

Lucifer, the Brother of Jesus?

In times past, anti-Mormons have picketed numerous events, from LDS temple dedications to the 2002 Olympics held in Salt Lake City. If you have ever witnessed such a gathering, you might remember—amongst the picket signs, scattered pamphlets, sensational statements yelled through megaphones, etc.—a declaration proclaiming, “Mormons believe in the wrong Jesus: A Jesus that is BROTHERS with Lucifer.” This criticism is arguably the most common of all made against the LDS Church.

While it is unfortunate that many critics use such “shock talk” to scare people from investigating the LDS Church further, there is no question that the tactic can be effective. Karl Keating gives his opinion regarding similar tactics used against the Catholic Church: “It must be admitted,” he says, “they enjoy a certain tactical (if short-term) advantage in that they can get away with presenting bare-bones claims such as these: they wear out Catholicism’s defenders by inundating them with short remarks that demand long explanations.”¹

Since the “long explanation” required for thoroughly addressing this topic won’t fit this simple brochure, I am somewhat limited in what I can share with you. Should you be interested in learning more, however, a link is provided at the end of the article in order to give you a more thorough explanation—an explanation that critics usually neglect to provide their audience.

Jesus, the Only Begotten?

Critics exclaim: *“Mormons believe that Jesus and Lucifer are brothers, yet the Bible states that Jesus was God’s ‘only begotten son.’ Mormons, therefore, don’t believe in the Jesus of the Bible!”*

The New Testament does indeed identify Jesus as God the Father’s “only begotten Son.” While attempting to understand exactly what this phrase meant, however, it is important to note that the title was not always intended to be taken literally in antiquity. We know this by considering Paul’s statement regarding Isaac’s relationship to his father Abraham. In Hebrews 11:17 Isaac is titled as Abraham’s “only begotten son,” despite the fact that Abraham also had a son named Ishmael.²

Additionally, the great first-century Jewish historian, Josephus, used this same terminology when describing the son of Monobazus (the king of Adiabene). Josephus recorded, “[Monobazus] had other sons by other wives besides [Helena]. Yet did he openly place all his affections on this his only begotten son Izates.”³

So, what does “only begotten” mean when speaking of sonship in this kind of context? The Greek term *mon-og-en-ace*’ (commonly translated as “only begotten”) was intended to denote that a son was unique, special, and of particular endearment⁴—which would set him apart from other sons.

Given these facts, we can ask the question, “Could this meaning also apply to Jesus’ relationship to God the Father, being unique, special, and of particular endearment, thereby allowing a belief which includes Jesus having siblings?” Certainly.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that Jesus is the spirit brother of both angels and all mankind. Before you and I were born, we lived with God the Father and our brother Jesus Christ. It is true that Lucifer was a son of God. It is also understood that he became prideful and rebelled against God. In consequence of his actions and unwillingness to accept the Father’s plan, Lucifer was cast out of Heaven.

While considering this, it should not be overlooked that Latter-day Saints believe Jesus was indeed unique and special among all of God’s children. As has been stated by the First Presidency, “Let it not be forgotten, however, that He is essentially greater than any and all others.”⁵ There are four key points that distinguish Jesus from His spiritual siblings:

- He has seniority as the firstborn.
- He is literally the Father’s only begotten Son in the flesh.
- He was foreordained to be the only Savior and Redeemer of the world.
- He was sinless.

Sons of God and Jesus’ Brothers?

In numerous instances, the Bible explicitly speaks of mortal men and angels as being the “sons,” “children,” and “offspring of God.” The scriptures additionally reveal more subtle implications of our shared divine sonship to the Father, by distinguishing Jesus’ Father as “our Father.”⁶

If the premise is given that angels, mortal men, and the Savior Jesus Christ are all “children of God,” then it would be perfectly reasonable to conclude that Lucifer was Jesus’ brother; for he too (though now a fallen angel) was among the sons of God. Job 1:6 is one of many passages that can be used to substantiate this doctrine. We read: “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.”

Admittedly, this passage by itself may not be enough to convince one of the validity of our position, since being “among” a group is not necessarily the same as being “part” of it. It should therefore be further noted that Job 38:7 titles “sons of God” as “morning stars.”

“And?” you might be asking. Well, these minor points are particularly significant since the name Lucifer means “light-bearer” or “shining-one.” Many scholars believe that this meaning, coupled with his epithet “son of the morning,” would therefore signify that he too was a “morning star”⁷—a son of God.⁸

A fundamentalist Christian scholar, Arno C. Gaebelein, agrees. He wrote: “The sons of God, revealed as morning stars, include Gabriel and Michael.... Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, should also be included, though he became the enemy of God by his fall.” Gaebelein again reiterated his belief; “We have stated before that, before his fall, the devil was originally an archangel, one of the Morningstars, as we learned from the Book of Job, which sang together God’s praises in the hour of creation.”⁹

In regards to Lucifer being specifically the “brother of Jesus,” we can look to the Evangelical Christian theologian, H.L. Martensen. He believed that Lucifer was “Christ’s younger brother, and became God’s adversary because he was not content to be second, but wanted to be first; because he was unwilling to bear the light of another, and wanted to be the light itself.”¹⁰

This idea is not new. In fact, Lactantius, a Latin Christian Father of the third century, taught the following: “Before creating the world, God produced a spirit like himself, replete with virtues of the Father. Later He made another, in whom the mark of divine was erased, because this one was besmirched by the poison of jealousy and turned therefore from good to evil. He was jealous of his older

brother who, remaining united with the Father, insured his affection unto himself.”¹¹

I submit the rhetorical question that—aside from the fact that the LDS doctrine is both scripturally and logically sound—if Gaebelein, Martensen, Lactantius, and others, could teach such a doctrine and still remain Christian, then how can members of the Church of Jesus Christ be branded as un-Christian for holding a similar belief?

