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EDITORIAL

David M. Morris

Editor

Once again, it is with great pleasure that we publish another issue of the *International Journal of Mormon Studies* (IJMS). This issue brings together a combination of scholars from different parts of the world and academic disciplines. Drawn from Mormon and non-Mormon perspectives, the articles found herein provide interesting insights to Mormonism globally, encouraging further attention and examination. Following on from the successful *European Mormon Studies Association* (EMSA) conference in Torino, Italy (2009), we have published here many of those papers that were presented during that conference. We are grateful for the submissions and support.

Like all aspects of modern life, and the worldwide recession, financial constraints have not left a journal as this and organisations such as EMSA untouched, and we are particularly grateful to those who have supported us financially, who no doubt would prefer that we do not mention them by name. We are, nevertheless, grateful. As editor I am particularly indebted for the efforts of Kim Östman and Zachary Jones who not only bring a professional and academic eye to this journal, but also selflessly give of their time and talents. We also extend our appreciation to those who blind peer reviewed the articles and took time to review publications that have an international flavour. We hope as an editorial board that you will enjoy the contents of this issue.

ARE JESUS AND SATAN BROTHERS? A SHORT EXPLORATION IN MORMON CHRISTOLOGY

John Walsh

Recently, various media sources, such as MSNBC, Fox News, and the Associated Press, have attributed to Mormonism the idea that Jesus and Satan are brothers.¹ In my view, this idea is a theological misunderstanding that incorrectly interprets Mormon Christology. While it is beyond the scope of this study to do a complete Christological analysis of the Mormon Jesus, this specific issue will be discussed in enough depth to allow the reader to understand that Joseph Smith's theology does not allow the idea that Jesus and Satan can be considered as brothers in their primary relationship.

As I have discussed this issue with non-Mormons, I have learned some important things about our topic. When non-Mormons hear it said that Jesus and Satan are brothers, they often believe that the New Testament Jesus and Satan are being compared. It should be remembered that in traditional Christianity there is no premortal Jesus, as the Holy Trinity created Jesus ex nihilo in Mary's womb as part of the Incarnation. Since I have discussed how the Mormon Jesus differs from the Jesus of traditional Christianity in considerable detail elsewhere,² I will not address it further here. But since non-Mormons are often focused on the mortal Jesus, I will begin my analysis on this point.

Let us consider first the definition of the term "brother." To be brothers, two persons must share a relationship of significance. As a result, for us to determine if Jesus is the brother of Satan, we must examine the nature of their relationship. Normally, we call two people brothers when they share the same genetic physical heritage.³ A brother would have the same father and mother. A half-brother would share one parent, but not the other.

¹ See Lawrence O'Donnell of MSNBC while appearing on The McLaughlin Group television show on December 9, 2007; Father Jonathan Morris, "Mitt Romney, the Mormon (What's That!)," on foxnews.com, on December 6, 2007; Associated Press, "GOP Hopeful Mike Huckabee Asks if Mormons Believe Jesus, Devil Are Brothers," on December 12, 2007.

² W. J. Walsh, *The Ascension Theology of Joseph Smith* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wales, Lampeter, 2005).

³ *Random House Dictionary*, 2009 (see <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/brother>).

In Mormonism, Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of God the Father and the mortal woman Mary.⁴ Satan is a malignant spirit who never was nor ever will be born into this mortal world.⁵ Since Satan does not even have a physical body, the Father did not sire him, and Mary did not conceive him. Therefore, Satan cannot be considered either Jesus' brother or half-brother on the basis of physical genetic heritage.

On the other hand, after delivering Jesus, Mormons believe that Mary went on to have other children who were begotten by her mortal husband Joseph.⁶ Mormons deny the post-marital virginity of Mary.⁷ Thus, Jesus did have true half-siblings, though Satan was not one of them. Nicene Christians are split as to whether Mary had additional children. Many Protestants agree that she did, while most Catholics and

⁴ Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret Book Company, 1976 reprint edition), pp. 58 and 323; Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), p. 7; Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1985), pp. 67–68, 75, and 111; Gerald Hansen, Jr., “Jesus Christ, Only Begotten In The Flesh,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 1, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992); Andrew C. Skinner, “Jesus Christ, Birth Of Jesus Christ,” in *Encyclopedia Of Mormonism*, vol. 1.

