The Roles of Jesus Christ
In Bringing to Pass the Immortality and Eternal Life of Man

Introduction
There are many, many roles that Jesus Christ, the Firstborn and Heir of Heavenly Father and Mother performs to bring about the immortality and eternal life of man. In this reading assignment, we will consider ten imperative roles that will be followed as this course proceeds.

1. Firstborn and Heir

Jesus Christ is both the firstborn and heir. He is the firstborn in two ways. First, Christ was the firstborn of Heavenly Father and Mother’s spirit offspring. Second, He was the first to be resurrected (i.e., becoming free from the physical and spiritual deaths imposed by Adam’s fall upon all mankind when they are born into this mortal world). As firstborn, Christ Heavenly father and Mother’s heir (i.e., He inherits all our Heavenly Father and Mother possess, both spiritually and physically). The following are teachings regarding these two roles of Jesus Christ.

A. Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of Heavenly Father and Mother’s spirit children and thus is Their Heir.

D&C 93:21
And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn;

Hebrews 1:1-2
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;

Col 1:15-16, 19
Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature [Gr: all creation]
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:
For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

Hugh B. Brown (1883-1975) First Presidency
Chief among that vast [premortal] assembly was Jehovah, the same who would become the Christ Child, the Redeemer. He was the Firstborn among the spirits, and by birthright was both heir and leader. (Conference Report, Oct.1963, p.92)

Jeffrey R. Holland Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
There are obvious ways in which Jesus, as literal offspring of the Father, is one with Him. For one thing, he is the spiritual son of God, the firstborn of the Father’s spirit children, ...
The first of these relationships—the power and authority of Christ’s literal inheritance from the Father, both physically and spiritually, as his firstborn and only begotten child in the flesh—was noted by Abinadi. To Christ more than any other in time or eternity it is said, “All that [the] Father hath shall be given unto him,” including authority to act for the Father under the Father’s direction. (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], pp.183-4)

B. Firstborn resurrected being of Heavenly Father and Mother’s children.

Colossians 1:18
And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

2. Heavenly Father’s Agent, Representative, Emissary, and Spokesman

Since “the firstborn holds the right of the presidency over this priesthood, and the keys or authority of the same” (D&C 68:17), then Jesus Christ, as heir, has the right of presidency over the priesthood of God and is therefore Heavenly Father’s representative or agent in all things.
It is in this way that the “oneness” of the Father and the Son is to be understood. To the Jews, the Savior stated clearly, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). He said this immediately following this declaration: “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all” (John 10:29). Thus declaring that God the Father is supreme and Christ is His representative, His agent, His spokesman. At an earlier occasion, He had proclaimed, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” Meaning, Christ is saying and doing what the Father would do if He were there. This is verified by the response of the Jews to this statement: “the Jews sought the more to kill him . . . making himself equal with God.” Christ continued: “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 5:17-20). Of this Neal A. Maxwell (1926-2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “But Christ’s unique submissiveness has always been in place. Indeed, He has “suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning” (3 Ne. 11:11), keenly observing His Father all the while: “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). This verse carries intimations of grand things—beyond the beyond.” (Plow in Hope, Ensign, May 2001, p.59)
The following are teachings regarding this extremely important role performed by Jesus Christ.

First Presidency (Joseph F. Smith, President)
Jesus Christ the “Father” by Divine Investiture of Authority. In all His dealings with the human family Jesus the Son has represented and yet represents Elohim His Father in power and authority. . .Thus the Father placed His name upon the Son; and Jesus Christ spoke and ministered in and through the Father’s name; and so far as power, authority, and Godship are concerned His words and acts were and are those of the Father. (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith [1998], p.359)

Jeffrey R. Holland Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
There are obvious ways in which Jesus, as literal offspring of the Father, is one with Him. For one thing, he is the spiritual son of God, the firstborn of the Father’s spirit children. Following that, he was to become the physical son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father in the Flesh. And as the Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi makes uniquely clear, Christ is the Son of God because he subjected his
will to the will of his Father. ... But what may at first seem less obvious is also taught in the scriptures—that there are ways in which Christ is so united with his Father that in some assignments he rightfully plays a fatherly role and rightfully bears the title of Father in doing so. ... Repeated references in this sacred record teach that, under the direction of and with authority given by the Father (Elohim), the Son (Jehovah/Jesus) may act as the Father in several ways.

