

THE HOLY ORDER

Based on a talk given to the
Bountiful Fellowship on October 29, 2017
©Denver C. Snuffer, 2017 all rights reserved

I was asked to discuss the topic of “priesthood.” The biggest challenge in discussing the topic is that those most interested already have a context in their mind and so whatever is said about priesthood is distorted by their misunderstandings. It becomes almost impossible to make any meaningful forward movement in understanding a much bigger picture. To make progress, this discussion should be looked at as introducing something very different from how you now understand priesthood. Consider new ideas that may change the picture altogether.

I will be using quotes from Joseph Smith that frequently use the word “keys.” That word is horribly misunderstood. I have made it a practice to not use the word because of all the foolish and vain ideas that have accumulated around it. Joseph used the term in a variety of ways. For example, to mean “authority,”¹ or opportunity,² and in others it refers to a correct idea.³ The term in the context of priesthood is completely absent from the Book of Mormon; and that book is the keystone of our religion, containing the fullness of the gospel. The only time the word “keys” is referenced in the Book of Mormon, it refers to a physical set of keys to unlock a door to the treasury controlled by Laban.⁴ Although Joseph used the term often and meant many things by it, the challenge is to understand priesthood without being distracted by a poorly defined, and often used term.

Mormon institutions now use the term most often to connote that there is exclusive right, license or control. The LDS *Handbook of Instructions* states the following, “Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood leaders to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on earth.”⁵ This definition is the opposite of the way scripture directs priesthood be used:

“We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen. No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile[.]” (D&C 121:39-42.)

The LDS *Handbook* approach turns this scripture upside down and backwards: by virtue of priesthood keys they have the right to direct, control and exercise influence over others. Mormon institutions in general all use their preferred meaning of the term “keys” to denounce anything or anyone they view as a rival. That is nonsense, and I avoid using the term because of widespread abusive practice.

¹ See, D&C 107:15.

² See, D&C 107:20.

³ See, D&C 129:9. This is the most important meaning.

⁴ See, 1 Ne. 4:20.

⁵ *Handbook of Instructions* 2, 2.1.1.

The greatest “key” to unlock truth is “pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul.” This is how the Brother of Jared was able to pierce the veil. “And because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil[.]” (Ether 3:19.) It was the pursuit of “greater knowledge” that led Abraham to find God.

When God gives a man a dispensation from heaven, there is a labor to be done in His vineyard. The authority to complete the labor is implicit with the assignment given by God. When someone receives a dispensation and discharges the assignment with honor, he holds the keys, owns the rights, enjoys the honors, and possesses the dispensation of that assignment to all eternity.⁶ A new dispensation is founded on knowledge from those who went before who “all [declare] their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little”⁷ to the new dispensation. An unchanging God bestows an unchanging gospel. Therefore, there is continuity and understanding shared along the path. These servants obtained rights and honors and are expected to come to the great future meeting when Adam-ondi-Ahman occurs⁸ in the last days. At that meeting an accounting will be given in the presence of Christ to Father Adam, preliminary to Christ’s return as the One whose right it is to preside over all things. If a dispensation was given and the recipient failed to complete the work God assigned, then he acquires no key, no honor, no right, no authority from the Lord and therefore has nothing to account for to Adam.

All who are invited to the future meeting when Adam-ondi-Ahman occurs again will give an account of their labor. This means it is necessary for servants to perform what God assigns to them in strict conformity to the assignment to honor and serve God. The notion that someone can obtain “keys” without receiving a dispensation from the Lord and successfully completing the work of God, is an idea that should be rejected.

To be clear, for the foregoing reasons, and because many Mormons misunderstand and misapply the word “keys” to mean authority to control and direct, I avoid using the term. Many people believe that one dispensation must resemble another. There are those who are critical or ignorant of what God is doing now because it is different from what Joseph Smith did. There have been only two successful models since the fall of man. The scriptures disclose little about Enoch and Melchizedek’s dispensations, but there is enough to know they did not establish an hierarchical institution with inequality between people. The work of God today will be done as He alone directs. It is apparent from what has already taken place, that God intends to complete many things that Joseph Smith only hinted at and never had the opportunity to accomplish.

As events progressed in Joseph Smith’s life, he used some words with specific intended meanings based on events at a specific moment in time. For example, “fullness of the priesthood” was used by Joseph Smith at different times with different meanings. It always conveyed that the recipient had accepted all that had been given to a point in time. The willing readiness to accept all

⁶ See, D&C 128: 21—the reason these ministers returned to visit Joseph was because they acquired the “keys” after successfully completing the assignment God gave them. Joseph needed this endowment to lay the foundation for a new dispensation.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ The phrase means “Adam in the presence of Son Ahman.” The first time this happened was near Spring Hill in Missouri. Since it was an event, and the location acquired significance because of what happened there, I use the term to describe a future event rather than a fixed location. Latter-day Saints think the future event will take place at the same location as the first event, but —like the location of the New Jerusalem—it may happen elsewhere.

that had been offered at the time of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple meant the believer had been ordained to the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods, been baptized and, as the then-current practice involved, been rebaptized, and passed through an initiatory washing and anointing. The term used during the late-Nauvoo period of Joseph Smith's life involved all of the foregoing and, an endowment and sealing, second anointing, and finally an adoption process tying the individual into a family relationship that would endure after death. Because Joseph Smith used the phrase "fullness of the priesthood" dynamically and not statically, his various revelations making use of the term should not be read as having a single meaning. In a final sense, *fullness of priesthood* will be post-resurrection, and will come to those who have continually manifested a willingness to accept the dynamic and progressive fullness of the priesthood offered by God to man in the development and restoration of all things.

There is a reason the temple ceremony begins by telling the story of the creation and involves our first parents, Adam and Eve. Priesthood, at least the Holy Order, should not be divorced from the creation and from the first man and woman. We do not appreciate the significance of the beginning. Adam was given a fullness, and possessed the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. It was given to him in the beginning. (Abr. 1:3.) There was more to this than is involved in later priestly service.⁹

The Holy Order was much greater in scope than later priesthoods. Later priesthood functions should not be used to apprehend understanding of the original. Something as narrow and limited as a man (or angel) laying hands on another man did not and could not convey the original Holy Order.

After Eden, conveying the original Holy Order required either a temple or an ascent into heaven. It is one of the reasons why prophecy foretells of a last days temple. Information, instruction and revelation were essential to the Holy Order. The man and woman who entered into the Holy Order were taught truths about the creation, heaven and man's relationship to the universe. When Abraham was seeking to obtain what was given to Father Adam, he studied records that came down from "the fathers." This included not just a chronology back to Adam, but also "to the beginning of the creation, for the records have come into my hands[.]" (Abr. 1:28.) This knowledge is conveyed to those who belong to the Holy Order. When the return of the original Holy Order is contemplated, consider that it will involve restoring great knowledge that is hidden from the world. The fathers knew it would be restored in the last days. Joseph Smith also prophesied of its return and explained the forefathers of mankind anxiously anticipated its return.¹⁰

⁹ Although I am going to discuss this topic in only a limited way, each time I convey more of what God is now doing it gives God's opponents more information they can use to deceive others. I hesitate to equip the pretenders, the well-intentioned but deceived, and the foolish more ammunition to make a better pretense. Even those who hold good intentions, are often tempted to run into errors because they possess only a tiny fraction of the truth. We should all only disclose what God approves to be given, when He directs, and how He directs.

¹⁰ The following is in D&C 121:26-32: "God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not been revealed since the world was until now; Which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory; A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And also, if there be bounds set to the

Isaiah's prophecy concerning the last days' temple clearly identifies it as a house where man will be instructed in God's path. It will be a facility where the God of Jacob will teach His pathway of ascent back to the Throne of God. Mankind will learn the laws governing that pathway.¹¹

Therefore, when the Holy Order returns, those who are initiated will be given more than just the laying on of hands. It will include men and women, as husband and wife. They will be given understanding of things which the world cannot know because it is forbidden for the profane to obtain what God decrees for the righteous alone to maintain in holiness. The unholy are excluded from this knowledge.¹²

The Holy Order in its truest sense is much more comprehensive and far reaching than just laying on hands to convey permission to perform ordinances. This discussion will focus on the return of the original Holy Order belonging to the first fathers. Begin by assuming that you know almost nothing about the Holy Order, and that the Holy Order is not the priesthood as currently understood. It is distinct and broader than something commonly called "priesthood." Some of the quotes from Joseph use the word "priesthood" in the original. I will use the words "Holy Order" to help clarify this is a different subject and needs to be separate from the inherited traditions.

Joseph said, "The [Holy Order] was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency." As an aside, when Joseph explained this in 1839 there was a church position called "the First Presidency." The church position was a proper noun. When the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* was published, the publisher was the LDS church, and so when "*First Presidency*" was used it was treated as if it referred to the church position. However, the position Adam occupied was the first presiding father, or first presidency of the family of God; not a church position. The family of God is not the same thing as an institutional church. The institutional church will never comprise the family of God, although it was intended as a tool to bring about the recovery of the family of God. Unfortunately, the institution grew to hinder the restoration of the family of God. God must now use a different means to fulfill His promises.

heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—All the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times—According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest."

¹¹ Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law[.]"

¹² The Book of Mormon excludes sacred information from the ungodly (see, e.g., 1 Ne. 14:28; 3 Ne. 26:11-12, 16; 3 Ne. 27:23). Joseph Smith did not reveal everything entrusted to him (D&C 76:114-116; JS-H 1:20). Information can be sacred. It can be controlled by God so that when He determines to communicate it to man He will do so either by catching the individual up into the heavenly realm or by commanding that a temple be built to house His revelations. Either option will require that those who enter in must be approved by His decree, because the way is guarded by sentinels who protect what is Holy from those who are profane.

“[The Holy Order] was first given to Adam; he obtained the [first presiding position on the Earth], and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed, as in Genesis 1:26, 27, 28. He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel; he stands next in authority to Adam in the [Holy Order]; he was called of God to this office, and was the Father of all living in this day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held keys first on earth, and then in heaven.

“The [Holy Order] is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. The keys have to be brought from heaven, whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from Heaven, it is by Adam’s authority.

...He (Adam) is the father of the human family, and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. This may take place before some of us leave this stage of action. The Son of Man stands before him, and there is given him glory and dominion. Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe but retains his standing as the head of the human family.” (*TPJS*, p. 157.)

So, the Holy Order really commences before the world with Adam. In Luke 3:38, he, the first man, is called “the son of God.” Adam obtained the Holy Order in the beginning and before the world. Included with it is the right to preside over all of the human family and the right to minister to Adam’s posterity. Adam continues to hold that presiding position and will do so until the end of time.

In those remarks Joseph skipped from Adam down to Noah because Adam had dominion and rights over all of humanity as the father of all mankind. Noah occupied the same position. Both of these men were the genealogical fathers of all mankind born after them. In the case of Noah, the right descended to him through the Fathers: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and then Noah.¹³ All of these fathers held that same Holy Order, but they had siblings and other relations who were not their descendants. Therefore, although they were within the Holy Order, unlike Adam and unlike Noah, there were other people living who would descend outside of their genealogical line.

The Holy Order was passed down through these fathers. Joseph discussed the subject from the perspective of identifying those who were the genealogical fathers of all living. That is why he referred to Adam and Noah, omitting the others.

