jesus What?

Holy Huh?

Buckle your seatbelts and prepare for a Disneylandish roller-coaster ride through the ever-evolving, wildly-whiplashing, herky-jerky world of official Mormon Church

doctrine on that little thing called "God."

--Alexander's Underlying Premise: Official Mormon Church Doctrine Has Not Historically Been Presented as Fully Constructed At Its Supposed Point of Revelation, Nor Has It Been Consistent or Sustained Over Time

"One of the barriers to understanding Mormon theology is the underlying assumption by most Latter-day Saints that doctrine develops consistently, that ideas build cumulatively on each other. As a result, older revelations are usually interpreted by referring to current doctrinal positions. This type of interpretation may produce systematic theology and may satisfy those trying to understand and internalize current doctrine, but it is bad history since it leaves an unwarranted impression of continuity and consistency."

--The Doctrine of God (as Originally Offered in Official Mormon Teaching) Was That of a God Who Was a Single Personage of Spirit but Who Was Physically Manifested as Jesus with a Body

"The Book of Mormon tended to define God as an absolute personage of spirit who, clothed in flesh, revealed himself in Jesus Christ (see Abinadi's sermon to King Noah in Mos. 13-14).

"Two years later, the first issue of the Mormon Evening and Morning Star published a similar description of God in the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ," the church's first statement of faith and practice which, with some additions, became Doctrine and Covenants 20. The "Articles," according to correspondence in the Star, was used with the Book of Mormon in proselytizing and indicated that "there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth and all things which are in them."

"The Messenger and Advocate, successor to the Star, published lectures 5 and 6 of the "Lectures on Faith" of the Doctrine and Covenants (1835), defining the "Father" as "the only supreme governor, and independent being, in whom all fulness and perfection dwells; who is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient; without beginning of days or end of life." In a letter published in the Messenger and

Advocate, Warren A. Cowdery argued that “we have proven to the satisfaction of every intelligent being, that there is a great first cause, prime mover, self-existent, independent and all wise being whom we call God . . . immutable in his purposes and unchangable in his nature.”

" . . . [T]here is little evidence that early church doctrine specifically differentiated between Christ and God. Indeed, this distinction was probably considered unnecessary since the early discussion also seems to have supported trinitarian doctrine.

"Joseph Smith's 1832 account of his first vision spoke only of one personage and did not make the explicit separation of God and Christ found in the 1838 version.

"The Book of Mormon declared that Mary “is the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh,” which was changed in 1837 to “mother of the Son of God.” Abinadi's sermon in the Book of Mormon explored the relationship between God and Christ: “God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in the flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—and they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth” (Mos. 15:1–4).

--Early Official Mormon Church Doctrine Had No Three-Part Godhead

"The “Lectures on Faith” differentiated between the Father and Son more explicitly, but even they did not define a materialistic, tritheistic godhead. In announcing the publication of the Doctrine and Covenants, which included the lectures, the Messenger and Advocate commented that it trusted the volume would give “the churches abroad . . . a perfect understanding of the doctrine believed by this society.” The lectures declared that “there are two personages who constitute the great matchless, governing and supreme power over all things—by whom all things were created and made.” They are “the Father being a personage of spirit” and “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.” The “Articles and Covenants” called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost “one God” rather than “Godhead,” a term Mormons use today to

separate themselves from trinitarians."

--In Early Official Mormon Church Doctrine, the Holy Ghost Was Not a Separate Member of the Godhead but, Rather, Represented the Mind of God

"The doctrine of the Holy Ghost in these early sources is even more striking compared to our point of view today. The "Lectures on Faith" defined the Holy Ghost as the mind of the Father and the Son, a member of the Godhead but not a personage, who binds the Father and Son together (D&C, 1835 ed., 53-54). This view of the Holy Ghost likely reinforced trinitarian doctrine by explaining how personal beings like the Father and Son become one god through the noncorporeal presence of a shared mind."

--Significant Changes Were Made by Joseph Smith to Early Mormon Doctrines on the Nature of God--Which Included Giving God a Physical Body, Physically Separating God from Christ, Introducing the Doctrine of Plurality of Gods and Establishing the Doctrine of Eternal Progression from Humanhood to Godhood.