First and foremost, as Abinadi taught, Christ was "conceived by the power of God" and therefore has the powers of the Father within him. In addition to that divine lineal relationship, Christ also acts as the Father in that he is the Creator of heaven and earth, is the father of our spiritual rebirth and salvation, and is faithful in honoring—and therefore claiming the power of—the will of his Father above that of his own will. Because of this inseparable relationship and uncompromised trust between them, Christ can act at any time and in any place speak and act for the Father by virtue of the "divine investiture of authority" the Father has given him. *(Christ and the New Covenant [1997], pp.183-4)*

### 3. The Creator

**Moses 1:31-33**

And behold, the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face. And the Lord God said unto Moses: For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me. And by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.

**3 Nephi 9:15**

Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that are in them. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.

**John 1:3**

All things were made by him and without him was not any thing made that was made.

**Colossians 1:16**

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:

Jeffrey R. Holland Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Clearly, Christ—under the direction of his Father—is the Father of creation, the Creator of heaven and earth and all things that in them are. *(Christ and the New Covenant [1997], pp.186)*

### 4. Jehovah—God the Old Testament

**Russell M. Nelson** Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

We worship God the Eternal Father in the name of His Son by the power of the Holy Ghost. We know the premortal Jesus to be Jehovah, God of the Old Testament. We know Him to be "the chief corner stone" upon which the organization of His Church is based. (Eph. 2:20.) We know Him to be the Rock from whom revelation comes to His authorized agents (see 1 Cor. 10:4; Hel. 5:12) and to all who worthily seek Him (see D&C 88:63).(*Thus Shall My Church Be Called*, Ensign, May 1990, p.16)

Bruce R. Mcconkie, (1915-1985) Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

There is one God and Father of us all, one eternal plan of salvation, one way back to heaven. And Jesus Christ is the name given by the Father whereby men may be saved. His is the only name given under heaven—either now, or in ages past, or in eternities yet unborn—whereby salvation comes. (See D&C 18:23; Moses 6:52.)

There is one everlasting gospel, one Mediator between God and men, one alone who came to reconcile fallen men to their Maker. All men in all ages are saved by the same power, the same laws, the same Savior. And that Savior is Christ.

It is written: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) He is the Lord Jehovah; he is the Great I AM; and beside him there is no Savior.

He is the God of Adam and of Enoch and of Noah and of all the Saints who were before the flood.

He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and of all Israel. He is the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the prophets of all the ages. It was by faith in his name that they performed all their mighty works.

He was the God of the Jaredites and the Israelites and the Nepites. Moses, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:26), chose to follow him.

He is the one who parted the Red Sea at Moses' word, who stopped the sun and the moon when Joshua spoke, who raised from death the widow's son because Elijah desired it.

All of the prophets, all of the patriarchs, all of the ancient Saints worshipped the Father in his holy name and in no other way.

All true believers, all of the faithful from Adam to this hour, all those who through faith have wrought righteousness and gained salvation—all, without exception, have taken upon themselves his name and have followed him with full purpose of heart.

He is our God and he is the God of our fathers! *(The Seven Christs,* Ensign, Nov. 1982, p. 33)

### 5. The Exemplar of the Father

**Colossians 1:15**

15 Who is the image of the invisible God,

**Hebrews 1:1-3**

1. GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,  
2. 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;  
3. Who being the brightness of [his] 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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Jeffrey R. Holland Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Of the many magnificent purposes served in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, one great aspect of that mission often goes uncelebrated. His followers did not understand it fully at the time, and many in modern Christianity do not grasp it now, but the Savior Himself spoke of it repeatedly and emphatically. It is the grand truth that in all that Jesus came to say and do, including and especially in His atoning suffering and sacrifice, He was showing us who and what God our Eternal Father is like, how completely devoted He is to His children in every age and nation. In word and in deed Jesus was trying to reveal and make personal to us the true nature of His Father, our Father in Heaven.

He did this at least in part because then and now all of us need to know God more fully in order to love Him more deeply and obey Him more completely. As both Old and New Testaments declare, "The first of all the commandments is . . . thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first [and great] commandment" *(Mark
12:29-30; see also Matthew 22:37-38; Deuteronomy 6:5).

