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### The Revelation of God in Jesus Christ

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## The Revelation of God in Jesus Christ

*The coming of God through incarnation promised.* Prophetically in the Old Testament, the coming of God into the world is proclaimed. In previous pages we have noted that a “virgin ⟨would⟩ [shall] conceive, and bear a son” and call his name “Immanuel,” the interpretation of which is “God with us”—that is, God with men (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23).

Again, “a child” under special circumstances, is to be “born” in Israel, and “the government” is to be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called “Wonderful,” “Counsellor,” “The mighty God,” “The everlasting Father,” “The Prince of Peace” (cf. Isa. 9:6).

The prophet Isaiah in giving comforting words to Israel, said: “⟨Your⟩ [Thy] dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. . . . And the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isa. 26:19). This was Jehovah (the preexistent spirit of the Christ) speaking to Isaiah, and is a plain prophecy that Jehovah, the spiritual personage and deity who manifested himself to the ancients—and especially to Moses—shall have a “body,” shall “die,” and shall be raised from the dead. All which, of course, the reader will recognize the Christ did, according to the New Testament, seven hundred years after Isaiah’s time; hence it is proper to proclaim this “child,” this “son that was given”—Jesus of Nazareth—to be “the mighty God,” “the everlasting Father,” “God with us,” and “God manifested in the flesh.”

*The Christ proclaimed to be God.* Turn we now to the New Testament, and first to that sublime poem of St. John’s preface to his gospel, which, like the book of Genesis, carries us back to the “beginning,” “when God created” not the universe, but our earth and its heavens:

In the beginning was the Word, and [the] Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And

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In introducing this chapter, Roberts noted: “Also 3 Nephi ch. 11: The appearance of the risen Christ to the Nephites; also book of Ether ch. 3; appearance of the preexistent Christ to the brother of Jared.”

the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. . . . For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:1-2, 14, 17)

There can be no question but direct reference is here made to the Lord Jesus Christ as being the “Word,” and the “Word,” or Jesus, being with the Father in the beginning “when” he created our heaven and our earth; and the “Word,” or Jesus Christ, also being God. So then the “Word” as used here by John is one of the titles of Jesus in his preexistent estate as a spirit. Called the “Word,” because by “Word” we give forth expression, and since Jesus Christ was to be an expression or revelation of God, he was called so to be the brightness of his (the Father’s) glory and the express image of his (the Father’s) person (cf. Heb. 1:3).

*Jesus declares himself to be God and in the form of God.* “Let this mind be in you, which was also in ⟨the Lord⟩ [Christ] Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Philip. 2:5-7).

Jesus was crucified on the charge that he was an impostor, that he, though plainly to the Jews being a man, said that God was his father, making himself equal with God. Jesus had said to a helpless cripple **on this occasion**—a cripple of thirty-eight years standing—Rise, take up thy bed and walk, and the man arose healed. This healing attracted the attention of the Jews, and because this act of mercy was done on the sabbath day they were scandalized greatly and sought to kill the Christ, but Jesus answered rather independently, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). On which they sought the more to kill him because from their viewpoint he had not only broken the sabbath in healing the cripple, but had now blasphemed by saying that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. Further he answered: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (John 5:19).<sup>1</sup>

Again this Son of God offended the Jews by saying: “The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. . . . I and my Father are one” (John 10:25, 30). On this declaration “the Jews took up stones to stone him.” Then Jesus said unto them: “Many good works have I

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<sup>1</sup>The whole chapter should be read as it manifests the close relations and sympathetic cooperation between this God’s Son, the Christ, and that Father who begot him into this earth life, to be the revelation of God to the World.

shewed you from my Father; for which *of* ⟨these⟩ [those] works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For *a* good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (John 10:31–33). Did Jesus deny that he was God to these infuriated Jews? What an opportunity to correct their misconception, if misconception it was! But Jesus did not deny their charge, on the contrary he confirmed it by a quotation from the Old Testament:

Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken (i.e. denied); Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. Therefore [they] ⟨the Jews⟩ sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand. (John 10:34–39)

Again when accused before Pilate who declared he could “find no fault in him,” the Jews answered: “We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God” (John 19:6–7). When before the Sanhedrin of the Jews, the High Priest in the court said directly to Jesus: “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus ⟨answered⟩ [saith unto] him, Thou hast said.” And further on, “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:63–64).

Once the Christ himself turned questioner of the Jews, and said to them; “What think ye of Christ?”—having reference, of course, to the Anointed One, the Messiah of the Old Testament—and of whom there was lively expectation that this Messiah would manifest himself unto Israel; and the question of Jesus referred to that Anointed One, then yet to be revealed—so,

What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, ⟨un⟩till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? (Matt. 22:42–45)

“No man was able to answer him [a word], neither durst any man from that day forth,” saith the record, “ask him any [more] questions” (Matt. 22:46).

The above question can only be answered by the plain truth, that the first Lord (the Father), said unto the second Lord (the Son, Jesus

Christ), “Sit thou on my right hand, 〈un〉til I make thine enemies thy footstool”; and the second Lord could become the “Son of David” only on the maternal side, Mary being a descendant of David. The Jews dare not answer, nor make further inquiry about this seeming mystery without admitting that the anointed one, their Messiah, was to be veritably the “Son of God.”