". . . Between 1842 and 1844, Joseph Smith spoke on and published radical Christian doctrines such as the plurality of gods, the tangibility of God's body, the distinct separation of God and Christ, the potential of man to become and function as a god, . . . and the materiality of everything, including spirit. These ideas were perhaps most clearly stated in the King Follett discourse of April 1844.

"It seems clear that certain ideas which developed between 1832 and 1844 were internalized after 1835 and accepted by the Latter-day Saints. This was particularly true of the material anthropomorphism of God and Jesus Christ, advanced perfectionism as elaborated in the doctrine of eternal progression, and the potential godhood of humanity."

--Following the Death of Joseph Smith, More Changes Were Made in Official Mormon Church Doctrines on God, with Adam Taking Over as God

"Between 1845 and 1890, . . . certain doctrines were proposed which were later rejected or modified.

". . . Brigham Young preached that Adam was not only the first man but also the god of this world. Acceptance of the King Follett doctrine would have granted the possibility of Adam being a god, but the idea that he was the god of this world conflicted with the later Jehovah–Christ doctrine. . . .

"The newer and older doctrines . . . coexisted, and all competed with novel positions spelled out by various church leaders.

"The "Lectures on Faith" continued to appear as part of the Doctrine and Covenants in a section entitled "Doctrine and Covenants"—distinguished from the "Covenants and Commandments," which constitute the current LDS Doctrine and Covenants.

"The Pearl of Great Price containing the "Book of Abraham" was published in England in 1851 as a missionary tract and was accepted as authoritative in 1880.

"The earliest versions of Apostle Parley P. Pratt's Key to the Science of Theology and Brigham H. Roberts's The Gospel: An Exposition of Its First Principles both emphasized an omnipresent, non–personal Holy Ghost, although Pratt's emphasis was radically materialistic and Roberts's more allegorical. Both were elaborating ideas addressed in the King Follett sermon. Such fluidity of doctrine, unusual from a twentieth–century perspective, characterized the nineteenth–century church.

"By 1890 the doctrines preached in the church combined what would seem today both familiar and strange. Yet between 1890 and 1925 these doctrine were reconstructed principally on the basis of works by four European immigrants, James E. Talmage, Brigham H. Roberts, John A. Widtsoe, and Charles W. Penrose. Widtsoe, Penrose, and Talmage did much of their writing before they became apostles, but Roberts served as a member of the First Council of the Seventy during the entire period."

--Still More Revamping Was Done to Official Mormon Church Doctrine on the Godhead, as the Holy Ghost Finally Emerges as an Individual Member of the Trinity Instead of Just Being God's Brain

"Perhaps the most important doctrine addressed was the doctrine of the Godhead, which was reconstructed beginning in 1893 and 1894. During that year Talmage, president of Latter-day Saints University in Salt Lake City and later president and professor of geology at the University of Utah, gave a series of lectures on the "Articles of Faith" to the theological class of LDSU.

"In the fall of 1898 the First Presidency asked him to rewrite the lectures and present them for approval as an exposition of church doctrines.

"In the process, Talmage reconsidered and reconstructed the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. In response to questions raised by Talmage's lectures, George Q. Cannon, of the First Presidency, "commenting on the ambiguity existing in our printed works concerning the nature or character of the Holy Ghost, expressed his opinion that the Holy Ghost was in reality a person, in the image of the other members of the Godhead—a man in form and figure; and that what we often speak of as the Holy Ghost is in reality but the power or influence of the spirit." The First Presidency on that occasion, however, "deemed it wise to say as little as possible on this as on other disputed subjects."

"In 1894 Talmage published an article in the Juvenile Instructor elaborating on his and Cannon's views. He incorporated the article almost verbatim into his manuscript for the Articles of Faith, and the presidency approved the article virtually without change in 1898.

"The impact of the Articles of Faith on doctrinal exposition within the church was enormous. Some doctrinal works, including B.H. Roberts's 1888 volume *The Gospel*, were quite allegorical on the nature of God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost. In the 1901 edition, after the publication of the Articles of Faith, Roberts explicitly revised his view of the Godhead, modifying his discussion and incorporating Talmage's more literal interpretation of the Holy Ghost."