⁵ Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 181 and 297; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), p. 279; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), pp. 170–72; Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), pp. 33–35; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), pp. 109 and 566; LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), pp. 293 and 308; Kent M. Van De Graaff, “Physical Body,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 3; Jay E. Jensen, “Spirit,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 3; Chauncey C. Riddle, “Devils,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 1.

⁶ Camille Fronk, “Mary, Mother of Jesus,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 2; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1979), pp. 227, 377, and 466–67; James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ: A Study of the Messiah and His Mission* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1982 reprint edition), pp. 116–17 and 279–80.

⁷ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 546; Alfred Benney, Roger R. Keller, “Catholicism and Mormonism,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 1. Cf. “Virgin Birth of Christ,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 1703.

some Protestants believe that Jesus' siblings mentioned in the New Testament⁸ are actually children of Joseph from a previous marriage, or possibly cousins.⁹ So Mormons differ from some traditional Christians on this point. Further, in a unique Mormon understanding, Adam is referred to as "the son of God,"¹⁰ and thus is another half-sibling of Jesus, though he was not begotten as a mortal being in the mortal world.¹¹ While there are issues that could be discussed regarding Jesus' half-siblings, as well as Mormon Christological issues concerning Jesus' divine nature, those issues are out of scope in regards to clarifying whether Jesus and Satan have a sibling relationship in Mormonism. Now, having established that Jesus and Satan did not share the same genetic physical heritage, we must ask if they share any other significant relationship which might justify usage of the term brother.

Let us next consider the issue of adoption. In the New Testament, Christ is referred to as the "firstborn of many brethren,"¹² and from a Mormon perspective, this expression partly refers to how people can assume aspects of divine nature through adoption by God.¹³ Sometimes children are adopted into a family and considered brothers, even if they have no shared genetic heritage. If the relationship is close and loving, they are not called adopted brothers, but true brothers. Normally, a person would introduce "James" simply as "my brother" instead of "my adopted brother," because whether he had been adopted into the family would be an irrelevant point based on the strength of the relationship. So, even though a person is not the physical son of the Father or Mary, and thus a natural sibling to Jesus, Mormons believe that they may become a covenant child of God, and therefore a true sibling via adoption. For those so chosen, Jesus is a true brother. Satan has not been adopted

⁸ Matthew 13:55–56; Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19.

⁹ Cf. J. M. Frame, "Virgin Birth of Jesus," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker House Books, 1984), pp. 1143–46.

¹⁰ Moses 6:22.

¹¹ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 159; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 546.

¹² Romans 8:29.

¹³ John Taylor, *Mediation and Atonement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1882), ch. 20; Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1941), pp. 282–83; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 23.

by God and thus cannot be considered a brother to Jesus in this sense of the term either.

Let us now examine the issue of relative place in the divine hierarchy. Mormons recognize the resurrected Jesus as reigning in celestial glory, at the right hand of the Father, receiving the everlasting praise and worship of the heavenly hosts.¹⁴ In comparison to Jesus, it is true that Satan was originally one of the greatest of angels.¹⁵ In fact, his name Lucifer, which means Light-bearer in Latin,¹⁶ reflects the intense heavenly glory he previously had in heaven. Through disobedience Satan lost whatever glory he had in the beginning, and dwells in Hell as a fallen angel who is eternally called Perdition.¹⁷ As someone who did not conform to the divine lifestyle, Satan has lost his status as a heavenly brother.

A famous scene from Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* will help to illustrate this issue. In the play, the nobleman De Guiche was ridiculed and rejected by the Gascon cadets because they did not believe that he acted in the way a true Gascon should act. Later, in the Battle of Arras, De Guiche changes his behavior and is finally accepted as a comrade in arms, not only by the Gascons, but also by Cyrano as well.

In ancient Jewish records, the hosts of the divine council are often called the heavenly family of the Most High God.¹⁸ However, Mormons believe that Satan is no longer a member of the heavenly hosts and family of God. The Book of Moses helps articulate this point:

... Satan came tempting him [Moses], saying: Moses, son of man, worship me. And ... Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee? For behold, I could not look upon God, except his glory should come upon me, and I were transfig-

¹⁴ *Doctrine and Covenants* (hereafter *D&C*) 76:23, 119; 1 Nephi 1:8.

¹⁵ Chauncey C. Riddle, "Devils," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 1.

¹⁶ "Lucifer," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1002.

¹⁷ *D&C* 76:26; Moses 4:3.