Joseph said,

“there are two priesthoods spoken of in the Scriptures, viz., the Melchizedek and the Aaronic or Levitical. Although there are two priesthoods, yet the

¹³ It was generally the responsibility of the oldest living holder of the Order to ordain. So long as Adam was alive, it was Adam who ordained almost all of those in this line. Adam ordained Seth (D&C 107:42), Enos (v. 44), Cainan (v. 45), Mahalaleel (v. 46), Jared (v. 47), and Methuselah (v. 50). When Adam died it was Seth who ordained Lamech (v. 51). Noah was ordained by Methuselah (v. 52), although Adam lived another two decades following that ordination.

Melchizedek Priesthood comprehends the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood, and is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to [the Holy Order] and the keys of the Kingdom of God in all ages of the world, to the latest posterity on the earth; and is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven.¹⁴

“Its institution was prior to ‘the foundation of this earth, or the morning stars sang together, or the Sons of God shouted for joy’ and is the highest and holiest [order] after the order of the Son of God.” (TPJS, p. 166-167.)

We think that the renaming of the Holy Order to the Melchizedek priesthood in order to avoid the too frequent repetition of the name of the Son of God,¹⁵ was done out of respect for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and that is true enough. However, the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God includes the first man, Adam, who is also identified as a “son of God.”¹⁶ There are other “sons of God.” The apostle John wrote in his first epistle to those he had taught. He gave them what he had received from Christ. He explained,

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore, the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not. Beloved now are we the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” (1 John 3:2-3.)

The Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God makes those who inherit it by definition the sons of God. Therefore, in a way, calling it the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God is a way of identifying the recipient as someone who has become one of God’s sons. Of course it is also appropriate to regard the primary Son of God to be Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. He is the only one in this cycle of creation who has attained to the resurrection. It is through the power of His resurrection that we are going to come forth from the grave. We do not have the power in ourselves to rise from the dead. The wages of sin are death,¹⁷ we have earned those wages, and we will die. The Savior did not earn those wages, but He nonetheless died, and His death was unjust. The law of justice was broken when He died and so whenever justice makes a claim on any of us, He can point to the fact that justice extracted from Him eternal life. That was an infinite price for Him to have paid. He has compensated for all of mankind’s shortcomings, failures, and Christ is the means by which we lay hold upon the promises. It is His intention to make of us all sons of God.

The Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God identifies the persons holding the Order as God’s sons. Even though the couple may be mortals in the flesh, they are by definition “sons of

¹⁴ In a letter written September 1842 Joseph Smith referred to this same principle: “Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the *summum bonum* of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the Holy Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living.” (D&C 128:11.)

¹⁵ See, D&C 107:2-4.

¹⁶ Luke 3:38.

¹⁷ Rom. 6:23.

God” if they belong to the Order.¹⁸ This is one reason why the sacrament prayer for the bread that is eaten by both men and women includes “take upon them the name of thy Son.”¹⁹

In *Preserving the Restoration*, pages 509-510, the following answers from the Lord are recounted:

Because of the potential and actual abuse by some priesthood holding men, I asked the Lord to extend priesthood to women. I was told as to public rites, “priesthood is confined to men because of the Fall and the conditions ordained at that time.”²⁰ Until things are reversed at the Millennium, it will remain for men alone to perform the public ordinances thus far given to us. This order is not going to change until the Millennium. I asked the Lord that if only men were to hold priesthood for our public ordinances, then could only women vote to sustain them. This pleased the Lord, for it was already in His heart. But He added: “There shall be a minimum of seven women²¹ to sustain the man in any vote, and if the man is married, his wife shall be one of them.” If you have already been ordained then you have the right to continue to minister to your family as a matter of right. But outside your family it is different. Even though already ordained, a community needs to recognize and authorize anyone to minister for them.

For any who would like to qualify to minister outside his family, he must meet in a community and obtain a sustaining vote of a minimum of seven women.²² When that is done, all seven who vote to sustain should sign a certificate.

This answer refers to “public rites” and not to those rites and performances the public are excluded from knowing. The Holy Order conveys blessings and information that is withheld from the world. But men and women jointly obtain the Holy Order.

Joseph continued, “...all other priesthoods are only parts, ramifications, powers and blessings belonging to the same, and are held, controlled, and directed by it. It is the channel

¹⁸ It is the nature of this Holy Order that it is conferred upon the man and woman jointly. See 1 Cor. 11:11. It was never “good for man to be alone.” See Gen. 2:18; Moses 3:18; Abr. 5:14. See also the Answer to Prayer for Covenant providing a new revelation on marriage, which states in part: “And again, I say to you, Abraham and Sarah sit upon a Throne, for he could not be there if not for Sarah’s covenant with him. Isaac and Rebecca sit upon a Throne, and Isaac likewise could not be there if not for Rebecca’s covenant with him. And Jacob and Rachel sit upon a Throne, and Jacob could not be there if not for Rachel’s covenant with him. And all these have ascended above Dominions and Principalities and Powers, to abide in my Kingdom. Therefore the marriage covenant is needed for all those who would likewise seek to obtain from me the right to continue their seed into eternity, for only through marriage can Thrones and Kingdoms be established.”

¹⁹ Moroni 4:3.

²⁰ Moses 4:22; Gen. 3:16.

²¹ Several people suggested to me that this requirement of seven women sustaining is a last-days’ fulfillment of Isa. 4:1-2 and 2 Ne. 14:1. If so, this would mean the prophecy of being “called by thy name” refers to the name of Christ. Seven women sustaining a man to priesthood precedes the ordinance of baptism itself. When baptized, we take upon us the name of Christ. It is the name of Christ through baptism that will “take away our reproach,” or in other words provide the remission of sins, as mentioned in Isa. 4:2.

²² This is information provided to me by the Lord on the morning of July 27, 2014 only after the talk given in St. George, Utah the day before.

through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time, and through which He will make known His purposes to the end of time.” (*TPJS*, p. 167.) Among other things, the purpose of the Holy Order is to put in place a mechanism by which God can reveal from heaven what is necessary for the salvation of man on Earth. In every generation when God has provided salvation for mankind, it is the Holy Order used by God to fix what is broken, restore what has been lost, repair, heal, forgive, and reconnect those who are willing to give heed to the message sent from Heaven to enable mankind to become sons of God.

Early events in man’s history involve conflicts to control the Holy Order. There was a war in heaven²³ that continues on earth.²⁴ In the earliest generations Adam and Eve taught their children to worship God.²⁵ But “Satan came among them, saying I am also a son of God; and he commanded them, saying: Believe it not; and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish.” (Moses 5:13.)

There is an opposition in all things.²⁶ Having opposition gives mankind a choice. But mankind’s choice is dependent on being pulled in different directions.²⁷ Man must be afforded the freedom to choose between these opposing sides. Without the freedom to choose there is no existence.²⁸ Satan wanted to destroy the agency of man.²⁹ This in turn would end mankind’s ability to choose for themselves. In other words, it would destroy their existence. Mankind can only be held accountable for their choices if they are free to make a choice.³⁰ Satan wanted to eliminate the right to choose, and also eliminate any accountability for man’s choices. The reason his plan attracted enough followers in heaven to cause a war was because he wanted to eliminate any law or commandment against sin. In the absence of a law against whatever a person chooses to do then there would be no condemnation and no judgment.³¹

Adam and Eve taught about repentance from sins.³² Satan offered another path that did not require desires, appetites and passions to be controlled. The result was carnality, sensuality and licentiousness.³³ The descendants of Adam and Eve were overcome by what Satan offered. In the earliest generations, the war Satan began and lost in heaven continued on earth with overwhelming success.

After generations there was a son born to Adam and Eve who exhibited the inclination to follow God. Eve rejoiced over Cain and declared, “I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words.” (Moses 5:16.) Had Cain remained faithful he would have succeeded

²³ Rev. 12:7.

²⁴ Rev. 12:12.

²⁵ Moses 5:12.

²⁶ 2 Ne. 2:11.

²⁷ 2 Ne. 2:16.

²⁸ D&C 93:30.

²⁹ Moses 4:3.

³⁰ D&C 101:78.

³¹ 2 Ne. 2:13.

³² Moses 5:14-15.

³³ Moses 5:13.

Adam as the one given the Holy Order, holding dominion over the earth. Through his line the promised Messiah³⁴ would have descended and Cain would be a patriarch over him.

Satan wanted to be chosen as the Savior so that he could implement his plan to save all mankind. Both he and his plan were rejected.³⁵ If he had been given the role of Savior he could have implemented his plan making it a condition for saving mankind. When he was not chosen, Satan wanted to become Adam, the first man, and stand as the patriarch over the entire family of man. This would have given him leverage to exert dominion over the creation and accomplish the same result. When he was rejected again, he rebelled and was cast out. As an exile from heaven, he targeted Adam and Eve to lead them to transgress God's commands.³⁶ When Cain became the probable heir of Adam, to receive the Holy Order and father the line through which the promised Messiah would come, Satan's attention turned to corrupting Cain.

A younger brother, Abel, also followed God. There had been universal rebellion (or apostasy) against God by the children of Adam and Eve until Cain. But then both Cain and Abel showed interest in following God. It is probable that Cain's example influenced Abel for the good. Since the Order would follow the oldest, righteous son, Cain would be the heir. Abel's righteousness could not displace Cain, had Cain remained faithful.

Cain followed Satan and obeyed Satan's command to offer a sacrifice. Abel followed God and obeyed God's command to offer a sacrifice. The contrast between Cain and Abel provoked God to accept Abel's sacrifice and reject Cain's.³⁷ Cain was offended at God's rejection, but God offered to accept Cain if he would repent and return.³⁸

This was a conflict that involved who would inherit the Holy Order. Satan wanted to destroy the plan of God. If he could gain control over the right of dominion, and make the coming Messiah subject to a patriarch who would support Satan's ambition, he hoped to still prevail in the conflict over this creation. Cain could have repented and retained his right to inherit from Adam. God offered him that. Adam and Eve also urged Cain to repent. Abel pled with Cain to repent.³⁹ Cain rejected them all, took a wife and left the company of his parents and brother Abel.

There is no record of how many years passed, but the ambition to control and corrupt this creation was never out of the heart of Satan. Desperate ambitions lead to desperate acts, and the solution Satan inspired was for Cain to murder his brother.⁴⁰ This was an attempt to get control over the entire creation by overthrowing the government of God and confiscate the birthright and associated Holy Order that accompanied it. The "flocks of my brother" Cain wanted to control as his "gain" was the lineage through whom the Messiah would descend.⁴¹

This is an important part of the plot of the adversary because if he can control any position under Adam involving the Holy Order, this creation can be compromised. God has a house of order. When the world was created it belonged to God. By His word He gave dominion over His

³⁴ Adam and Eve were taught by an angel of a future Messiah, called the "Only Begotten" who would be offered a sacrifice for sin and redeem Adam and his posterity. Moses 5:6-9.

³⁵ Moses 4:1; Abr. 3:27-28.

³⁶ Moses 4:3-4, 18-19.

³⁷ Moses 5:18-21.

³⁸ Moses 5:22-23.

³⁹ Moses 5:26-27.

⁴⁰ Moses 5:28-31.