After generations of prophets had tried to teach the family of man the will and the way of the Father, usually with little success, God in His ultimate effort to have us know Him, sent to earth His Only Begotten and perfect Son, created in His very likeness and image, to live and serve among mortals in the everyday rigors of life.

To come to earth with such a responsibility, to stand in place of Elohim—speaking as He would speak, judging and serving, loving and warning, forbearing and forgiving as He would do—this is a duty of such staggering proportions that you and I cannot comprehend such a thing. But in the loyalty and determination that would be characteristic of a divine child, Jesus could comprehend it and He did it. Then, when the praise and honor began to come, He humbly directed all adulation to the Father.

"The Father . . . doeth the works," He said in earnest. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 14:10; 5:19). On another occasion He said: "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me." "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 8:38, 28; 6:38).

I make my own heartfelt declaration of God our Eternal Father this morning because some in the contemporary world suffer from a distressing misconception of Him. Among these there is a tendency to feel distant from the Father, even estranged from Him, if they believe in Him at all. And if they do believe, many moderns say they might feel comfortable in the arms of Jesus, but they are uneasy contemplating the stern encounter of God (see William Barclay, The Mind of Jesus [1961], especially the chapter "Looking at the Cross" for a discussion of this modern tendency). Through a misreading (and surely, in some cases, a mistranslation) of the Bible, these see God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son as operating very differently, this in spite of the fact that in both the Old Testament and the New, the Son of God is one and the same, acting as He always does under the direction of the Father, who is Himself the same "yesterday, today, and forever" (for example, 1 Ne. 10:18; 2 Nephi 27:23; Moroni 10:19; D&C 20:12).

In reflecting on these misconceptions we realize that one of the remarkable contributions of the Book of Mormon is its seamless, perfectly consistent view of divinity throughout that majestic book. Here there is no Malachi-to-Matthew gap, no pause while we shift theological gears, no misreading the God who is urgently, lovingly, faithfully at work on every page of that record from its Old Testament beginning to its New Testament end. Yes, in an effort to give the world back its Bible and a correct view of Deity with it, what we have in the Book of Mormon is a uniform view of God in all His glory and goodness, all His richness and complexity—including and especially as again demonstrated through a personal appearance of His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. ("The Grandeur of God," Ensign, Nov. 2003)

6. The Savior and Redeemer of the World

Bruce R. McConkie (1915-85) Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Salvation comes because of Christ and his atoning sacrifice. He is the Redeemer who ransoms men from the effects of Adam’s fall. He brings immortality to all men, thus redeeming them from temporal death through the resurrection. Those who believe and obey his laws are redeemed from spiritual death and have eternal life. In like manner he is the Savior. He came "to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:11), not to save fallen man in his sins but rom his sins.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," Paul says, "not imputing their trespasses unto them." That is, through the gospel, fallen man may be ransomed from a state of sin and spiritual darkness and restored to one of harmony and unity with Deity. The gospel is "the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18-19.) Our Lord’s ministry is one of mediation. He interposes himself between the immortal Man of Holiness and mortal men who are sinners; he intercedes on their behalf and pleads their cause in the courts above. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5.) "He shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved." (2 Nephi 2:9.) As our Advocate with the Father, He pleads: "Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified; wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life." (D&C 45:3-5.) (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], p.68)

7. The Advocate

D&C 29:5

5 Lift up your hearts and be glad, for I am in your midst, and am your advocate with the Father; and it is his good will to give you the kingdom.

D&C 45:3-5

3 Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him—

4 Saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;

5 Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.

8. Father of Those Who Abide in His Gospel

Message of the First Presidency (Joseph F. Smith, President)

A third sense in which Jesus Christ is regarded as the "Father" has reference to the relationship between Him and those who accept His Gospel and thereby become heirs of eternal life. Following are a few of the scriptures illustrating this meaning. ...