¹⁸ Nathaniel Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice-Regency in Late Antiquity* (Boston: Brill, 1999), pp. 22 and 53; Macy Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998), p. 239. Cf. Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 45; 3 Enoch 16:1-5 (Synopse [20]).

ured before him. But I can look upon thee in the natural man. Is it not so, surely? Blessed be the name of my God, for his Spirit hath not altogether withdrawn from me, or else where is thy glory, for it is darkness unto me? And I can judge between thee and God ... And now, when Moses had said these words, Satan cried with a loud voice, and ranted upon the earth, and commanded, saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me. And it came to pass that Moses began to fear exceedingly ... Nevertheless, calling upon God, he received strength, and he commanded, saying: Depart from me, Satan, for this one God only will I worship, which is the God of glory. And now Satan began to tremble, and the earth shook; and Moses received strength, and called upon God, saying: In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan. And it came to pass that Satan cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and he departed hence, even from the presence of Moses, that he beheld him not.¹⁹

In this text, just as De Guiche was rejected by the Gascons for not displaying the attributes inherent to any true Gascon, Satan is rejected by Moses for lacking the glory inherent to anyone that is really a member of the family of God. As De Guiche did not act the way a true Gascon should act, Satan does not act the way a true member of the family of God should act. Therefore, from a Mormon perspective, Jesus and Satan are not comrades in arms and thus cannot be considered brothers in this sense of the term either.

It should be noted that Satan declares, "I am the Only Begotten, worship me." Therefore, Satan wants Jesus' place in the divine hierarchy. Satan wants equality with Jesus as his true brother. However, Moses rejects this idea because he sees that Satan lacks the defining divine glory. If Satan were the brother of Jesus, Moses knows he would have the same type of glory inherent to Jesus and members of the divine family. And Satan does not. Further, Moses calls upon the power of the Only Begotten to banish Satan, thus showing that the power of Jesus is greater than the power of Satan. This story is inconsistent with the idea of Satan being a true brother to Jesus, a member of the divine family, and enjoying any type of equality with Jesus.

Having established this analytical foundation, it can be noted that some Mormons may not immediately object to the idea that Jesus and Satan are brothers due to what I believe is their incomplete under-

¹⁹ Moses 1:12-22.

standing of Mormon theology. In addition, some Mormon ecclesiastical leaders and others have on rare occasions used imprecise language indicating some type of sibling relationship in a few of their homiletic discourses and writings.²⁰ By few, I mean that such usage is relatively rare in Mormon discourse; and thus, is not the primary way in which the relationship between Jesus and Satan has historically been described in Mormon culture. By imprecise, I mean that these people would probably rephrase their homiletic discourses if they thought that their word choice might somehow cause some people to accept the notion that Jesus and Satan have some type of family relationship.

In my view, those Mormons who fail to object to the suggestion of such a family relationship probably overemphasize a common aspect of nature that Jesus once shared with Satan prior to his mortal birth and underemphasize all the aspects of nature that made Jesus the unique Son of God.

For context, it should be noted that Mormons reject the Greek Neo-Platonic philosophical tenets adopted by Nicene Christians that divide existence between two separate realities: divinity and the created world, with an irreconcilable gap between these two realities.²¹ From a

²⁰ For example, see John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960 edition), p. 209; Gary P. Gillum, "Christology," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, vol. 1.

²¹ For an overview Nicene theology merging with Greek philosophy, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. ix; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 12–13, 54, 77; Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and Classical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 3; Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000); Hans Küng, *Christianity: Essence, History, Future*, trans. by John Bowden (New York: Continuum, 1994, 1998); Keith E. Norman, "Ex Nihilo: the Development of the Doctrines of God and Creation in Early Christianity," *BYU Studies*, vol. 17 (1977), no. 3; Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church*, ed. by A. M. Fairbairn (New York: Burt Franklin, 1888, 1972); Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?: A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), p. 88; Stephen E. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christians?* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, 1996), pp. 38–40; Blake T. Ostler, "The Mormon Concept of God," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 17 (1984), no. 2; David J. Halperin in *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, ed. by John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane (Albany: State

Nicene perspective, this rejection by Mormons is heretical. Nicenes believe that it causes Mormons to confuse Creator and creature. Mormons believe that this division between Creator and creature is not correct. This is a true point of distinction between Mormonism and Nicene theology.