⁴¹ Moses 5:31-33.

creation to Adam and Eve. It became theirs and Adam holds the right to preside over it, as Joseph Smith explained. That right must be returned to Jesus Christ before His return.⁴² If anyone who has held a position in the Holy Order refuses to return dominion back to Christ, it can create a conflict that continues the same war that began in heaven. If Cain were to hold dominion over this creation, he could impose conditions Satan put into his heart before returning the right of dominion back to the Savior. By extension, if any disciple of Satan were ever to obtain the Holy Order with the right of dominion the conditions Satan demanded in the preexistence, which were designed to destroy the agency of man, could become the condition for redeeming this creation. Cain's apostasy was a continuation of the war in heaven and a threat to the salvation of everyone who would live thereafter. Threatening salvation of mankind has been the aim of our adversary since the beginning. There is still a great conspiracy to destroy the souls of men and to capture this creation. The Holy Order is guarded by carefully qualifying those who receive it. It is under God's control and supervised by Adam and Eve.

Despite the enormity of Cain's sin, his punishment was not death. His parents wept over him, and he was driven from their society. The earth was told to not give her yield to Cain, making him a vagabond and a hunter, slaying animals for his sustenance.⁴³ He killed his brother because of ambition and then was required to continue killing to eat. But he was allowed to live.

To understand the Holy Order one must start with the beginning. Jumping ahead to the time of Moses and the Aaronic priests, or even the time of Joseph Smith, misses the mark. Priesthood in its most meaningful sense involves the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. The restoration at the end of creation must return to the beginning. Before the return of Christ, everything, including the original Holy Order with all its components, must be restored. That has not yet been revealed.

The Holy Order did not return with the ordinations in June 1831.⁴⁴ It was not accomplished when the three witnesses ordained the quorum of the twelve.⁴⁵ There is something far greater within the Holy Order. It includes the right of dominion over all creation, or the same right originally given to Adam that belonged to God. The right of dominion over this creation is why God is God. In essence, the Holy Order is to create of flesh and blood a living, mortal surrogate for the Father and Mother. Cain fell, Able was murdered, and the right passed to Seth. Seth stands next in the line followed in turn by Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and then Noah. All these lived before the flood. Noah alone remained on earth with his family. His son Shem inherited the Holy Order. Shem was a great high priest⁴⁶ after the Order of the Son of God. Shem obtained the right of dominion, and was referred to as a "king." He also held the right to preach righteousness and was referred to as a "priest." Melchizedek is a new name given to him and means "king and priest." That new name was then also adopted as the name for the Holy Order itself.⁴⁷

⁴² "Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe but retains his standing as the head of the human family." (*TPJS*, p. 157.) See also D&C 116:1; Dan. 7:9-10.

⁴³ Moses 5:36-37.

⁴⁴ See the discussion on pp. 17-34 in *A Man Without Doubt*.

⁴⁵ See, *DHC*, Vol 2, pp. 186-191.

⁴⁶ D&C 107:2; 138:41.

⁴⁷ D&C 107:2-4.

The line was then broken for generations. This was the first gap between Adam and his posterity who held the Holy Order. Until Abraham,⁴⁸ this break lasted nine generations. After this long gap, a man lived whose heart longed for what once was. He wanted to recover and restore what had been lost. He wrote, “[F]inding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers...” (Abr. 1:2.) The “blessings of the fathers” he wanted to obtain was the original Holy Order. He wanted to be like the first fathers.

Abraham “sought for the blessings of the fathers and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same, having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge[.]” (Abr. 1:2.) Knowledge is a critical component of the Holy Order. Rather than worldly status or rank, the Holy Order involves “great knowledge” from God. The greater knowledge of the Holy Order is the reason a man cannot be saved in ignorance. “It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.” (D&C 131:6.) “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God.” (TPJS, p. 217.) The “knowledge” Joseph Smith refers to is that same “knowledge” Abraham sought after.⁴⁹ Its purpose is to allow the one who possesses it to become a greater follower of righteousness. Godly knowledge must be implemented to save one’s soul. There is no salvation without obedience to the principles of righteousness learned. It is the same for everyone as it was for Abraham: “[T]o possess a greater knowledge and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God.” This is what made him “a rightful heir.” (Abr. 1:2.)

At this point in history, Adam was the father of all who were living. Noah would also have been the father of all. All the early members of the Holy Order fathered nations. Abraham knew that was part of what the Holy Order involved. It was not merely knowledge for knowledge’s sake that motivated Abraham. He knew it would put him at the head of a righteous posterity. At that point in history, it also meant the promised Messiah would descend from his fatherhood. Abraham anticipated obtaining a posterity of “nations” that would look to him, as he looked to Noah and to Adam, as his fathers.

⁴⁸ The generations were: Shem/Melchizedek-Arphaxad-Cainan-unnamed daughter-Eber-Peleg-Reu-Serug-Nahor-Terah-Abraham. Abraham described his forefathers in these words: “My fathers, having turned from their righteousness, and from the holy commandments which the Lord their God had given unto them, unto the worshiping of the gods of the heathen, utterly refused to hearken to my voice; For their hearts were set to do evil, and were wholly turned to the god of Elkenah, and the god of Libnah, and the god of Mahmackrah, and the god of Korash, and the god of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; Therefore they turned their hearts to the sacrifice of the heathen in offering up their children unto these dumb idols, and hearkened not unto my voice, but endeavored to take away my life by the hand of the priest of Elkenah. The priest of Elkenah was also the priest of Pharaoh.”

⁴⁹ “Knowledge saves a man; and in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge. So long as a man will not give heed to the commandments, he must abide without salvation. If a man has knowledge, he can be saved; although, if he has been guilty of great sins, he will be punished for them.” (TPJS, p. 357.)

This role of fatherhood was (and is) an opportunity to nurture, assist, provide for, care for and bring along descendants. It gives the father and mother the challenge and opportunity to take a child who is innocent and teachable and help develop them into something Godlike, responsible and capable. Someone who can stand on her own two legs and defend the truth when called upon to do so: someone who can become a vessel of righteousness. What Abraham desired was to be a servant who would be a father of nations.

And so he “became a rightful heir, holding the right belonging to the fathers, it was conferred upon me from the fathers. It came down from the fathers from the beginning of time, even from the beginning, before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn or the first man who was Adam or the first father, through the fathers unto me.” (Abr. 1:2-3.) Abraham identifies what he sought and obtained. It was the original Holy Order that began with Adam or the first father.

Abraham’s right was non-genealogical because generations separated him from Shem. Like today, Abraham was living in a world of apostasy, isolated from God’s Holy Order. Like Abraham, we should be looking to reconnect to Heaven.

He is the first example of a man in a world of apostasy reconnecting to Heaven. Despite the generations separating Abraham from Shem, he qualified to receive the rights belonging to the fathers because he sought for his appointment, he possessed knowledge, he lived consistent with the knowledge he had and wished to have greater knowledge, and he wanted to obey more commandments to gain further light and knowledge by the things he learned through obedience. When Abraham received the Holy Order by ordination from the oldest living holder,⁵⁰ Melchizedek, the Lord accepted Abraham and declared to him: “My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father” (Abr. 2:8-10.) This future for the Holy Order is also non-genealogical in that there have been and will be distant generations separated from Abraham who will inherit the Holy Order. It was and will be the same process through which Abraham became a descendant of the first fathers. The reconnecting has and does happen after generations of apostasy. Whoever does, in whatever generation, is a descendant and can call Abraham their father.

The Lord declared to Abraham, “I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee and in thee (that is in thy Holy Order) and in thy seed (that is the Holy Order) for I will give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee and in thy seed after thee (that is to say the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of eternal life.” (Abr. 2:11.) Any person in any generation (after Abraham) who becomes part of the Holy Order will be grafted into the line of the fathers, and become a descendant of Father Abraham.

When the Lord said these things to Abraham, he reflected soberly on what had transpired and recorded, “After the Lord had withdrawn from speaking with me, and withdrawn His face from me, I said in my heart, Thy servant has sought thee earnestly, now I have found thee.” (Abr. 2:12.)

⁵⁰ D&C 84:14.

In verse 10, the Lord refers to “this Gospel.” That is not necessarily referring to what the gospel is today. In Abraham’s case, he had both “great knowledge” as well as “greater knowledge.” Those are important words and were important parts of “this Gospel” to which God made reference. It is very difficult to bring “this Gospel” back to the earth. When the process begins, men almost immediately rebel and close their minds. It stirs up the adversary to action. Religious people seem particularly influenced to fight against the return of the Holy Order. They always fight against the prophets and messengers because they are in Satan’s employ without realizing it. The temple endowment (before 1990) included the role of the false minister. Despite its removal, that role belongs in the endowment. The point of the character was that he worked for Satan but believed he was following God.⁵¹ When God referred to “this Gospel” it is a body of teachings and rights that are very hard to recover. Mankind is disinterested God’s words and continually insists they already have enough and cannot tolerate God giving more.⁵²

There was a great deal more to be recovered, restored and returned left undone at Joseph’s death.⁵³ When “this Gospel,” meaning the one Abraham received, is on the earth at any time, the possessor is a descendant of Abraham. They are part of the family of Abraham and he is their father. In this way he became the father of many nations.

Today the status of “father of many nations” still applies to the Holy Order, but the process is inverted. Instead of being the father through descendants of the body, the Holy Order contains the right to redeem the dead. But the dead do not remain as ancestors but become posterity. The living members of the Holy Order are the fathers and mothers of the dead whom they redeem. But that topic is best left for the future time when the temple exists. If this generation fails to obtain the right, and neglects the responsibility to prepare for the coming commandment to build a temple, then the information will be useless to those living today. Therefore, if there is ever a temple built at God’s command, this topic will become important then. It is enough for now to note that the Holy Order still includes becoming a “father of many nations.” But the method at the end is different than it was in the time of the first patriarchs, including Abraham.

I addressed the subject of reconnecting to the fathers, and redeeming the dead, in *The Mission of Elijah Reconsidered*, one of the essays in the book *Essays: Three Degrees*. Below is an excerpt from that essay:

Joseph revisited the topic of Elijah’s meaning again in a talk given on March 10, 1844. When he picks up the subject again to discuss Elijah, he says, “The spirit power & calling of Elijah is that ye have power to hold the keys of the revelations

⁵¹ Peter asked the false minister: “Do you know who that man is? He is Satan.” The fooled preacher responded: “What? The devil?” Peter answered: “That is one of his names.” Then the deceived preacher explained: “He is quite a different person from what he told me the devil is. He said the devil has claws like a bear’s on his hands, horns on his head, and a cloven foot, and that when he speaks he has the roar of a lion.” Peter then responded: “He has said this to deceive you, and I would advise you to get out of his employ.”

⁵² 2 Ne. 29:8-10.

