

Lord, “Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so, and by what thou madest them?” (1:30).

The Lord answered the first question by explaining that “this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Creating worlds and populating them with his children are major parts of God’s “work.” He creates EARTHS as dwelling places for his spirit children, where they receive physical bodies and learn to walk by faith. Whereas IMMORTALITY is never-ending life, ETERNAL LIFE means to become like God (*see* GODHOOD). Thus, God’s “glory” consists in mankind’s attainment of everlasting glory, the ultimate being eternal life.

In answer to Moses’ second question (i.e., “by what thou madest them?”), the Lord stated that worlds were created by the power of the “Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth” (Moses 1:32). This passage underscores the view that the creative acts of God, which include all inhabitable worlds (Moses 1:33; cf. John 1:1–2), are done through the Only Begotten as God’s agent, and are done in grace and truth for the benefit of his children.

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GODHEAD

[For discussions about the three members of the Godhead and their divine attributes and manifestations in the world, *see* GOD; GOD THE FATHER; ELOHIM; MAN OF HOLINESS; JESUS CHRIST; HOLY GHOST; HOLY SPIRIT; GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST; DOVE; SIGN OF. *See also* GODHOOD; ENDLESS AND ETERNAL; NAME OF GOD; INTELLIGENCE; FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD; OMNIPOTENT GOD, OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD, OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.]

Latter-day Saints believe in God the Father; his Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost (A of F 1). These three Gods form the Godhead, which holds the keys of power over the universe. Each member of the Godhead is an independent personage, separate and distinct from the other two, the three being in perfect unity and harmony with each other (AF, chap. 2).

This knowledge concerning the Godhead derives primarily from the Bible and the revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith (*see* SMITH, JOSEPH: TEACHINGS OF JOSEPH SMITH). For example, the three members of the Godhead were separately

manifested at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:16–17) and at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:55–56). Joseph Smith commented, “Peter and Stephen testify that they saw the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Any person that had seen the heavens opened knows that there are three personages in the heavens who hold the keys of power, and one presides over all” (TPJS, p. 312).

On June 16, 1844, in his last Sunday sermon before his martyrdom, Joseph Smith declared that “in all congregations” he had taught “the plurality of Gods” for fifteen years: “I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods” (TPJS, p. 370). The two earliest surviving accounts of Joseph’s FIRST VISION do not give details on the Godhead, but that he consistently taught that the Father and the Son were separate personages is clearly documentable in most periods of his life (e.g., D&C 76:23 [1832]; 137:3 [1836]; his First Vision, JS–H 1:17 [recorded 1838]; D&C 130:22 [1843]). While the fifth LECTURE ON FAITH (1834) does not identify the Holy Ghost as a “personage,” it affirms that “the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit constitute the Godhead” (cf. Millet, pp. 223–34).

Although the three members of the Godhead are distinct personages, their Godhead is “one” in that all three are united in their thoughts, actions, and purpose, with each having a fulness of knowledge, truth, and power. Each is a God. This does not imply a mystical union of substance or personality. Joseph Smith taught:

Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God. I say that is a strange God anyhow—three in one, and one in three! It is a curious organization anyhow. “Father, I pray not for the world, but I pray for those that thou hast given me . . . that they may be one as we are.” . . . I want to read the text to you myself—“I am agreed with the Father and the Father is agreed with me, and we are agreed as one.” The Greek shows that it should be agreed. “Father, I pray for them which thou hast given me out of the world, . . . that they all may be agreed,” and all come to dwell in unity [TPJS, p. 372; cf. John 17:9–11, 20–21; also cf. WJS, p. 380].

The unity prayed for in John 17 provides a model for the LDS understanding of the unity of the God-

head—one that is achieved among distinct individuals by unity of purpose, through faith, and by divine will and action. Joseph Smith taught that the Godhead was united by an “everlasting covenant [that] was made between [these] three personages before the organization of this earth” relevant to their administration to its inhabitants (*TPJS*, p. 190). The prime purpose of the Godhead and of all those united with them is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39; Hinckley, p. 49–51).

Each member of the Godhead fulfills particular functions in relation to each of the others and to mankind. God the Father presides over the Godhead. He is the Father of all human spirits and of the physical body of Jesus Christ. The human body was formed in his image.

Jesus Christ, the Firstborn son of God the Father in the spirit and the Only Begotten son in the flesh, is the creative agent of the Godhead and the redeeming mediator between the Father and mankind. By him God created all things, and through him God revealed the laws of salvation. In him shall all be made alive, and through his atonement all mankind may be reconciled with the Father.

The Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit who bears witness to truth. The Father and the Holy Ghost bear witness of the Son, and the Son and the Holy Ghost bear witness of the Father (3 Ne. 11:32; cf. John 8:18). Through the Holy Ghost, revelations of the Father and of the Son are given.

The LDS doctrine of the Godhead differs from the various concepts of the Trinity. Several postbiblical trinitarian doctrines emerged in Christianity. This “dogmatic development took place gradually, against the background of the emanationist philosophy of Stoicism and Neoplatonism (including the mystical theology of the latter), and within the context of strict Jewish monotheism” (*ER* 15:54). Trinitarian doctrines sought to elevate God’s oneness or unity, ultimately in some cases describing Jesus as *homoousious* (of the same substance) with the Father in order to preclude any claim that Jesus was not fully divine. LDS understanding, formulated by latter-day revelation through Joseph Smith, rejects the idea that Jesus or any other personage loses individuality by attaining Godhood or by standing in divine and eternal relationships with other exalted beings.

[See also Christology; Deification.]

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GODHOOD

Logically and naturally, the ultimate desire of a loving Supreme Being is to help his children enjoy all that he enjoys. For Latter-day Saints, the term “godhood” denotes the attainment of such a state—one of having all divine attributes and doing as God does and being as God is. Such a state is to be enjoyed by all exalted, embodied, intelligent beings (see DEIFICATION; ETERNAL PROGRESSION; EXALTATION; GOD; PERFECTION). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that all resurrected and perfected mortals become gods (cf. Gen. 3:22; Matt. 5:48). They will dwell again with GOD THE FATHER, and live and act like him in endless worlds of happiness, power, love, glory, and knowledge; above all, they will have the power of procreating endless lives. Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus Christ attained godhood (see CHRISTOLOGY) and that he marked the path and led the way for others likewise to become exalted divine beings by following him (cf. John 14:3).

The LDS conception of godhood is central to their understanding of why God creates and acts. Latter-day Saints believe in a God who “cleaves unto” other eternal INTELLIGENCES (D&C 88:40) and wants to make them happy. Joseph Smith observed, “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God” (*TPJS*, p. 255). Happiness is the goal of existence, and God created this world in order to promote happiness (2 Ne. 2:25). Because he loves the world, he gave his “only begotten Son” (John 3:16). God gives commandments to help mankind achieve happiness. Joseph Smith wrote: “In obedience there is joy and peace unspotted, unalloyed; and as God has designed our happiness—and the happiness of all His creatures,