Because of their rejection of the Nicene perspective, Mormons believe that all existence, including God, angels, and humanity are part of the same continuum of reality, though in different stages of development.²² This means that as part of the natural order, God is mutable and subject to change.²³ In association with this mutability, Mormons believe that Gods, angels, and humanity all began as self-existing Intelligence, or

University of New York Press, 1995), p. 282; Guy G. Stroumsa in *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, p. 147; Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 2nd ed., (New York: T&T Clark International, 1998), pp. 73 and 127; Timo Eskola, *Messiah and Throne: Jewish Merkavah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 2001), p. 278; Robert Louis Wilken, *The Christians As the Romans Saw Them*, 2nd ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 79 and 175; Daniel W. Graham and James L. Siebach in *Early Christians in Disarray: Contemporary LDS Perspectives on the Christian Apostasy*, ed. by Noel B. Reynolds (Provo: FARMS and Brigham Young University Press, 2005), pp. 205–37; Noel B. Reynolds in *Early Christians in Disarray: Contemporary LDS Perspectives on the Christian Apostasy*, p. 314; R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318–381* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), pp. 856–69; A. H. Armstrong, ed., *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), p. 57; Shaye J.D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, ed. by Wayne A. Meeks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987, 1989), p. 36; Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985), p. 9 [f. 31]; Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 96; Jules Gross, *The Divinization of the Christian According to the Greek Fathers* (Anaheim: A&C Press, 2002), p. 97; Jeffrey R. Holland, cited in Elise Soukup, “The Mormon Odyssey,” in *Newsweek* at

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9630255/site/newsweek/>.

²² John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, ed. by G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), pp. 52–53; Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 170; Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 21. See Walsh, *The Ascension Theology of Joseph Smith*.

²³ Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 345.

light and truth,²⁴ though with different levels of ability. God the Father, the Intelligence of greatest ability, instituted laws whereby the other Intelligences could progress in power and knowledge as he himself had progressed.²⁵ Part of this plan of progression was to graduate from Intelligence to premortal spirit. From existence as a premortal spirit, the Intelligences graduated to mortal physical bodies. After death and resurrection, the Intelligences would enter into their final state, having a resurrected physical body of flesh, bone, and spirit, like the Father.

This Mormon scheme of reality means that Jesus and Satan can be compared in several ways. They could be thought of as brothers in the sense that each began as self-existing, co-eternal Intelligence, though Mormon teachings indicate that Jesus was of greater ability than Satan. They could also be thought of as brothers in the sense that God the Father helped each graduate to a premortal spirit body that he himself had procreated.²⁶

However, if a person accepted these lines of reasoning, then he must also state that Jesus and Satan have no special unique relationship between them. In other words, if a person were to accept that Jesus and Satan are brothers as a natural derivative from these Mormon teachings, each God, angel, and human would also have to be considered a brother or sister to them both as well. Of course, if we are all brothers and sisters, then these relational terms lose much of their meaning due to too much commonality.

This being said, it is important to know that calling Jesus and Satan brothers is still a distorted view of Mormon theology, in my opinion. Since Jesus and Satan have no special relationship between them, it seems improper to describe shared partial ontology as the basis for brotherhood. Because calling them brothers implies a special significant relationship, and this does not actually exist, it would be more accurate to say that Jesus and Satan both exist in the same continuum of reality as humanity does. It's simple, concise, and clearly distinguishes Mormonism from traditional Christianity.

It should be noted that Jesus' primary relationship is with his Heavenly Father, and his mother Mary. In Mormon theology, Jesus is called the Son of God because of his physical body with its unique ge-

²⁴ D&C 84:45; 88:6, 40; 93:28-40; John 3:21 (Joseph Smith Translation).

²⁵ Joseph Smith in *History of the Church*, ed. by B. H. Roberts, vol. 6, 2nd revised ed., (Salt Lake City: The Deseret Book Company, 1980), p. 312.

²⁶ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 251.

netic heritage.²⁷ Even though Jesus had received a spirit body from the Father, Mormon scripture says he was not called the Son of God until he received his physical body from God the Father and Mary.²⁸ This special physical body, with its unique mixture of divine and mortal chromosomes, was necessary for Jesus' calling as Savior and Redeemer of the world.

While Mormons are famous for calling themselves children of God, they do not believe that this gives them the same distinctive divine sonship that Jesus has with the Father. Jesus could be considered a son of God (with a small s) when he was a premortal spirit, but he did not become the Son of God (with a capital S), until he was begotten by the Father and conceived by Mary. It is true that Jesus was referred to as the Only Begotten and similar titles prior to his physical birth, but he claims these titles in anticipation of his mortal birth and unique genetic heritage.

