

Does The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Teach That God Had *SEX* with Mary?

It's a good bet that the headline got your attention, isn't it? That is exactly what it was meant to do. That is why critics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints often use this, or similar statements: They have great shock value, get your attention, and pique your curiosity. It is true that sex sells. However, as is often the case, after the critics ask a good question they run away with their ears covered when there is an attempt to give a response. This response is for the honest truth seekers, members who would sincerely like to have this question answered, and even the critics.

So do the LDS teach, as doctrine, that God had a sexual relationship with Mary? The short answer is, no. But that answer is probably unsatisfactory to those who want a more complete answer.

The place members should always look for official doctrine is in the canonized scriptures of the Church. The clearest statement of doctrine about this topic is found in the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ. 1 Nephi 11:18–21 states:

Behold the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!

As can be seen, official LDS doctrine clearly teaches that Mary was a virgin, and that as a virgin she gave birth to Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ is the literal Son of God. If this is so, where do critics get the idea that LDS believe God had a physical relationship with Mary? It certainly isn't in any doctrinal statements found in scripture.

Typically, critics either take statements from non-authoritative books or take an innocent phrase and make it sound like it says something it doesn't. An example is a statement from the 1972 *Family Home Evening Manual*, pp. 125–126, that recently appeared in an anti-Mormon brochure passed out at Temple Square in Salt Lake City:

How are children begotten? I answer just as Jesus Christ was begotten of his father... We must come down to the simple fact that God almighty was the father of his son Jesus Christ. Mary, the virgin girl had never known mortal man, was his mother. God by her begot His son Jesus Christ.

While this sounds like damning evidence, a "smoking gun," upon reflection it doesn't say anything other than Jesus is really the only begotten Son of God and his Sonship isn't figurative. What the statement doesn't do is specify the mechanics of His conception.

Church leaders have placed emphasis on Jesus Christ being the literal Son of God. Christ alone is the only begotten Son of God in the flesh (John 1:14). It is critical to understand this concept, as those who are not unified in the faith and the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13) and those who deny the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ will not overcome (1 John 5:5). In this light, in *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 7, President Benson is quoted as follows:

The LDS Church proclaims that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in the most literal sense. The body in which He performed His mission in the flesh was sired by that same Holy being we worship as God, our Eternal Father.

Further, the manual *Gospel Principles*, 1997 edition, p. 64, is quoted as follows:

Thus, God the Father became the literal father of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal father.

Despite how anti-Mormons try to use these quotes, it can be seen that the LDS do indeed believe that Jesus Christ is the literal Son of God. But, once again, the quotes say nothing about the method of His conception, only about His lineage.

For the next quote, let's try a little exercise. Read this assertion, which is similar to those often made by critics of the Church: "The Mormon Church teaches that God had sexual intercourse with Mary." Now read this statement by BYU professor Stephen E. Robinson in the video *The Mormon Puzzle*, which critics have used to support the assertion:

The official doctrine of the Church is that Jesus is the literal offspring of God. He's got 46 chromosomes: 23 came from Mary, 23 came from God the eternal father.

Did your jaw drop to the floor? Did you say to yourself, "It's true, then?" Before you get too riled up, let's go to part two of the exercise.

The Church certainly does teach that Jesus Christ was a mortal, born of an immortal father and a mortal mother. Or, as the critics put it: Jesus Christ is God incarnate. Now read Professor Robinson's quote again, and it becomes a no-brainer. If Jesus Christ was mortal (incarnate, if you will), then of course He had 46 chromosomes, just like the rest of us, and also like the rest of us, 23 did come from His Father, and 23 from His mother. There is nothing shocking about that, is there? If this is the most damning evidence on the subject, the critics need to rethink their position.

In this day and age of artificial insemination, test-tube babies and cloning, it should be evident that there are other methods to consider regarding how Jesus Christ may have been conceived. While each of these provides ample fuel for speculation, the LDS Church simply has no official position concerning the mechanics of how the Son was begotten of the Father and conceived in Mary's womb.

The purpose of this article is to counter sensationalistic arguments of LDS critics and provide a simple introduction to this subject. If you would like more



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