Didn't Jesus Create Lucifer?

Colossians 1:16 says, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”

It is not uncommon for our critics to cite this verse and insist that “all things” means “absolutely everything”; however, this strict interpretation becomes problematic, and (when read contextually) proves itself to be incompatible with Christian theology. Since the passage says that Jesus created “all things” in “Heaven” that are “invisible”, and since God the Father is titled the “invisible God” in the proceeding verse, we would therefore be required to conclude that Jesus created His Father.

A more reasonable approach would be to acknowledge the fact that the Greek term “pas” (commonly translated as all, any, every, or whole) can be understood in a limited and relative sense. Examples of this fact can be found throughout the New Testament. Rather than listing them out, I will simply quote the renowned Baptist preacher C.H. Spurgeon who persuasively argues the point:

“‘The whole world is gone after Him.’ Did all the world go after Christ? ‘Then went all Judea, and were baptized of him in Jordan.’ Was all Judea, or all Jerusalem baptized in Jordan? ‘Ye are of God, little children,’ and ‘the whole world lieth in the wicked one.’ Does ‘the whole world’ there mean everybody? If so, how was it, then, that there were some who were ‘of God?’ The words ‘world’ and ‘all’ are used in seven or eight senses in Scripture; and it is very rarely that ‘all’ means all persons [or all things], taken individually.”¹²

But Jesus created thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. Isn't this a list of various orders (ranks) of angels?

These titles have been given to both angels, as well as mortal rulers on Earth, so exactly which the author is referring to is debatable. Whatever interpretation one embraces, however, is moot since the passage is declaring that Jesus created the “orders,” not the angels or mortal rulers themselves. Consequently, we find versions like the NEB that translates the verse as follows:

“[Jesus] created, not only things visible but also the invisible orders of thrones, sovereignties, authorities, and powers.”¹³

It should be further noted that the Greek word for “create” (ktizo) was “used among the Greeks to mean the founding of a place, a city or colony.”¹⁴ This being so, given that the passage is indeed referring to the orders of angels, it seems plausible that this “creation” thereby refers to the creative act of Jesus establishing, under the direction of the Father, an angelic government within the Kingdom of Heaven—an interpretation that would be consistent with LDS doctrine.¹⁵

In summary, the concept that Jesus and Lucifer were spirit brothers and children of the same Father is not nearly as shocking as it may at first seem when wielded by anti-Mormons as a club against the Church. In addition, such a belief certainly finds support biblically and historically.



For more details on this topic see
<http://www.fairlds.org/apol/ai152.html>

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¹ Karl Keating, *Catholicism and Fundamentalism: The Attack on “Romanism” by “Bible Christians”* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988), 75. Cited in Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1992), 149.

² Josephus also calls Isaac Abraham’s “only begotten son.” *Antiquities* 1:222; Similarly, in Hebrew, *ben yakh’-ad* or *ben yaw-kheed* are typically translated as “only son.” The Hebrew phrase (as is found in Greek) can also mean “darling,” “beloved,” or “unique son.” See Genesis 22:2, 12, 16.

³ *Antiquities* 20:20.

⁴ *Linguistic Key To the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981), 363; *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing, 1940), 822, 823.

⁵ *The Father and the Son, a Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and the Twelve*, as cited in James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1981), 426.

⁶ See Matthew 6:9; Luke 3:38; John 20:17; Acts 17:29; Hebrews 12:9; Job 38:7.

⁷ *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1977), 366.

⁸ The Biblical Scholar Margaret Barker comments, “The prologue describes how the sons of God (sons of the ‘*elohim*’), one of whom was Satan, came to Yahweh and challenged him to test the loyalty of Job. The usual English rendering of Job 1.6 imply that Yahweh was superior to the sons of God: ‘the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh.’ This is not necessarily what the Hebrew implies since the same verb is used in Ps. 2.2, and there it means ‘set themselves against Yahweh.’ Thus the prologue to Job depicts a heaven where Yahweh is one among many [sons] and is challenged to test the loyalty of his servant.” Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God* (Luisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 6.

⁹ Arno Clemens Gaebelein, *Gabriel and Michael* (New York: Our Hope Publications, 1945), 7, 92.

¹⁰ *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1952), 416.

¹¹ Giovanni Papini, *The Devil* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984), 81–82; The fourth century Bishop of Constantia of Cyprus, Epiphanius, reported the beliefs of an early Judeo-Christian sect, whom he thought to be Heretical, saying, “[The Ebionites] set two divine appointees side by side, one being Christ, but one the devil. And they say that Christ has been allotted the world to come, but that this world has been entrusted to the devil... [Christ] was created as one of the archangels, and that he is ruler of both angels and of all creatures of the Almighty....” Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 2.30.16; vol. 1, 132. Unfortunately, virtually all we know about the Ebionites comes from their critics. Secondly, the title “Ebionite” was given to multiple Judeo-Christian sects that, unlike the Gentile church, continued to embrace their Jewish roots. Certainly, both of these factors, to a significant degree, are responsible for the conflicting reports we find regarding their practices and doctrines (i.e., whether they believed in a *virgin birth*).

¹² Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Particular Redemption* (February 28, 1858) <<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0181.htm>>

¹³ *The New English Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1970). Emphasis added.

¹⁴ *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing, 1940), 256.

¹⁵ Note: “The teachings of Latter-day Saint prophets indicate that a priesthood organization exists among the heavenly hosts. However, discussion of specific positions or functions in the celestial hierarchy beyond the scriptures cited above [Ezekiel. 9:2; Revelation 8:2; D&C 29:26; 88:112; 107:54; 128:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 1:9] is conjectural.” Jerry C. Giles, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:42.