--Darwin's Theory of Organic Evolution Further Reshaped (and Muddied)
Mormonism's Official Doctrines on God

'By 1900 it was impossible to consider the doctrines of God and humanity without dealing with organic evolution. Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* had been in print for four decades, and scientific advances together with changing attitudes had

introduced many secular-rational ideas. Talmage and John A. Widtsoe had confronted these ideas as they studied at universities in the United States and elsewhere. In a February 1900 article, for example, Talmage argued that science and religion had to be reconciled since "faith is not blind submission, passive obedience, with no effort at thought or reason. Faith, if worthy of its name, rests upon truth; and truth is the foundation of science."

"Just as explicit in his approach was Widtsoe, who came to the conclusion that the "scriptural proof of the truth of the gospel had been quite fully developed and was unanswerable." He "set out therefore to present [his] modest contributions from the point of view of science and those trained in that type of thinking." Between November 1903 and July 1904, he published a series of articles in the Improvement Era under the title "Joseph Smith as Scientist." The articles, republished in 1908 as the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association course of study, argued that Joseph Smith anticipated many scientific theories and discoveries.

"Joseph Smith as Scientist, like Widtsoe's later A Rational Theology, drew heavily on Herbert Spencer's theories and ideas. The Mormon gospel, Widtsoe argued, recognized the reality of time, space, and matter. The universe is both material and eternal, and God organized rather than created it. Thus God was not the creator, nor was he omnipotent. He too was governed by natural law, which was fundamental.

"Although the publications of Talmage, Roberts, and Widtsoe established the church's basic doctrines of the Godhead, some members and non-members were still confused. In 1911 Apostle George F. Richards spoke in the tabernacle on the nature of God. Afterward a member challenged him, arguing that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were one God rather than three distinct beings. Richards disagreed and cited scriptural references, including Joseph Smith's first vision."

--The Mormon Church Ends Up Dumping Its Previously LDS Church President-Taught Doctrine of "Adam-God"

"In February 1912 detractors confronted missionaries in the Central States Mission with the Adam-God theory. In a letter to the mission president, the First Presidency argued that Brigham Young did not mean to say that Adam was God, and at a special priesthood meeting during the April 1912 General Conference, they secured approval for a declaration that Mormons worship God the Father, not Adam."

--The Mormon Church Further Tweaks Its Official Doctrine on the Relationship Between God and Christ, Deciding to Finally Give Jesus a Mission Statement

"Reconsideration of the doctrine of God and the ambiguity in discourse and printed works over the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ pointed to the need for an authoritative statement on the nature and mission of Christ.

"From 1904 to 1906 Talmage delivered a series of lectures on "Jesus the Christ" at Latter-day Saints University. The First Presidency again asked Talmage to incorporate the lectures into a book, but he suspended the work to fill other assignments. In September 1914, however, the presidency asked him to prepare "the book with as little delay as possible." In order to free him "from visits and telephone calls" and "in view of the importance of the work," Talmage was "directed to occupy a room in the Temple where" he would "be free from interruption." After completing the writing in April 1915, he said that he had "felt the inspiration of the place and ... appreciated the privacy and quietness incident thereto." The presidency and twelve raised some questions about specific portions, but they agreed generally with the work, which elaborated views expressed previously in the Articles of Faith."

--Reconstruction of Official Mormon Church Doctrine on God Eventually Starts Swinging Back to the Teachings of Joseph Smith

"By 1916 the ideas which Joseph Smith and other leaders had proposed (generally after 1835) were serving as the framework for continued development of the doctrine of God. Talmage, Widtsoe, and Roberts had undertaken a reconstruction which carried doctrine far beyond anything described in the "Lectures on Faith" or generally believed by church members prior to 1835."

--The Mormon Church Continues Reinventing God, Jesus and the Holy Ghost in Its Attmpt to Get It Right

"Official statements were soon required to canonize doctrines on the Father and the

Son, particularly because of the ambiguity in the scriptures and in authoritative statements about the unity of the Father and the Son, the role of Jesus Christ as Father, and the roles of the Father and Son in the Creation.

"A statement for the church membership prepared by the First Presidency and twelve apostles, apparently first drafted by Talmage, was published in 1916. The statement made clear the separate corporeal nature of the two beings and delineated their roles in the creation of the earth and their continued relationships with this creation. The statement was congruent with the King Follett discourse and the work of Talmage, Widtsoe, and Roberts.

