begin. Satan will then have “no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth” (1 Ne. 22:26; see also MILLENNIUM).

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GERALD N. LUND

JESUS CHRIST, FATHERHOOD AND SONSHIP OF

Latter-day Saint scriptures refer to Jesus Christ as both the Father and the Son. Most notably in the Book of Mormon, Christ introduced himself to the BROTHER OF JARED saying, “I am the Father and the Son” (Ether 3:14); NPHH referred to the Lamb of God as “the Eternal Father” (1 Ne. 11:21, 1830 ed.), and the prophet ABINADI said that the Messiah would be “the Father . . . and the Son” (Mosiah 15:3). Such usage has been explained in several ways consistent with the fundamental LDS understanding of the Godhead as three distinct beings.

There is no lack of clarity about Christ’s sonship. Jesus is the Son of God in at least three ways. First, he is the firstborn spirit child of God the Father and thereby the elder brother of the spirits of all men and women as God the Father, known also by the exalted name-title Elohim, is the father of the spirits of all mankind (Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:9; John 20:17). Thus, when Christ is called the Firstborn (e.g., Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15; D&C 93:21), Latter-day Saints accept this as a possible reference to Christ’s spiritual birth. Second, he is the literal physical son of God, the Only Begotten in the Flesh (e.g., John 1:14; 3:16; 2 Ne. 25:12; Jacob 4:11; D&C 29:42; 93:11; Moses 1:6; 2:26). Third, spiritually he is also a son by virtue of his submission unto the will of the Father (Heb. 5:8).

Jesus Christ is also known by the title of Father. The meaning of scriptures using this nomenclature is not always immediately clear, primarily owing to the fact that Christ and his Father are virtually inseparable in purpose, testimony, glory, and power. In most cases, however, the scriptural usage can be explained in several ways:

Christ is sometimes called Father because of his role as Creator from the beginning (see CREATION). Before his mortal birth, and acting under the direction of the Father, Jesus was JEHOVAH, the Lord Omnipotent, through whom God created worlds without number (Moses 1:33; 7:30; John 1:1–3; Heb. 1:2). Because of his creative role, Christ-Jehovah is called “the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning” in the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 3:8; see also 2 Ne. 25:16; Alma 11:39; 3 Ne. 9:15). Jesus’ role as Creator is similarly attested in the Bible (e.g., John 1:3; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16) and the Doctrine and Covenants (e.g., D&C 38:1–3; 45:1; 76:24; 93:9).

Jesus Christ is also known as Father through the spiritual rebirth of mankind (see BORN OF GOD). As the foreordained Redeemer, he became the “author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). He is the Savior. No person will come unto the Father except through him and by his name (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Mosiah 3:17). Those who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and receive its saving covenantal ordinances, living worthy of its sanctifying and enlightening powers, are “born again” unto Christ and become known as the children of Christ, “his sons and daughters,” his “seed” (Mosiah 5:5–8; 15:10–13; 27:25–26; Alma 5:14). Christ thus becomes the Father of their salvation, the Father of life in the Spirit, the Father of the new birth. In a related sense, he is also the Father of all mankind in that the RESURRECTION of the entire human family comes through him (Sperry, p. 35).

Furthermore, Jesus is called Father because of the AUTHORITY God gave him to act for the Father. He explained in Jerusalem: “I can of mine own self do nothing . . . I am come in my Father’s name” (John 5:30, 43). An LDS leader has clarified this: “All revelation since the fall has come through Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament . . . The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall, and he has never appeared except to introduce and bear record of the Son” (DS 1:27). Latter-day Saints understand this to mean that, except when introducing the Son, God always acts and speaks to mankind through Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the Father has placed his name upon the Son, authorized and empowered him to speak even in the first person
for him, as though he were the Father. An example of this is when the Lord Jehovah (who would later come to earth as Jesus of Nazareth) spoke to Moses: "Moses, my son; . . . thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior" (Moses 1:6). Sometimes the Savior has spoken both as the Father (Elohim) and as the Son (Jesus) in the same revelation (e.g., D&C 29:1 and 42:49:5 and 28).

In addition, Christ is Father in that he literally inherited attributes and powers from his Father (Elohim). From Mary, his mother, Jesus inherited mortality, the capacity to die. From God, his Father, Jesus inherited immortality, the capacity to live forever: "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26; cf. Hel. 5:11). Christ is "the Father because he was conceived by the power of God" (Mosiah 15:3). "This is a matter of his Eternal Parent investing him with power from on high so that he becomes the Father because he exercises the power of that Eternal Being" (McConkie, p. 371).

Christ is also Father in that he spiritually received all that the Father has. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one—the Father because he gave me of his fulness, and the Son because I was in the world" (D&C 93:3-4).

Other explanations are likewise possible. All persons have multiple roles in life. A man can be a father, son, and brother; a woman can be a mother, daughter, and sister. These titles describe roles or functions at a given time, as well as relationships to others. For Latter-day Saints, this is so with the Christ. He has many names and titles. He ministers as both the Father and the Son. After explaining that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would come to earth, take a body, and minister as both Father and Son, Abinadi summarized: "And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and earth" (Mosiah 15:4; see also Mosiah 7:26-27; D&C 93:14). The Father and the Son, the Spirit and the flesh, the God and the man—these titles, roles, and attributes are blended wondrously in one being, Jesus Christ, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

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ROBERT L. MILLET