*Jesus Christ is to be worshipped, hence God.* Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament scriptures, is to be worshipped by men and angels, and worship is an honor to be paid only to true Deity. The angels of heaven refuse the adoration we call worship. When an angel appeared to the Apostle John while on the Isle of Patmos, and the apostle, awed by the brightness of his glory, fell upon his face to worship him, the angel said, “See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren: . . . worship God” (Rev. 19:10). Again,

unto which of the angels said he 〈God〉 at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? . . . When he bringeth in the 〈first born〉 [first-begotten] into the world 〈who is Jesus〉, he 〈God〉 saith, [And] let all the angels of God worship him. (Heb. 1:5-6)

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philip. 2:9-11)

*Jesus Christ is the Creator, hence God.* Evidence of this is found in the testimony of John in the opening verses of his great gospel, as we have already seen:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4)

The Father . . . hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son . . . Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (Col. 1:12-17)

So also the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken

unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (That is to say under the direction of the Father, Jesus Christ as preexistent spirit, created the worlds). (Heb. 1:1-2)

*Jesus Christ equal with God the Father; hence God.* After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples on a mount in Galilee, and said:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and [of] the Son, and [of] the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. (Matt. 28:18-20)

Observe in this passage, that this Jesus Christ is placed upon a footing of equality with God the Father and with the Holy Ghost. This brings to mind the scripture of St. Paul who, speaking of Jesus, said: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Philip. 2:6). Also the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is declared to be “the brightness of his (the Father’s) glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down (at) [on] the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). So Paul to the Corinthians, “Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4). And again in his letter to the Colossians, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col. 1:15). Being the express image of his person, then the “image of the invisible God,” Jesus becomes a revelation of the person of God to the children of men as well as a revelation of God’s attributes, “for it pleased the Father that in him (the Lord Jesus Christ) should all fulness dwell. . . . For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 1:19; 2:9). All there is then of God, there is in Jesus Christ, and all is revealed through him. All that Jesus Christ is, God is; and Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, is an immortal man of flesh and bone and spirit united; and who, with his Father, and the Holy Ghost reigns eternally in the heavens, our Godhead. “Great is the mystery of godliness”; and yet “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3:16).

*God revealed to the world in the person of Jesus Christ.* The world stands in need of a revelation of God. He whom Babylonians, Assyrians, and Egyptians sought for in their pantheism must be made known. God whom Confucius would have man respect, but keep at a distance, must draw near. The “Alfader” of the Goths and Huns and



Syphians, mysterious and incomprehensible to them, must be brought out of the northern darkness into a glorious light. The God idea that prevailed among the Greek philosophers, must be brought from out of the midst of their idle speculations and made to stand before the world. Him whom they ignorantly worshipped must be preached unto them. He whom the Jews were seeking to deny and forsake because of their misunderstanding, must be revealed, and that concretely, to the children of men. And lo! when the veil falls, and the darkness moves back through the revelation that God gives of himself, what form is that which steps forth from the background *of* the world's ignorance and mystery? A man, as God lives! Jesus of Nazareth, the great Peasant Teacher of Judea! And he is God revealed henceforth to the world!

Those who thought upon God as impersonal, without form, must know him henceforth as a person in the sense of being an individual, in the form of man—or, more properly, man in his form; for in the image of God was man created. Those who held him to be “without quality,” must henceforth know him as possessed of the qualities of Jesus of Nazareth. Those who have regarded him as infinitely “terrible,” must henceforth know him as infinitely gentle. Those who would hold him at a distance, will now permit him to draw near.

This is the world's mystery revealed. This is God, “manifested in the flesh.” This is the Son of God, who comes to reveal the Father, for he is the “express image” and likeness of the Father's person, and the revealer of the Father's mind. Henceforth when **men** shall say, “shew us the Father,” Jesus, as when he answered Philip, will point to himself as the complete revelation of the Father and say: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:8-9). Henceforth when men shall dispute about the “being” and “nature” of God, it shall be a perfect answer to uphold Jesus Christ as the complete and perfect revelation, and manifestation of God; and through all the ages it shall be so—eternally so. For there shall be no excuse for men saying that they know not God, for all may know him from the least to the greatest, so tangible, so real a revelation has God given of himself in the person, character, and attributes of Jesus Christ. Jesus lived his life on earth, a life of sorrow, its pathway strewn with actions fraught with mercy, kindness and love. A man, he was approved of God among men by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him. But him men took, and by wicked hands crucified and slew. God raised him up, however, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of *them*; and exalted him on high, at the right hand of God, whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. (This synopsis of the Christ's life is in Acts 2.)

Mark you, in all this there is not a word about the “mysterious, ineffable generation of the Son of God” from the Father; and nothing about any other of the many mysteries that men indulged in their learned disquisitions of God. Yet the foregoing is the revelation of God as seen in Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament scriptures.

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Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: Roberts, *Mormon Doctrine of Deity*; Smith, “King Follett Discourse”; 3 Ne. 11; Ether 3; Joseph Smith-History, on the First Vision.