"This elaboration, together with the revised doctrine of the Holy Ghost, made necessary the revision and redefinition of works previously used. By January 1915, Charles W. Penrose had completed a revision of Parley P. Pratt's Key to the Science of Theology. Penrose deleted or altered passages which discussed the Holy Ghost as non-personal and which posited a sort of "spiritual fluid" pervading the universe."

--The Mormon Church Ultimately Removes the Lectures on Faith from the Doctrine & Covenants

"Less than two years later, in November 1917, a meeting of the twelve apostles and First Presidency considered the question of the "Lectures on Faith," particularly lecture 5. At that time, they agreed to append a footnote in the next edition, apparently clarifying the lecture's teachings on God. This proved unnecessary when the First Presidency appointed a committee to revise the entire Doctrine and Covenants.

"Revision continued through July and August 1921, and the church printed the new edition in late 1921. The committee proposed to delete the "Lectures on Faith" on the ground that they were "lessons prepared for use in the School of the Elders, conducted in Kirtland, Ohio, during the winter of 1834-35; but they were never presented to nor accepted by the Church as being otherwise than theological lectures or lessons."

"How the committee came to this conclusion is uncertain. The General Conference of the church in April 1835 had accepted the entire volume, including the lectures, as authoritative and binding upon church members. What seems certain, however, is

that the 1916 official statement, based upon Talmage's, Widtsoe's, and Roberts's reconstructed doctrine of the Godhead, had superseded the theology of the lectures."

--The Science of Organic Evolution Continues to Force Changes in the Mormon Church's Official Doctrines on God and Mortal Man's Eternal March to Godhood

"Basically, concern over the increasing vigor of the theory of evolution through natural selection seems to have outweighed all other considerations on the doctrine of man. The First Presidency wanted to see the truths of science and religion reconciled, and much of the work of Talmage, Widtsoe, and Roberts dealt with that challenge.

"On evolution, for instance, they generally took the view that while evolution itself was a correct principle, the idea of natural selection was not. The First Presidency's official statements of 1909 and 1925 specifically addressed the problem of evolution and of human nature, which was an important part of Talmage's, Widtsoe's, and Roberts's works.²⁶

"Because evolution was constantly in the background, it seems apparent that two things happened. First, church members internalized the implications of the doctrine of eternal progression, assuming that men and women, as gods in embryo, were basically godlike and that the flesh itself, since it was common to both God and humanity, posed no barrier to human perfectibility. Second, members seem to have concluded that Joseph Smith's statement in the "Articles of Faith" that God would not punish man for Adam's transgression was a rejection of the doctrine of original sin, which held that humanity inherited a condition of sinfulness. In general, it seemed, the doctrine of absolute free will demanded that any evil which man might do resulted not from the flesh but from a conscious choice. How these, and related doctrines, will change in the future remains to be seen."

There you have it in all its glorious tinkering.

Would someone please tell me when the Mormon Church finally gets its official ducks in a row per its down-home doctrines on God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, their

body parts or lack thereof, their actual job descriptions, the multiple-gods thing, eternal progression to Master of My Universe, etc.?

It's only had since, like, 1830 to figure it out.

Geezus.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfmvkO5x6Ng>

Source:

The above excerpts from Thomas G. Alexander's examination of official Mormon doctrinal evolution are taken from "Line Upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine," Gary James Bergera, ed., Signature Books, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1989, Chapter 5, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine," pp. 53–65. For the full text, see:

<http://signaturebookslibrary.org/?p=9423>

Alexander's examination was first presented as a paper on 3 May 1980 at the Mormon History Association in Canandaigua, New York. At the time, Alexander was professor of history and associate director of the Charles Redd Center of Western Studies at Brigham Young University. His paper was published in "Sunstone" magazine, vol. 5, no. 4, July–August 1980, pp. 24–33. For a pdf copy, see:

http://www.mormonismi.net/pdf/Reconstruction_of_Mormon_Doctrine_Alexande...

For an understanding of what the Mormon Church is supposedly officially teaching when it comes to figuring out who God is and what God is supposed to be doing, see a shrink, put your finger to the wind, or both.