⁵³ In January 1841 the potential for the “fullness of the priesthood” to be given the church had been lost and could only be restored in a temple. (D&C 124:27-28.) In the letter to John Wentworth first published in March 1842 Joseph Smith wrote, “we believe that [God] will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.” The required temple for returning the Holy Order was not completed before Joseph and Hyrum were killed June 27, 1844.

ordinances, oracles powers & endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood & of the Kingdom of God on the Earth & to receive, obtain and perform all the ordinances belonging to the Kingdom of God even unto the sealing of the hearts of the fathers unto the children & the hearts of the **children unto the fathers even those who are in heaven.**⁵⁴

Notice the connection between these parties. It is not to connect you to your kindred dead. They are in the world of spirits. They are not “in heaven.” Joseph is talking about a connection of your hearts to “the hearts of the fathers who are in heaven.” That is the mission of Elijah. If you will receive it, this is the spirit of Elijah: That we redeem our dead, but then connect ourselves with our “fathers which are in heaven.” Our dead are saved through us, but we are saved by connecting to our “fathers in heaven.” Who are our “fathers in heaven” to whom we must be connected? If all we do is connect ourselves to our dead, then neither they nor we are connected to the “fathers in heaven.” So it becomes quite important to understand why Joseph is talking in these strange terms. Who are these “fathers in heaven” to whom we must form a connection? We want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those which dwell “in heaven.” Merely connecting the earthly to their kindred dead will not suffice. Joseph is explaining something more cosmic in this integration of generations. It is greater than mere genealogy.

Remember, those who are in the spirit world, our dead, are in need of redemption. They don't have these ordinances yet. We are supposed to take care of that for them. Our dead are the ones that need redemption from us, and cannot be the “fathers in heaven” Joseph is discussing. They cannot be “in heaven,” because they need us to be redeemed. We need to be redeemed by our connecting to “the fathers who are in heaven.”

This is important enough for Joseph to have focused on it in the remaining months of his life. As we have seen, Joseph expressed exasperation at the hard heads of the Saints, who would not listen to new information. Let us not repeat the error. We must do something more to avoid being “utterly wasted” at the Lord's return.⁵⁵ We must connect ourselves to “the fathers in heaven.” Joseph understood this doctrine. (Emphasis in original.)⁵⁶

Abraham passed along the same Holy Order to Isaac, which then passed to Jacob, then to Joseph, and then to Ephraim. We lose track of the right for some generations until the time of Moses. Moses didn't belong to the birthright tribe. He lived approximately three centuries distant from Joseph and Ephraim. During those centuries, through intermarriage, Moses would have inherited blood of Judah, blood of Ephraim, blood of Benjamin, and other tribes of Israel, but his genealogy is reckoned from the Tribe of Levi.⁵⁷

To understand how tribal affiliation was identified in ancient Israel, it is useful to refer to the tribal practice among some Indian tribes. The tribes have sub-clans that are comparable to separate villages. Intermarriage within the clan is prohibited. When a daughter gets to be marital age, she must marry outside her clan. Her husband from the other clan takes her to live with his clan once

⁵⁴ *Id.* p. 329, emphasis added.

⁵⁵ D&C 2: 3.

⁵⁶ For a more extended discussion of the subject, see that essay.

⁵⁷ Exo. 2:2.

they marry. If the daughter was from the Water Clan and she marries a husband from the Bear Clan, she is then regarded as part of the Bear Clan. Their children also are members of the Bear Clan. The Water Clan identity of the wife is lost. Genealogically, she is Water Clan. But her family identification becomes Bear Clan.⁵⁸

Moses' identification with the tribe of Levi is not based on DNA, but on the way ancient Israel assigned tribal affiliation. In any event, Moses offered Israel an opportunity to reconnect fully with God. Unfortunately that opportunity was forfeited and Israel lost their chance and received a lesser priesthood and lesser knowledge.⁵⁹ Moses represented an isolated restoration of a single person who could have brought all of Israel back into God's presence and could have established Zion. But Israel, after three centuries of slavery, was not willing to ascend the mountain. Today we are slaves of traditions that are just as limiting. Awake and arise. That is what I have been stirring people to do.

Following Moses, there were prophets who ascended and became ministering servants. Joseph had this to say about those prophets: "All the prophets had the [Holy Order] and were ordained by God himself." (*TPJS*, p. 181.) If they didn't have what was required, they would not be in possession of "the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from Heaven." (*TPJS*, p. 167.) They would not have possessed "the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which he has continued revealing himself to the children of men to the present time." (*Id.*) It was essential that they were qualified to minister in a way that guaranteed, for anyone would listen, salvation.

Remember that Father Adam presides over every dispensation of the gospel.⁶⁰ But Joseph wrote that it was "The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times!" (D&C 128:20.) There is no conflict. Although Father Adam is at the head as the first father and still holds dominion over this creation, Peter, James and John were assigned to assist in this dispensation as well. Adam holds keys in order to bring about every dispensation from the time of Adam down to the very end of time. But Adam did not live through every dispensation from the beginning to the very end of time. Adam is in possession of authority or "keys" over the Holy Order. He has a say who will be involved in each dispensation. He now exercises the right of dominion in the councils of Heaven as a resurrected man. But salvation for the living must involve those who are living to bear the burden to preach repentance and faith on Christ. Salvation is, was and always will be a

⁵⁸ This example is adapted to a "patriarchal" society to illustrate the pattern of ancient Israel and their reckoning of tribal identities. In almost all modern Native American societies the reckoning is "matriarchal" and the husband would relocate to his wife's clan. In Hopi tradition, for example, home ownership is passed through the mother's line to the daughter.

⁵⁹ See, D&C 84:19-27. The "greater priesthood" referred to in the revelation includes the "mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God" and means the Holy Order held by Moses. The "ordinances" that allow the "power of godliness" to be shown to man in the flesh are also referring to an inheritance of greater knowledge that brings mankind into the presence of God the Father.

⁶⁰ *TPJS*, p. 157 discussed supra.

mortal challenge and mortal obligation. It is not a test to prove those who are immortal. It is to prove the living.⁶¹

Whether we are saved depends on what we do during our mortal probation. Angels do not fix our errors or finish our tests for us. When immortals return, it will be to destroy the wicked and visit with those who are wheat. The best way to understand it is to refer to what we know about the immortals that are still on earth. We have two examples: the Three Nephites and John the Beloved.

Once the mortal lives of the three Nephite disciples who tarried on the earth ended, they, like John, ministered as angels to mortal prophets. They did not minister openly to the world. They acted as angels whose ministry is explained in Moroni:

“[N]either have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by **declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ**, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men.” (Moroni 7:29-32, emphasis added.)

Angels minister to “chosen vessels” or mortal messengers, as the Three Nephites did with Mormon and Moroni.⁶² Then these vessels testify and bear testimony so that the way is prepared “that the residue of men may have faith in Christ.” These three visited with Mormon, but the people to whom Mormon ministered didn’t see them. They ministered to Moroni and those to whom Moroni ministered didn’t see them. The chosen vessels⁶³ also become as ministering angels. Many people have received ministering angels. Men, women and children have, can and do receive angelic ministers.⁶⁴ Angels minister to those with faith, who are supposed to then preach salvation to others.

Likewise, John the Beloved became a ministering angel.⁶⁵ He has a ministry “for those who shall be heirs of salvation.” Do not expect him to make appearances to the world, and do what flesh and blood are required to do. When the world has faith enough to receive angels, then angels will minister to them. But until then, they minister in private to those with faith to receive them. Appearing to the world would be unjust. It would be unfair if any single generation had all the heavy-lifting of salvation performed for them by immortals. If angels suddenly accomplish things that, from the days of Adam have been the duty of mortals, an apology would be owed to every other generation.

⁶¹ See, Abr. 3:24-25. The proving is done to those who dwell on earth.

⁶² Mormon 8:11.

⁶³ Heaven’s “chosen vessels” may seem most unlikely. In the cases of Alma the Younger and Saul of Tarsus they were wicked when they were chosen. Yet both would later become ministering servants who preached righteousness to the residue of men.

⁶⁴ Alma 32:23. When they minister to you it is to enable you to testify and help others to likewise have faith in Christ.

⁶⁵ D&C 7:6.

Appearances of angels, like the post-resurrection ministry of Christ, happen with the faithful. Christ appeared as a resurrected minister only to the faithful in Jerusalem. Likewise, He showed Himself to “the more righteous” who had been spared among the Nephites.⁶⁶

The history of priesthood in this dispensation is made more difficult to understand because some important events are not recorded, and what is recorded has been altered. In *JSP Documents, Vol. 5*, p. 509 the LDS Church Historian’s Office explains how some important documents were altered by Oliver Cowdery, apparently without Joseph Smith’s knowledge. Here is how they explain the altered documents:

“Cowdery then took those loose pages and recorded the blessings in the patriarchal blessing book on 3 October 1835.

“Though it is possible that JS worked with Cowdery on the changes or instructed him to expand the blessings on his own, it seems more likely that Cowdery made the expansions without direction from JS. This would not have been the only occasion he did so: there is evidence that Cowdery altered at least one other blessing text—his own—when he recorded it in the volume.

“...In summary, there is no direct evidence that JS was involved in expanding and editing the 1833 blessings in September or October of 1835, and there are reasons to think he was not[.]”

This incident is one of the few instances where the LDS Historian’s Office acknowledges a problem that is more widespread than the example of patriarchal blessing alterations. Alterations in the records began in the 1850s and under the control of the LDS Historian’s Office. Richard Van Wagoner referred to this problem and quoted from one employed in the Historian’s Office:

The official *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*⁶⁷ was published in book form under the direction of the First Presidency in 1902. The introductory assurance that “no historical or doctrinal statement has been changed” is demonstrably wrong. Overshadowed by editorial censorship, hundreds of deletions, additions, and alterations, these seven volumes are not always reliable. ...The nineteenth-century propaganda mill was so adroit that few outside Brigham Young’s inner circle were aware of the behind-the-scenes alterations so seamlessly stitched into church history. Charles Wesley Wandell, an assistant church historian, was aghast at these emendations. Commenting on the many changes made in the historical work as it was being serialized in the *Deseret News*, Wandell noted in his diary: “I notice the interpolations because having been employed in the Historian’s office at Nauvoo by Doctor Richards, and employed, too, in 1845, in compiling this very autobiography, I know that after Joseph’s death his memoir was ‘doctored’ to suit the new order of things,⁶⁸ and this, too, by the direct order of Brigham Young to Doctor Richards and systematically by Richards.” The Quorum of the Twelve, under Brigham Young’s leadership, began altering the historical record shortly after Smith’s death. Contrary to the introduction’s claim, Smith did not author the *History of the*

⁶⁶ 3 Ne. 10:12.

⁶⁷ Commonly referred to as the *Documentary History of the Church*, or “DHC.”

⁶⁸ The “new order of things” is a reference to polygamy that was taught openly by Brigham Young and had been publicly denounced by Joseph Smith.

Church. At the time of his 1844 death, the narrative had been written up to 5 August 1838.⁶⁹

Oliver Cowdery apparently thought that he had the right to alter documents, including revelations.⁷⁰ The problem was fairly widespread while Joseph was alive, and became a much greater problem after he died. The texts of scriptures, journals, diaries, and other historical documents do not have the integrity they should. This makes the reconstruction of Mormon history and teachings a daunting task. Many of those involved believed that if the “truth” needed a little embellishment to make it more persuasive, it was appropriate and right to do so. Institutional claims were buttressed by embellishments that are today proving problematic for the LDS church. There is a “faith crisis” for many church members when they realize some historical “facts” are either demonstrably untrue or entirely made up. That, however, should not deter those who are willing to labor at it. Stripped of the falsehoods, what remains is glorious and inspiring, even if it undermines institutional claims. The truth should never have been altered to support anyone’s agenda. We should only care to know and understand God’s will and work.