Salvation is attainable only through compliance with the laws and ordinances of the Gospel; and all who are thus saved become sons and daughters unto God in a distinctive sense. In a revelation given through Joseph the Prophet to Emma Smith the Lord Jesus addressed the woman as "My daughter," and said: "for verily I say unto you, all those who receive my gospel are sons and daughters in my kingdom" (Doc. & Cov. 25:1). In many instances the Lord has addressed men as His sons (e. g. Doc. & Cov. 9:1; 34:3; 121:7). ... That by obedience to the Gospel men may become sons of God, both as sons of Jesus Christ, and, through Him, as sons of His Father, is set forth in many revelations given in the current dispensation. Thus we read in an utterance of the Lord Jesus Christ to Hyrum Smith in 1829: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world. I am the same who came unto my own and my own received me not; But verily, verily, I say unto you, that as many as receive me, to them will I give power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on my name. Amen." (Doc. & Cov. 11:28-30) ...

Men may become children of Jesus Christ by being born anew-born of God. Those who have been born unto God through obedience to the Gospel may by valiant devotion to righteousness obtain exaltation and even reach the status of Godhood. ... By the new birth—that of water and the Spirit—mankind may become children...
9. Millennial King and Lawgiver

D&C 38:17-22

And I have made the earth rich, and behold it is my footstool, wherefore, again I will stand upon it.

And I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh;

And I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it with all your hearts.

And this shall be my covenant with you, ye shall have it for the land of your inheritance, and for the inheritance of your children forever, while the earth shall stand, and ye shall possess it again in eternity, no more to pass away.

But, verily I say unto you that in time ye shall have no king nor ruler, for I will be your king and watch over you.

Wherefore, hear my voice and follow me, and you shall be a free people, and ye shall have no laws but my laws when I come, for I am your lawgiver, and what can stay my hand?

D&C 45:56-59

And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day.

And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon the earth of your inheritance, and for the inheritance of your children forever, while the earth shall stand, and ye shall possess it again in eternity, no more to pass away.

Then, in the final day, when all is done and accomplished according to the divine purpose—after all men, the sons of perdition included, have risen from death to life and have become immortal—all men will stand before the bar of God in a final day of judgment.

The eventual destiny of all men will have been determined before that day, but then the final and irrevocable decrees will be issued as pertaining to every living soul. (The Millennial Messiah [1982], p.515.)

10. The Judge

Bruce R. McConkie (1915-85) Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In all ages, from Adam to this hour, the holy prophets have taught the true doctrine of the judgment. They have always set forth those concepts and verities that would encourage men to live in such a manner as to gain the glorious reward of eternal life when their day and time came to stand before the Eternal Bar. The hour of judgment is not the same for every man. Some are judged at one time and others at a different hour. There are, in fact, many days of judgment available, but always the same Judge sits at the same judgment bar, always the same laws govern the procedures, and always a just and right judgment is imposed.

Our birth into mortality is a day of judgment in that it signalizes we were found worthy while in the premortal life to undergo a mortal probation and thus to continue on the course leading to eternal life. There are those who press forward along this course during this mortal probation—with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect love of God and of all men, keeping the commandments, and doing only those things that please their Lord—until they are translated and taken up into heaven, or until their calling and election is made sure. Either of these glorious eventualities is in itself a day of judgment. Their celestial inheritance is thus assured, though they have not yet gained bodies of immortal glory. Death also is a day of judgment when the spirits of men go to either paradise or hell as their deeds warrant.

The second coming of Christ is the great day of judgment for all men, both the living and the dead, in it those who qualify come forth in the resurrection of the just and obtain their rewards in the kingdoms established for them. At that time the decree goes forth that the rest of the dead shall remain in their graves to await the resurrection of the unjust and their consequent telestial inheritance.

At that time the wicked among men are consumed as stubble, their bodies become dust again, and their spirits are consigned to an eternal hell to await the day of the resurrection of damnation. At that time those mortals who are worthy escape the burning, abide the day, and remain on the new earth with its new heavens in the presence of earth's new King.

Then, in the final day, when all is done and accomplished according to the divine purpose—after all men, the sons of perdition included, have risen from death to life and have become immortal—all men will stand before the bar of God in a final day of judgment. The eventual destiny of all men will have been determined before that day, but then the final and irrevocable decrees will be issued as pertaining to every living soul. ("An Ensign to the Nations," Ensign, Nov. 1989, p.51)