** (Related thread: "Why was Joe's 5th Lecture Yanked from the D&C? Cuz It Said God Had NO Body," by Steve Benson, RfM discussion board, 19 November 2016,

<http://exmormon.org/phorum/read.php?2,1907020,1907020#msg-1907020>)

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 11/19/2016 06:23AM by steve benson.

Re: Why was Joe's 5th Lecture Yanked from the D&C? Cuz It Said God Had NO Body

Posted by: **Chicken N. Backpacks** ()

Date: November 19, 2016 12:33PM

But...but...but...

Nahom!!

Re: Why was Joe's 5th Lecture Yanked from the D&C? Cuz It Said God Had NO Body

Posted by: **donbagley** ()

Date: November 19, 2016 10:15PM

Very thorough, Steve. Thanks for the information. It's a convincing thesis.

Re: Why was Joe's 5th Lecture Yanked from the D&C? Cuz It Said God Had NO Body

Posted by: **Babyloncansuckit** ()

Date: November 20, 2016 12:47AM

So much tang, so little time. It's hard for a guy to keep his lies straight.

Re: Why was Joe's 5th Lecture Yanked from the D&C? Cuz It Said God Had NO Body

Posted by: **Chicken N. Backpacks** ()

Date: November 20, 2016 01:14AM

Holy crap--! I just read FAIRMO's commentary on the "spirit" question, and, even though it's been a long and tiring day, I read it twice, and indeed it seems that despite what the actual words say-- "a personage of spirit" --they simply say, nope, it clearly says he has a real body!

Re: Why was Joe's 5th Lecture Yanked from the D&C? Cuz It Said God Had NO Body

Posted by: **Betty G** ()

Date: November 20, 2016 04:30AM

I haven't really read that much of the Mormon Doctrine and Covenants, and so I am unfamiliar with a lot of what you wrote here.

After reading this first post, I went up and looked this Lecture on Faith item.

What I read didn't match up exactly with what you wrote, though.

It seems that though many originally attributed it to Joseph Smith, it was actually written mostly by Signey Rigdon after a meeting in committee. Much of it being attributed to Joseph was because it was seen as sanctioned by him, but no author was attributed in the manuscript. The history of it, however, indicates that it was actually written by Signey Rigdon, or if one wants to be more liberal, that it was done by Signey Rigdon for the most part after consultation in committee with the rest of the group that was creating it.

It also seems, it wasn't just the fifth lecture that was taken, it was the entirety of the Lectures on Faith that were taken out.

On that account, as it was apparently written by Signey Rigdon, it could reflect what some might consider an early idealization of the trinity. There are some that say the Trinity is far more strongly supported in the Book of Mormon than in the bible (ironic when considered), and in some ways those same individuals might say the same about the fifth lecture.

Now, a lot of the language of this was very confusing (and it wasn't the easiest for me to try to find a Non-LDS source for these, for those of us without this background, it might be nice to give us a link on this stuff every so often), and when it went into questions, I wasn't sure whether that was actually part of that lecture or something else.

I would imagine, however, that the LDS, would find stuff to back their opinions on the nature of God in the question and answer section.

I think far more unique and interesting in it is NOT the reference to the Father as a personage of spirit...as it never defines what exactly a personage could mean or indicate. To a Baptist it may seem like the trinity, but for an LDS that may also indicate a physical body that is empowered via the suggested lines indicated, or other such meanings. Hence, the more interesting item is the answer to question #3 which is

Question 3: How many personages are there in the Godhead?

Two: the Father and the Son

For a Baptist, you suddenly go...wait a second...what was just stated there?

This is far more interesting, because as from a Mormon point of view, it could back

up their ideas, especially in the answer that the Son is the likeness of the Father as stated in question #8, which would indicate the son is actually in the form and appears as his Father, which directly contradicts the Trinitarian view.

Now these sort of get confusing with Questions #14 and #15 for a Non-LDS because there it states that there is actually 3 individuals in the Godhead...with the Spirit being the third and the one that joins the mind of the Father and the Son (if I read it correctly).

It would also contribute to the idea that the Father cannot simply be spirit as the Spirit is now considered the third part of the Godhead.

This is a rather confusing thing to try to read, and perhaps it makes more sense to Mormons than it did to me.