The Church Historian’s Office is candid about this incident involving Oliver Cowdery. But they are not always equally candid with many other parts of the historical record that were altered by Oliver Cowdery and many others. The test for candor should not be whether it supports or opposes institutional claims. One reason for the third volume of the new scriptures was to painstakingly examine the original documents of the original revelations and to accurately find what came from Joseph Smith. The new third volume will be titled *Teachings and Commandments*. Some of the revelations will be gone altogether because they do not clearly originate with Joseph Smith in a reliable transmission.

The word apostle (Ἀποστολος) literally means, “someone sent away.” The word implies they are sent to deliver a message. An English equivalent would be “messenger.” There is no such thing as priesthood called “apostle.” It is an office in the church, like relief society president, primary president, or scout leader. It is only an office in the church. This is why Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery would hold the office of elder before the restoration of any of the higher priesthood. LDS priesthood lines of authority are particularly vulnerable because for about 22 years during the presidency of Heber J. Grant, ordinations did not confer any priesthood. They ordained to an office in the church. And while the person ordained to the office in the church was authorized to function in the church office, conferral of priesthood is a separate matter. You can (and now do) have apostles without priesthood.

The best source of original material to search the events of the restoration involving Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery is the history Joseph Smith began to write in 1838. Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and John Whitmer had been excommunicated. John Whitmer had been church historian since 1831.⁷¹ He took the history with him and although asked to return the material,⁷² refused to do so. Consequently Joseph began to write a replacement in April 1838.

⁶⁹ Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess*, Signature Books (Salt Lake City, 1994), p. 322.

⁷⁰ Statements in D&C 9:2; 24:10; 28:1, 4; and in particular 57:13 were apparently enough for Cowdery to feel it his privilege to alter documents.

⁷¹ See, D&C 47:1-4.

⁷² An insulting letter to John Whitmer on April 9, 1838 from Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon asked for the return of his incompetent materials. See, *JSP Documents, Vol. 6*, pp. 78-79.

The first draft of the history Joseph Smith composed in 1838 has been lost. It was copied in 1839 by James Mulholland. In *JSP Histories, Vol. 1*, there are three columns (Draft 1, Draft 2 and Draft 3) of the history side-by-side showing the 1839 copy and later revisions and edits. They begin on page 204. Draft 1 was lost, and therefore column 1 is blank until page 294. There an excerpt, preserved in the *Book of Covenants*, is reprinted. Other parts of Draft 1 are on pages 304, 306-308, 312-314, 316-320, 324-328, 336, 352-354, 364-372, then more or less continually beginning on 378. Internal material in Draft 2 suggests it was a faithful copy of Draft 1. It was copied in 1839 but all the dating in it is for 1838. This means Mulholland apparently made a faithful copy and did not alter what Joseph wrote the year earlier.

In the earliest version of Joseph's history there was a revelation in March 1829 at the request of Martin Harris. In the revelation Joseph Smith was told, "Verily I say unto you, that wo shall come unto the inhabitants of the earth, if they shall not hearken to my words; for hereafter you shall be ordained to go forth to deliver my words unto the children of men. Behold if they will not believe my words, they will not believe you, my servant Joseph, if it were possible that you could show unto them all of these things which I have committed unto you."⁷³ Joseph was promised that, at some future point, he would be "ordained" to deliver words to the public. Interestingly, if people will not believe the words given him by the Lord, then they would not believe Joseph even if he revealed everything he had received from God. This raises two relevant points: First, Joseph had not yet been ordained. Second, Joseph would not be required to reveal everything, indeed revealing everything would be futile. Only the words given him were to be made public. We should never assume that we are told everything revealed to a man given a dispensation from God. Some things are between him and the Lord.

Two months after the promise of ordination, in May of 1829, Joseph wrote: "[Joseph and Oliver Cowdery] went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins as we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. While we were thus employed praying and calling upon the Lord, a Messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying to us: 'Upon you my fellow servants in the name of the Messiah I confer the priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels and of the gospel of repentance, and baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and this shall never be taken again from the earth, untill the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.' He said this Aaronic priesthood had not the power of laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on (us) hereafter and he commanded us to go and be baptized, and gave us direction that I should baptized Oliver Cowdery and afterwards that he should baptize me."⁷⁴ Joseph was the first to baptize, but he was the second to be baptized. Oliver Cowdery was baptized by an unbaptized officiator who had been ordained with authority to baptize.

This May 1829 ordination from the angel included the privilege to baptize and to have angels minister, but it lacked something else that involved the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. They were promised that other authority involving the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost would be conferred separately and sometime later.

In Draft 2 (and therefore also in the earlier missing Draft 1) there is no mention of an appearance by Peter, James, and John. It is entirely omitted from Joseph's history. The first

⁷³ *JSP Histories, Vol. 1*, pp. 269-270- Draft 2; also D&C 5:5-7.

⁷⁴ *JSP Histories, Vol. 1*, p. 292-Draft 2; see also JS-H 1:68-70.

reference to Peter, James and John is in an insert into an August 1830 revelation. Briefly here is how the language was originally and how it was altered:

Joseph Smith received a revelation on August 28th, 1830. When it was originally received, here is how it read in the first handwritten version (Revelation Book 1):

A Revelation to the Church given at Harmony sesquehann County State of Pennsylvania given to Joseph the Seer at a time that he went to punch wine Sacrament & he was stopped by an angel & he he spoke to him as follows Saying

Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ your Lord your God & your Redeemer whose word is quick & powerful for Behold I say unto you it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory Remembering unto the father that my Body which laid down for you & my blood which was shed for you the Remission of y sins Wherefore a commandment I give unto you that ye shall not Purchase Wine neither strong drink of your enemies Wherefore ye shall partake none except it is made new among you yea in this my Fathers Kingdom which shall be built up on the earth Behold this is wisdom in me Wherefore marvel not for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the Vine with you on the Earth & with those whom my father hath given me out of the world Wherefore life up your hearts & rejoice & Gird up your loins & be faithful until I come even so amen.

The first time it was put into print WW Phelps was the editor in Missouri. The paper was *The Evening and Morning Star*. He edited it and the version he printed read as follows:

A COMMANDMENT GIVEN SEPTEMBER 4, 1830

LISTEN to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful.

For behold I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory; remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of sins:

Wherefore a commandment I give unto you, that you shall not purchase wine, neither strong drink of your enemies:

Wherefore you shall partake of none, except it is made new among you, yea, in this my Father's kingdom which shall be built up on the earth.

Behold this is wisdom in me, wherefore marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you, on the earth, and with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world: Wherefore lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins.

This printed version was from the Missouri press destroyed by a mob. Some few copies still exist. But the press was destroyed and the effort had to be made again to publish the document. In Kirtland, a new version was printed in the renamed paper. Previously it was THE Evening and Morning Star, in Kirtland the paper was titled: "Evening and Morning Star." This version was edited and updated by Oliver Cowdery. He made additions to many of the revelations "to reflect current organization, doctrine, and practice, which had continued to develop side the revelations were first dictated." (*Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Transcriptions, Vol 2*, p. 199.) Below is the version Oliver Cowdery printed (which subsequently became the source from which the 1835 edition of the D&C was taken):

REVELATION

Given September, 1830

Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful.

For behold I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory; remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins:

wherefore a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall not purchase wine, neither strong drink of your enemies:

wherefore you shall partake of none, except if is made new among you, yea, in this my Father's kingdom which shall be built up on the earth.

Behold this is wisdom in me: wherefore marvel not for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth, and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the book of Mormon, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel; to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim; and also with Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things, or the restorer of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets side the world began, concerning the last days: ale also John the son of Zacharias, which Zacharias he (Elias) visited and gav promise that h should have a son, and his name should be John, and he should be filled with the spirit of Elias; which John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, jr. and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto this first priesthood which you have received, that you might be called and ordained even as Aaron: and also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse: and also, with Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham your fathers; by whom the promises remain: and also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days.

And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry; and of the same things which I revealed unto them, unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last time; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things both which are in heaven and which are on earth: and also with those whom my Father hath given me out of the world:

wherefore lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins, and take upon you my whole armor, that ye may be able to withstand the evil day, having done all ye may be able to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth; having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you, taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you, and be agreed as touching all things whatsoever ye ask of me, and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up that where I am ye shall be also. Amen.⁷⁵

I have not included the version now in the LDS D&C, but it was changed again. It should be apparent that the text revealed originally and what the editors did with it has been a growing concern. The 1835 D&C used the last version above and edited it. The *Teachings and Commandments* version will return to the original.

When Joseph wrote the history, there was no mention of Peter, James and John. But these revisions added their names and the claim of “ordination” by them. Joseph Smith’s 1842 letter contradicts the claim that they performed an “ordination.” The only mention Joseph made in the 1842 account was that they “declar[ed] themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fullness of times!” (D&C 128:20.) Oliver Cowdery signed a document during his last illness that supports the claim of “ordination” from Peter, James and John.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Blog entry from <http://denversnuffer.blogspot.com/2014/06/history-of-d-section-27.html> on June 7, 2014.

⁷⁶ Oliver Cowdery died March 3, 1850. During a lengthy illness he signed a document on January 13, 1849 which included this: “While darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people; long after the authority to administer in holy things had been taken away, the Lord opened the heavens and sent forth His word to the salvation of Israel. In the fulfillment of the sacred Scriptures, the everlasting Gospel was proclaimed by the mighty Angel (Moroni), who, clothed with the authority of his mission, gave glory to God in the highest. John the Baptist, holding the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood; Peter, James, and John, holding the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, have also ministered for those who shall be heirs of salvation, and with these administrations ordained men to the same Priesthood. These Priesthoods, with their authority, are now, and must continue to be, in the body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Blessed is the Elder who has received the same, and thrice blessed and holy is he who shall endure to the end.

Joseph wanted to obtain the promised greater ordination that would allow him to lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. He prayed for it from 1829 through 1831. Joseph recorded, “We now became anxious to have that promise ~~which conferred upon~~ (realized to) us, which the angel had that conferred upon us the Aaronick Priesthood ~~upon us~~. had given us, viz, that provided we continued faithful the we should also have the Melchisedec Priesthood, which holds the authority of the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost we had for some time made this a subject of humble prayer, and at length we got together in the Chamber of M^r Whitmer’s house in order more particularly to seek of the Lord information, and if possible obtain what we now so earnestly desired. ~~We had not been long~~ After some time spent in solemn and fervent prayer, the Word of the Lord came unto us, in the Chamber, commanding us, that I should ordain Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ, and the he also should ordain me to the same office, and that after having been thus ordained, we should proceed to ordain others to the same office, according as it should be made known to us.”⁷⁷

The office of “Elder” is a position in the association or church not priesthood. However, Joseph’s account relates that they were “commanded to proceed... and then attend to the laying on of hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.”⁷⁸ Joseph believed that the “voice of God” gave the authority for laying on hands. This would be the way Melchizedek received the priesthood: By the voice of God.⁷⁹

The authority used to ordain others is described in Joseph’s history. The authority was the same as in the Book of Mormon. Joseph wrote: “And behold you are they who are ordained of me, to ordain priests and teachers to declare my gospel, according to the power of the Holy Ghost which is in you[.]”⁸⁰ The power to ordain in the early days of the Restoration was derived from the power of the Holy Ghost that is within the person who is doing the ordaining. The instruction to ordain “priests and teachers” was enlarged to include elders and deacons also: “Every Elder, priest, teacher, or deacon, is to be ordained according to the gifts and calling of God unto him; and he is to be ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one that ordains him.”⁸¹

Ordination early in the Restoration was accomplished the same way as ordination was accomplished in the Book of Mormon, that is by the power of the Holy Ghost that is in the person being ordained.