In my view, people who call Jesus and Satan brothers because they both received advancement from Intelligence to premortal spirit with the Father's help seem to fail to grasp that this commonality is not the basis of Jesus' unique divine Sonship. It is very important to note that Mormons call Jesus the divine Son of God because the Father begat his physical body which he did not do for Satan. Thus, in Mormon theology, Satan is not another Son of God (with a capital S), and he is not Jesus' brother.

While it is a Mormon theological dogma that both Jesus and Satan received premortal spirit bodies from the Father, I believe it is improper emphasis to create a brotherly relationship based on it. It has a tendency to create a distortion in the listener's mind by underemphasizing the primary importance of the literal physical genetic relationship between Jesus and the Father that Satan does not enjoy. This is especially true for those of a Trinitarian mindset who do not believe in premortal existence for either Jesus or the rest of humanity.

It is interesting that Mormons call each other "brother" or "sister" within their religious community. For example, someone might say that this is "Brother Johnson" or "Sister Smith." This usage reflects the shared covenantal responsibilities of the people and is not a reference to their shared premortal heritage. A person would not call his non-Mormon neighbor "Brother Jones" just because they share the same

²⁷ Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 187.

²⁸ Cf. Moses 4:1-2.

premortal nature. Likewise, if a non-Mormon neighbor is not a brother despite a common spiritual heritage as a spirit child of the Father, then it is inappropriate to consider Jesus and Satan as brothers for the same reason. Instead, Satan is “the common enemy”²⁹ of God and humanity. Again, when discussing shared premortal heritage, the issue of emphasis is important. Imagine for a moment that I were to take my wife to a party and when introducing her to people, I said simply, “This is my friend.” It is a true statement that she is my friend. Still, that simple description in isolation lacks the emphasis needed to properly portray the significance of our relationship. If people were to later find out that she is also my wife, and I failed to mention it, then they would likely believe that I was less than forthright in describing our relationship when I simply said “friend.” And they would be correct. Likewise, while Jesus has occasionally been called “Elder Brother” in Mormon discourse, this is not his primary title and inadequately describes his relationship to either Satan or humanity in general when used in isolation or without proper context.

Importantly, this title is not used in Mormon scripture. In contrast, Jesus’ title of “Only Begotten” is used 9 times in the *Book of Mormon*,³⁰ 13 times in the *Doctrine and Covenants*,³¹ and 25 times in the *Pearl of Great Price*.³² Many of the uses within the *Pearl of Great Price* are actually extractions from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. This means that Joseph Smith believed that the biblical text made more sense to him when it stressed the particular title of “Only Begotten.” This relative usage of “Elder Brother” versus “Only Begotten” is very important to understanding the relationship between Jesus and Satan in the mind of Joseph Smith.

²⁹ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 151; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), pp. 221 and 235; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, vol. 3, p. 204; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1982), p. 14; Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989 reprint edition), pp. 461–62.

³⁰ 2 Nephi 25:12; Jacob 4:5, 11; Alma 5:48; 9:26; 12:33–34; 13:5, 9.

³¹ D&C 20:21; 29:42, 46; 49:5; 76:13, 23, 25, 35, 57, 93:11; 124:123; 138:14, 57.

³² Moses 1:6, 13, 16–17, 19, 21, 32–33, 2:1, 26–27; 3:18; 4:1, 3, 28; 5:7, 9, 57; 6:52, 57, 59, 62; 7:50, 59, 62.

What does “Only Begotten” signify? It signifies that within the mortal world Jesus is the only one to have been sired by God the Father, and thus has no siblings in his primary relationship to divinity. Jesus’ unique genetic heritage was an essential component of his ability to act as Savior and Redeemer.

Can people be adopted into the family of God, according to Mormonism? Yes. Do Jesus and all of humanity share common spiritual heritage as spiritual offspring of the Father? Yes. Before he was cast down, was Satan once a member of the premortal family of God, and thus shares this premortal heritage? Yes. However, for Joseph Smith, “Only Begotten” was a far, far more crucial title for Jesus than “Elder Brother,” as evidenced by the Prophet’s relative usage of the two terms. Therefore, in my view, use of the title “Elder Brother,” especially in reference to Satan, neglects the importance and uniqueness of Jesus in Mormon theology as the Son of God (capital S). I believe the lack of proper emphasis distorts the place of both Jesus and Satan in Joseph Smith’s thought.