However, the most likely explanation for why they were removed from the LDS Doctrine and Covenants from what I've gathered via the internet (you know, that devil of a thing that allows the common person to actually be able to find information these days as opposed to just accepting what is told them...) at least to me seems to be self explanatory.

They were originally either written by committee OR by Signey Rigdon. It doesn't really matter which for why they were removed.

AS FAR AS I CAN TELL...the Mormon Doctrine and Covenants is composed solely of what LDS members accept as revelations directly given to their prophets. As the Lectures were not revelations as they were written by committee or however...it would seem that their explanation is as good as any for why they removed them.

The fifth lecture was actually really confusing for me to try to read and sort out...in all honesty.

However, I didn't quite find your explanation in this first part actually quite forthcoming either...in all honesty.

Tell me the whole truth rather than partial truths and it would help me better and do a better job of convincing and probably understanding the Mormons.

Then, maybe you do it in the second part of your post (I haven't read that yet, I

wanted to try to find this fifth lecture you were referring to so I could actually understand what you were talking about first...as I said...know that there are those of us who are NOT LDS and know everything about them from the start...links to these things would be useful for those of us like me. You posted articles with excerpts but I couldn't find where you linked anything to the actual full text of the fifth lecture you were referring to. Understand there are some of us here that are relatively new to the entire idea of Mormonism, much less some of the concepts and articles presented). If you don't...please, when referencing something that most BiC Mormons or otherwise might take for granted, understand some of us do not have that background so a link to the original material would be VERY HELPFUL rather than making us try to find it on our own to even understand what you are talking about.

I'll read your follow up now. :)

Re: Why was Joe's 5th Lecture Yanked from the D&C? Cuz It Said God Had NO Body

Posted by: **Betty G ()**

Date: November 20, 2016 04:49AM

I've now read your next post, didn't change that much, though I see why you separated it as your thesis of part two differed from that of part one.

One item I read that I probably do not agree with (the item quoted, not your personally or your opinion) is this

[quote]

'By 1900 it was impossible to consider the doctrines of God and humanity without dealing with organic evolution. Charles Darwin's Origin of Species had been in print for four decades, and scientific advances together with changing attitudes had introduced many secular-rational ideas. Talmage and John A. Widtsoe had confronted these ideas as they studied at universities in the United States and elsewhere. In a February 1900 article, for example, Talmage argued that science and religion had to be reconciled since "faith is not blind submission, passive obedience, with no effort at thought or reason. Faith, if worthy of its name, rests upon truth; and truth is the foundation of science."

[/quote]

There was a line in Indiana Jones (yes, not exactly scripture there) that basically says...science is facts, not truth. If you are looking for truth there is a philosophy

class down the hall.

Which I think is relevant in that truth is not necessarily science and facts are not necessarily truth.

I am one that says religion is a matter of faith, whichever religion one is...and if you rely on facts and evidence...you are not going to find that in religion. Faith is tantamount to religion...and hence is a requirement in most religions tenets for whatever reward (or non-reward) one will receive.

So, personally speaking, I probably disagree with Talmadge on that comment, as I would not necessarily ascribe science as based on truth per se.

As noted in my OP, even Mormon apologists have acknowledged...

Posted by: **Stephen R. Benson** ()
Date: November 20, 2016 04:50AM

. . . that modern handwriting analysis ties Joseph Smith to the creation of the "Fifth Lecture on Faith," with support for that admission bolstered by accompanying, linked sourcing.

You need to read more carefully...

Posted by: **Stephen R. Benson** ()
Date: November 20, 2016 05:20AM

In fact, I specifically noted more than once in the OP that all of the "Lectures of Faith" were removed from the "Doctrine and Covenants."

That said, the OP focused primarily on the Joseph Smith-authored Lecture #5, given that its content sweeps away--in deeply problematic fashion for the spurious LDS party line--the Mormon Church's official claim that Smith saw a flesh-and-boned God the Father when, in reality, Smith is on the record in Lecture #5 as explicitly teaching that God the Father was only a personage of spirit and that it was Jesus who had a body of flesh and bones.

Leaving Lecture #5 in the "Doctrine and Covenants" would have been especially complicating for the Mormon Church to disingenuously insist that Joseph Smith's "First Vision" fantasy is to be believed.