“Accept assurances, dear brother, of the unfeigned prayer of him who, in connection with Joseph the Seer, was blessed with the above ministrations, and who earnestly and devotedly hopes to meet you in the celestial glory.” *Deseret Evening News*, December 21, 1901, p. 11.

⁷⁷ *JSP Histories, Vol. 1*, p. 326 (Draft 1), all as in original.

⁷⁸ *JSP Histories, Vol. 1*, pp. 326-328.

⁷⁹ “And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch. It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God; and it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as believed on his name.” JST-Genesis 14:27-29.

⁸⁰ *JSP Histories, Vol. 1*, pp. 332-334 (Draft 2); see also D&C 18:32. Compare with Moroni 3:4.

⁸¹ *JSP Histories, Vol. 1*, p. 346 (Draft 2); see also D&C 20:60.

The Joseph Smith 1842 letter was written while he was in hiding in Nauvoo. That letter corresponds with his earlier history, but in it he mentions things that were not in the histories. They are highlighted below:

“Again what do we hear, Glad tidings from Cumorah, Moroni, an angel from Heaven, declaring the fulfilment of the prophets, the book to be revealed, a voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca County, declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book, **a voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquahanah, detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light, the voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness** between Harmony, Susquahanah County, and Coleville, Broom County on the Susquahanah River declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom of the dispensation of the fulness of times.

“And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! And the voice of Michael, the archangel; **the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring** their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!”⁸²

These are carefully worded affirmations by Joseph. The “voice” is not the same thing as the person or even visionary encounter. The “devil” is who “appeared” on the banks of the Sesquahananah, not Michael. It was the “voice of Michael” that detected the deception. The devil appeared, and Michael spoke.

It was “the **voice** of Peter, James, and John” that spoke to Joseph. When they spoke they “declar[ed] themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom of the dispensation of the fullness of times.” Does saying “I have the keys to my Dodge truck” give you the keys to my Dodge truck? The voice of Peter, James and John—not laying on hands or ordination—is what Joseph described took place. Joseph and Oliver left no other account of the “voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of diverse angels” who “declared their” rights, keys, honors, majesty and glory. Recently, there was a new revelation that explains more about this event. The purpose of these visits was not to confer priesthood, but to explain the history of God’s dealings with mankind, and to convey essential knowledge about this creation. It was to give Joseph a basis to understand enough so that a temple could be built to house God’s revelations. If men are to be taught enough to have “great knowledge” as Abraham had, then the information must be revealed from heaven. These words are like Abraham’s words. Joseph affirms he had “great knowledge” and sought for and obtained “greater knowledge.” This is all required for the Holy Order to return.

Joseph was called upon by God to lay the foundation for the last days. He did not establish Zion, but he left behind a foundation to move forward. The failure was not Joseph’s or Hyrum’s. It was the people.

Understanding is brought about by having access to a channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from Heaven. Therefore, Joseph needed to not only be in possession of that channel, but the channel needed to respond to

⁸² D&C 128:20-21.

and did respond to Joseph's petitions and inquiries in order for him to be able to function in the position he held.

The January 1841 revelation records,

“And again, verily I say unto you, let my servant William be appointed, ordained, and anointed, as counselor unto my servant Joseph, in the room of my servant Hyrum, that my servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, which was appointed unto him by his father, by blessing and also by right; from henceforth he shall hold the keys of the patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people, That whoever he blesses shall be blessed, and whoever he curses shall be cursed; that whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. And from this time forth I appoint unto him that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph; That he may act in concert also with my servant Joseph; and that he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive, and be crowned with the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and gifts of the priesthood, that once were put upon him that was my servant Oliver Cowdery; That my servant Hyrum may bear record of the things which I shall show unto him, that his name may be had in honorable remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever.” D&C 124:91-96.

Hyrum was put into a position once occupied by Oliver, to act with Joseph, possessing the ability to “ask and receive.” Hyrum was given the channel through which you can know and understand what God wants or intends for people. That is one of the most important functions of the Holy Order. The purpose is to save souls.

Hyrum's name was to be had “in honorable remembrance from generation to generation” or his position was to descend through him generation after generation. Descendants of Hyrum occupied the position of Presiding Patriarch of the Church until Eldred G. Smith was made emeritus in 1979. Until his death, he still signed as Patriarch to the Church and he still kept an office in the church office building. The office and the authority of that office ended with the death of Eldred G. Smith on April 4, 2013.⁸³ Since the Holy Order has a patriarchal component to it as well, that now will also need to be restored since the institution has rejected and abandoned all right to the office.

⁸³ In an interview with Patriarch Smith on February 7, 2012 he was asked if he had or would confer the position on his son, Gary. This is what the transcript of the interview records: “Question: Have you conferred the office on your son Gary, and if not why not? Answer: NO (Based on this, asked him if he would then ordain Gary so the office would be passed down?) He emphatically said ‘No,’ even when I pressed him. He said Gary didn’t want it and that Gary wouldn’t be accepted. He said that he would need approval of the Q12 and that he probably wouldn’t get it. E. said that if one asked individuals in the Quorum there might be a different answer than if one asked the entire Quorum. If you asked the entire Quorum, the answer would be a ‘no.’” Portions of the interview can be read at barerecord.blogspot.com/2013/04/162-loss-of-church-patriarch.html, but the above part was not included in that post. A complete transcript of the interview is in my possession.

Accomplishing what is needed is almost beyond human ability. Even very humble people change when given great blessings. The change from humble to haughty happens so often and so quickly it is astonishing.

Many prophecies foretell the gentiles will reject their invitation. The condemnation in 1832, the expulsion from Missouri, the forced winter exodus from Nauvoo, the suffering during and after the exodus, the afflictions, judgments and wrath of God at the saints all happened in fulfillment of prophecy. The saints' pride, lying, deceit, hypocrisy, murders, priestcrafts, and whoredoms (as Christ foretold would happen), overwhelmed the restoration in Nauvoo. Then after Brigham Young led people into isolation in the wilderness, inquisitorial abuses quickly followed. The awful "Mormon Reformation" led to mass-murders at Mountain Meadows, as well as religious killings based on the idea of "blood atonement." The religion lapsed into contradictions in "fundamental" teachings, adopting a well-paid professional ministerial class of leaders, changes to the ordinances including radical change to the temple endowment in 1990, eliminating washings and anointings in 2005, a quest for popularity and centrally-controlled, tightly correlated rejection of teachings. These unfortunate events are all part of the gentile history of a long, downward path. The gentiles have walked away from the light, and increasingly embraced darkness and foolish trust of men. All Mormon sects are now ruled by traditions contrary to the scriptures and commandments of God. They are asleep and cannot be awakened. God is now doing something new, and left them to find their own way.

Emma Smith, Sidney Rigdon and William Marks all said that without Joseph Smith there was no church. They were right. After Joseph died, there was a complete overthrow of the church by the quorum of the twelve. The quorum of the twelve overthrew equality in the church. The twelve substituted themselves in place of an equal distribution of power as mandated by revelation. They pretend to privileges never given to them by God.

The first presidency and quorum of the twelve should be equal in authority. Joseph never moved a single apostle into the first presidency. They were independent, equal bodies. Likewise, the quorum of seventy was equal with the twelve, and therefore should be equal with the first presidency also. The standing high councils of Zion were also equal in authority. All the "keys," to the extent there are any, were held equally by the first presidency, quorum of the twelve, quorum of the seventy, and the high councils. There was no primacy in the twelve, as originally organized.

In the years preceding Joseph's death, as their calling required, the twelve were away from Nauvoo doing missionary work. Joseph spent his last three years in close association with the Nauvoo High Council, as reflected in the Nauvoo High Council Minutes. Following Joseph's and Hyrum's deaths, Emma Smith remarked, "Now as the Twelve have no power with regard to the government of the Church in the Stakes of Zion, but the High Council have all power, so it follows that on removal of the first President, the office would devolve upon the President of the High Council in Zion ...the Twelve... were aware of these facts but acted differently."⁸⁴

None of the equality present in these four different bodies survived Brigham Young. When Brigham Young assumed control, the church became an oligarchy run by the twelve. This is how things are done today. Now the senior apostle automatically becomes the church president, an unscriptural and unwise system for consolidating power. Equality among many has been replaced by the dictatorship of one. "[Emma] bore testimony to [Lucy Messerve] that Mormonism was true as it

⁸⁴ Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, Doubleday, (New York, 1984), pp. 206-207.

came forth from the servant of the Lord, Joseph Smith, but ...[said] the Twelve have made Bogus of it.”⁸⁵ The term “bogus” in those days meant counterfeit.

One of the last signs indicating the end of the gentiles was the passing of Eldred Smith in 2013, and with him the office of Patriarch to the church. Only one thing now remains. God must send a witness to be the final required “sign” sent to declare God’s intention to begin something new.

Joseph Smith cautioned the saints about violating God’s trust. Joseph said, “His word will go forth, in these last days, in purity; for if Zion will not purify herself, so as to be approved in all things, in His sight, He will seek another people; for His work will go on until Israel is gathered, and they who will not hear His voice, must expect to feel His wrath.”⁸⁶ We should expect God’s house to be ordered around only one principle: repentance. When the pride of a great organization replaces repentance, the heavens withdraw, and when they do, “Amen” to that portion of God’s house. The restoration through Joseph will always remain, even if God chooses to do something different before His return. It is His to do with as He determines best. He has sent me as the witness to declare:

At the time I was excommunicated, I was in good standing with the Lord. I had nothing amiss in my personal life. There was no sin warranting church discipline. As a former member of the High Council for years, every church disciplinary proceeding I attended that resulted in excommunication, always involved serious moral transgression, betrayal of marriage covenants, and in some cases criminal wrongdoing. In contrast, the reason for my discipline was a book I had written about church history, in which I attempted to align the events of the Restoration to the prophecies of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine & Covenants. The stake president admitted to me and my wife before the Council began, that I was then worthy of a temple recommend. By any standard of moral conduct, I was an innocent man, whose only offense was believing the scriptures revealed our condition before God. On the evening of May 1, 2014, the Lord gave me further light and knowledge about His work in His vineyard. The Lord is in control over the church, men, and all things. When He undertakes to accomplish something, “there is nothing that the Lord God shall take in His heart to do, but what He will do it.” (Abr. 3:17.) Often the means used by the Lord to accomplish His “strange act,” and to perform His “strange work”(D&C 101:95), are very small indeed. “Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and

⁸⁵ *Id.*, p. 211.

⁸⁶ *TPJS*, p. 18. To the same effect, during the Mormon Reformation Heber C. Kimball said: “We receive the priesthood and power and authority. If we make a bad use of the priesthood, do you not see that the day will come when God will reckon with us, and he will take it from us and give it to those who will make better use of it? (*JD* 6:125.) George A. Smith said, “God has set his hand at the present time to establish his kingdom. But unless the Saints will so live and so exert themselves that they can preserve the purity of the holy Priesthood among them, the work will be left to other people.” (*JD* 6:161.) Even Brigham Young commented on the possibility that only an LDS remnant would remain to carry forward the work. “God will preserve a portion of the meek and the humble of this people to bear off the Kingdom to the inhabitants of the earth, and will defend His Priesthood; for it is the last time, the last gathering time; and He will not suffer the Priesthood to be again driven from the earth.” (*JD* 2:184.)

simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise. And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.” (Alma 37:6-7.)

It is almost always the case that the Lord uses simple things to confound the mighty. I can think of nothing smaller or simpler or less important than myself. Inside the great church to which I once belonged, I was obscure. However, I lived my religion, attended faithfully, served to the best of my ability, upheld church leaders with my prayers, paid tithes, fasted, observed the Word of Wisdom, and helped answer questions for those needing assistance with troubling issues. There was no reason to regard me as a rebel who should be singled out for discipline. Nevertheless, the Lord chose to use a faithful and believing member to accomplish His design. Only someone who is devoted to His will could accomplish what the Lord had in His heart. Now He has accomplished it.

The Church has Doctrine & Covenants 121, verses 36 to 40, to warn it about abusing His authority. There is an “amen” or end to authority when control, compulsion, and dominion are exercised in any degree of unrighteousness. Therefore, when using authority, great care must be taken. In any case, the church was careless. Therefore, those involved, are now left to kick against the pricks, to persecute the Saints and to fight against God.

Section 121 is a warning to church leaders. It is addressing the powerful, not the powerless. It is addressing those who occupy the seats of authority over others. Only those who claim the right to control, compel, and exercise dominion, are warned against persecuting the saints, who believe the religion and practice it as I did from the time of my conversion. My excommunication was an abuse of authority. Therefore, as soon as the decision was made, the Lord terminated the priesthood authority of the stake presidency and every member of the High Council who sustained this decision, which was unanimous. Thereafter, I appealed to the First Presidency, outlining the involvement of the 12 and the 70. The appeal gave notice to them all. The appeal was summarily denied.

Last general conference, the entire First Presidency, the 12, the 70, and all other general authorities and auxiliaries, voted to sustain those who abused their authority in casting me out of the church. At that moment, the Lord ended all claims of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to claim it is led by the priesthood. They have not practiced what He requires. The Lord has brought about His purposes. This has been in His heart all along. He has chosen to use small means to accomplish it, but He always uses the smallest of means to fulfill His purposes.

None of this was my doing. The Lord’s strange act, was not, could not, be planned by me. Was not, could not, have been controlled by me. It was not anticipated by me, or even understood by me, until after the Lord had accomplished His will, and made it apparent to me on the evening of May 1, 2014. He alone has done this. He is the author of all of this.⁸⁷

I am not the cause of this, but only a witness it has happened. God gave the signs. I am only to declare what He has done. The Lord has permitted the church to keep its claims without any hindrance from Him through four generations. During that time there were many offenses to the

⁸⁷ Transcribed from *Journal of Denver Snuffer*, Vol. 8, entry of May 2, 2014, pp. 29-33.

Lord. Now, however, their claims have ended by His voice, so He can continue the restoration without them.

Just because something is true at one moment it does not mean it will remain true forever. Things change because decisions, actions and behaviors matter. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the same as it was in 1973. At this moment it is not even the same church it was in 2012. It is changing rapidly, and will be something different again in a few years. The Lord, knowing the direction the LDS Church is heading, has acted to preserve the restoration. The change obviously does not affect the leadership's legal rights in any way.⁸⁸ They are upheld by common consent, and have the right to control the direction of the organization.

This may appear a peculiar event, but God is the same today as yesterday. When Israel refused the fullness offered by God anciently, "he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; And the lesser priesthood continued."⁸⁹ Israel failed to enter into God's rest, but He commissioned rites through Moses, and then respected them for generations. Israel was not just abandoned by God. He called another servant to end the commission of Israel, so what God began He took responsibility to end. John the Baptist "was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews."⁹⁰ What God begins as an orderly establishment, He will end through an orderly conclusion.

Joseph Smith established The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Joseph's followers, like ancient Israel with Moses, failed to obtain the fullness.⁹¹ The LDS Church has operated under a commission from the time they rejected the fullness offered through Joseph, with limited authority, just as Israel did after Moses was taken. God decided when and how He would bring an end to the authority of the leaders of the LDS Church, just as He ended the kingdom of the Jews through John. Once God acts, our doubt about it does not change what He has done. God is now free to proceed with another chapter in His "strange act."⁹² His house is a house of order, but since the days of Abraham, God's house has included things about which mankind retained very little knowledge.

It is because of the gentile failure that the Lord has begun something new. The Holy Order can give mankind a channel for restoring what was lost. The final work must fully restore what was at the beginning or it will be of no value.

I was asked about children who are kept from access to LDS temples and what can be done to inform them about temple rites. First, although it has been demonstrably corrupted, there is value in the temple. If I had children who could not go to the temple today, I would not personally administer to them the temple ceremony. I made promises in the temple that I have kept. I keep the covenants. Part of that is to not disclose certain things, but rather than do so I would suffer my life

⁸⁸ The entire corporate church is organized as a "corporation sole." There is one owner: the LDS Church President. As The Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints he owns everything from the copyrights to chapels, from temples to business entities, from websites to artwork, the entire "church" belongs to one man. Even if voted out by common consent, he, and not church members, would own all the property. In a very real legal sense, there is only one Mormon in the LDS organization.

⁸⁹ D&C 84:25-26.

⁹⁰ D&C 84:28.

⁹¹ D&C 124:28.

⁹² D&C 101:94-95.

to be taken; I was initiated before the changes in 1990. Since I am under an obligation not to disclose certain things, it would be improper to induct anyone into a temple ceremony. However, anyone can go and read the ceremony online. I recommend reading the pre-1990 transcript rather than the post-1990 altered ceremony. If someone learns about the ceremony from reading on-line, and I did not tell him anything, then discussing it is permissible because it does not include me breaking a covenant to not disclose.

Likewise, if your child goes through the temple today, I would recommend they read the ceremony in the form it was observed before the changes in 1990. I wouldn't be the one to originally disclose it to them. I would tell them to read it online. But after they read it I would feel free to discuss what they learn. The ceremony is useful, even though the transmission of it has corrupted it.

Ordinances that are ordained from God cannot be changed. If they are changed, they are broken.⁹³ If they are broken, they are ineffective. Even a broken ordinance can be informational and if you take it sincerely and honor your covenants, God will work with that. He can dispense every blessing and promise of the temple. It would come from Heaven through the Holy Spirit of Promise. Therefore, there is no down side, but there is a considerable upside if you are true and faithful to the temple rites. The LDS rites make it clear that everything is conditional: "Brothers and Sisters, if you are true and faithful, the time will come when you will be called up and anointed, Kings and Queens, Priests and Priestesses, whereas now you are only anointed to become such. The realization of these blessings depends upon your faithfulness."⁹⁴

Men cannot create covenants with God. In the Answer to Prayer for Covenant the Lord explains the following: "Covenants, promises, rights, vows, associations and expectations that are mine will endure, and those that are not cannot endure. Everything in the world, whether it is established by men, or by Thrones, or by Dominions, or by Principalities, or by Powers, that are not by my word and promise shall be thrown down when men are dead, and shall not remain in my Father's Kingdom. Only those things that are by me shall remain in and after the resurrection." To endure beyond this life anything and everything requires an ordination from God. Men cannot, and those who are in positions of authority in the heavens (including those who occupy thrones, dominions, principalities and powers) cannot. Men can make agreements and call them vows, covenants or promises, and can obligate themselves in this life to perform them, but in the afterlife all such things come to an end if they are not ordained by God. One of the most important opportunities to obtain associations ordained by God occurs when the Holy Order is on earth.

The purpose of the coming last days' temple in Zion is to allow the communication of great knowledge and greater knowledge, and to restore what has been lost since the time of Adam. Important knowledge is required for those who receive the Holy Order. We do not get saved in ignorance.

Peter, James and John did not lay hands on Oliver and Joseph and ordain them to priesthood. But they were on the Holy Mount at the time of the transfiguration, and they were endowed with knowledge there. They saw the history of the world down to the end of time.⁹⁵ A brief description is revealed in D&C45:15-59, copied below:

⁹³ Isa. 24:5.

⁹⁴ I recite that from memory. It is close, if not word-for-word what is said at the beginning of the temple rites.

⁹⁵ D&C 63:20-21: "Nevertheless, he that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth when the day of transfiguration shall

“Wherefore, hearken and I will reason with you, and I will speak unto you and prophesy, as unto men in days of old. And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh, and spake unto them, saying: As ye have asked of me concerning the signs of my coming, in the day when I shall come in my glory in the clouds of heaven, to fulfil the promises that I have made unto your fathers, For as ye have looked upon the long absence of your spirits from your bodies to be a bondage,⁹⁶ I will show unto you how the day of redemption shall come, and also the restoration of the scattered Israel. And now ye behold this temple which is in Jerusalem, which ye call the house of God, and your enemies say that this house shall never fall. But, verily I say unto you, that desolation shall come upon this generation as a thief in the night, and this people shall be destroyed and scattered among all nations. And this temple which ye now see shall be thrown down that there shall not be left one stone upon another. And it shall come to pass, that this generation of Jews shall not pass away until every desolation which I have told you concerning them shall come to pass. Ye say that ye know that the end of the world cometh; ye say also that ye know that the heavens and the earth shall pass away; And in this ye say truly, for so it is; but these things which I have told you shall not pass away until all shall be fulfilled. And this I have told you concerning Jerusalem; and when that day shall come, shall a remnant be scattered among all nations; But they shall be gathered again; but they shall remain until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion, and men’s hearts shall fail them, and they shall say that Christ delayeth his coming until the end of the earth. And the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound. And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel; But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men. And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land. But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die. And there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations; yet men will harden their hearts against me, and they will take up the sword, one against another, and they will kill one another. And now, when I the Lord had spoken these words unto my disciples, they were troubled. And I said unto them: Be not troubled, for, when all these things shall come to pass, ye may know that the promises which have been made unto you shall be fulfilled. And when the light shall begin to break forth, it shall be with them like unto a parable which I will show you— Ye look and behold the fig trees, and ye see them with your eyes, and ye say when they begin to shoot forth, and their leaves are yet tender, that summer is now nigh at hand; Even so it shall be in that day when they shall see all these things, then shall they know that the hour is nigh. And it shall come to pass that he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come, even for the signs of the coming of the

come; When the earth shall be transfigured, even according to the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fulness ye have not yet received.”

⁹⁶ This motivated Peter and James to ask to come speedily into Christ’s kingdom and John to ask to tarry until the Lord’s return. (D&C 7:3-5.)

Son of Man. And they shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath. And they shall behold blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke. And before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood, and the stars fall from heaven. And the remnant shall be gathered unto this place; And then they shall look for me, and, behold, I will come; and they shall see me in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory; with all the holy angels; and he that watches not for me shall be cut off. But before the arm of the Lord shall fall, an angel shall sound his trump, and the saints that have slept shall come forth to meet me in the cloud. Wherefore, if ye have slept in peace blessed are you; for as you now behold me and know that I am, even so shall ye come unto me and your souls shall live, and your redemption shall be perfected; and the saints shall come forth from the four quarters of the earth. Then shall the arm of the Lord fall upon the nations. And then shall the Lord set his foot upon this mount, and it shall cleave in twain, and the earth shall tremble, and reel to and fro, and the heavens also shall shake. And the Lord shall utter his voice, and all the ends of the earth shall hear it; and the nations of the earth shall mourn, and they that have laughed shall see their folly. And calamity shall cover the mocker, and the scorner shall be consumed; and they that have watched for iniquity shall be hewn down and cast into the fire. And then shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet? Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God. And then shall they weep because of their iniquities; then shall they lament because they persecuted their king. And then shall the heathen nations be redeemed, and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection; and it shall be tolerable for them. And Satan shall be bound, that he shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men. 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 not 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 them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver.

Like others who are initiated into the Holy Order, they were endowed with greater knowledge. It fortified them for their ministry. It qualified them to be among those who would declare their dispensation to Joseph Smith. Peter, James and John are symbols of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Like the earlier grandfather, father, and son, Peter, James and John were adopted into the line of the Holy Order.

It was the last in the line, Jacob, through whom the nations or tribes of Israel would descend. And it was Jacob through whom the nations, the twelve tribes and the twelve nations of Israel were established. He was the one through whom the righteous progeny and birthright descended. Likewise, John is the last one in the line who chose to remain behind to create, as a ministering angel, a great “posterity” among mortals, to serve as a ministering angel to those who would be heirs of salvation.⁹⁷ I do not believe the reason Peter, James and John came was to ordain

⁹⁷ D&C 7:6.

Joseph and Oliver. That was accomplished in either the chamber of Old Father Whitmer or at the conference in June of 1831, or both. Below is an excerpt beginning on page 19 of *A Man Without Doubt* discussing the moment Joseph identified the “Melchizedek” priesthood or “high priesthood” as having first appeared:

Joseph’s history explains his hope to receive this other, greater priesthood ordination as the angel had promised: “We now became anxious to have that promise which conferred upon (realized to) us, which the angel had that conferred upon us the Aaronick Priesthood upon us, had given us, viz, that provided we continued faithful, the we should also have the Melchisedec Priesthood, which holds the authority of the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (*JS Papers, Histories, Vol. 1, 1832-1844*, (Church Historian’s Press: Salt Lake City, 2013), p. 326, all as in original.)

In anticipation of getting the promise fulfilled and priesthood conferred, a conference was scheduled for June 1831. Joseph promised there would be a great endowment of power given in the conference. At the conference, on June 3, 1831, a revelation to Joseph directed that twenty-three attendees were to be ordained to this heavenly priesthood. (At the time of the conference it was called “high priesthood” but later would be called “Melchizedek Priesthood.”) (See “Melchizedek Priesthood” in Glossary.)

Today, the LDS church tells a different story to support their claim to have “Melchizedek Priesthood.” Every LDS priesthood holder tracks his authority back to “Peter, James and John” who purportedly ordained Joseph and Oliver Cowdery on an unknown day in 1829, prior to Joseph even founding a church. The records kept contemporaneous to the events contradict the claims of the LDS church. Below are accounts written at the time of the June 1831 conference where the “high priesthood” was first given to Joseph Smith and others:

Jared Carter’s journal records “Friday” (3 June) as the “memorable day when God first gave the fullness of the high priesthood to the elders of the Church of Christ.” (*JS Papers, Documents Vol. 1: July 1828-June 1831*, p. 318, footnote 412, spellings as in original.)

“JS’s history uses very similar language, further suggesting that Melchizedek was first publicly used in ordinations at the June 1831 conference: ‘The authority of the Melchisedec priesthood was manifested and conferred for the first time, upon several of the elders.’” (*Id.*, p. 320, spellings and italics as in original.)

John Corryll confirms: “In John Corryll’s 1839 history, he used the term Melchizedek priesthood instead of high priesthood as though the two were synonymous. He explained that ‘the Malchisedec priesthood was then for the first time introduced, and conferred on several of the elders.’” (*Id.*, spellings and italics as in original.)

Parley P. Pratt confirmed the same thing. “Parley P. Pratt later explained the ordination to the high priesthood in this way: ‘Several were then selected by revelation, through President Smith, and ordained to the High Priesthood after the order of the Son of God; which is after the order of Melchisedec. This was the first occasion in which this priesthood had been revealed and conferred upon the Elders in this dispensation, although the office of an Elder is the same in a certain degree, but not in the fullness. On this occasion I was ordained to this holy ordinance and calling by President Smith.’ (Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, p. 72.)” (*JS Papers*,

Documents Vol. 1: July 1828-June 1831, p. 318, footnote 422, spellings and cited source as in original.)

The official History of the Church (“DHC”) published by the LDS Church states: “On the 3rd of June, the Elders from the various parts of the country where they were laboring, came in; and the conference before appointed, convened in Kirtland; and the Lord displayed His power to the most perfect satisfaction of the Saints. The man of sin was revealed, and the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood was manifested and conferred for the first time upon several of the Elders.” (*DHC, Vol. 1*, pp. 175-176.)

Joseph wanted power in the priesthood so Zion could be established in a New Jerusalem on earth. This was the priesthood Enoch used to move mountains and control rivers. As the revised version of Genesis reported, Melchizedek and “every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world.” This authority was necessary for Zion to be protected from destruction by the world.

In the June 1831 conference, Joseph Smith ordained five, and Lyman Wight ordained eighteen, for the total of twenty-three. For a moment they rejoiced. The heavenly priesthood returned! But the results that followed were anything but satisfactory. The authority did not “take” and the power did not come. Most of the men involved fell away and rejected Joseph shortly after their ordination. The more receptive of the men were left confused. The great blessing Joseph had waited years to receive turned into the first great crisis Joseph would confront.

“Levi Hancock, who was present at the June conference, later recalled a conversation he had in January 1832 with Lyman Wight, who ordained several individuals to the high priesthood at the June conference. Speaking about the priesthood, Hancock remarked that ‘neither of us understood what it was.’ ‘I did not understand it,’ wrote Hancock, ‘and he [Wight] could give me no light.’” (*JS Papers, Documents Vol. 2: July 1831-January 1833*, p. 79.)

Not only was the ordination confusing, subsequent performance by those ordained did not mirror Melchizedek or Enoch. Of the five Joseph ordained,

- Lyman Wight was excommunicated in 1848
 - Harvey Whitlock was excommunicated in 1835
 - Thomas Marsh left the church in 1838, signed an affidavit against Joseph which contributed to his imprisonment in Missouri, and was excommunicated in 1839
 - Parley Pratt apostatized and was excommunicated in 1842, reinstated in 1843.
- Of the eighteen Lyman Wight ordained,
- John Whitmer was excommunicated in March 1838
 - Sidney Rigdon was excommunicated in September 1844
 - Edward Partridge died in 1840
 - Ezra Thayer refused to follow the Twelve after Joseph and Hyrum were martyred
 - Joseph Wakefield was excommunicated in January 1834
 - Ezra Booth apostatized within months, and went on to write anti-Mormon and anti-Joseph Smith publications
 - John Corrill was excommunicated in 1839

- Jacob Scott denied the faith
- Wheeler Baldwin joined the RLDS Church in 1859
- Martin Harris left the LDS Church, later followed James Strang, but returned to the LDS Church and was rebaptized in 1870.

None of those ordained turned rivers out of their course, divided the earth or held armies in defiance. Instead of breaking bands, they broke fellowship away from Joseph. It became apparent that ordination to this high priesthood did not confer the hoped for great endowment of power. Instead of producing power like Enoch and Melchizedek held, it produced disappointment, quickly followed by open dissent.

Ezra Booth, one of those ordained by Wight, was not content to leave quietly. He wrote a series of nine letters published in the Ohio Star newspaper in 1831. These were later collected by E.D. Howe and included in the 1834 anti-Mormon book *Mormonism Unveiled*. Booth was disappointed with Mormonism in general. He criticized Joseph, and pointed at the 1831 priesthood ordination as evidence of Joseph's false, grandiose pretensions. It does not appear Booth's damning letters exaggerate or misstate the events. He told his understanding of the events. He apparently thought the truth was bad enough. The Booth letters said, in relevant part:

...Great promises are made to such as embrace it, signs and wonders are to attend them, such as healing the sick, the blind made to see, the lame to walk, &c; and they are to receive an everlasting inheritance in "the land of Missouri," where the Savior will make his second appearance; at which place the foundation of the temple of God, and the City of Zion, have been laid, and are soon to be built. It is also to be a city of Refuge, and a safe asylum when the storms of vengeance shall pour upon the earth, and those who reject the Book of Mormon, shall be swept off as with the besom of destruction. ... Many of them have been ordained to the High Priesthood, or the order of Melchisedec; and profess to be endowed with the same power as the ancient apostles were. But they have been hitherto unsuccessful in finding the lame, the halt, and the blind, who had faith sufficient to become the subjects of their miracles... (*Ezra Booth, Letter 2, September 1831.*)

...As the 4th of June last was appointed for the sessions of the conference [referring to the June 1831 conference where the ordinations occurred], it was ascertained, that that was the time specified, when the great and mighty work was to be commenced, and such was the confidence of some, that knowledge superceded their faith, and they did not hesitate to declare themselves perfectly assured that the work of miracles would commence at the ensuing conference. With such strong assurances, and with the most elevated expectations, the conference assembled at the time appointed. To give, if possible, energy to expectation, Smith, the day before the conference, professing to be filled with the spirit of prophecy, declared, that "not three days should pass away, before some should see their Savior, face to face." Soon after the session commenced, Smith arose to harangue the conference. He reminded those present of the prophecy, which he said "was given by the spirit yesterday."

He wished them not to be overcome with surprise, when that event ushered in. He continued, until by long speaking, himself and some others became much excited. He then laid his hands on the head of Elder Wight, who had participated largely in the warm feeling of his leader, and ordained him to the High Priesthood. He was set apart for the service of the Indians, and was ordained to the gift of tongues, healing the sick, casting out devils, and discerning spirits; and in like manner he ordained several others; and then called upon Wight to take the floor. Wight arose, and presented a pale countenance, a fierce look, with arms extended, and his hands cramped back, the whole system agitated, and a very unpleasant object to look upon. He exhibited himself as an instance of the great power of God, and called upon those around him "if you want to see a sign, look at me." He then stepped upon a bench, and declared with a loud voice, he saw the Savior: and thereby, for the time being, rescued Smith's prophecy from merited contempt. —It, however, procured Wight the authority to ordain the rest. So said the spirit, and so said Smith. The spirit in Smith selected those to be ordained, and the spirit in Wight ordained them. But the spirit in Wight proved an erring dictator; so much so, that some of the candidates felt the weight of hands thrice, before the work was rightly done. Another Elder, who had been ordained to the same office as Wight, at the bidding of Smith, stepped upon the floor. Then ensued a scene, of which you can form no adequate conception; and which, I would forbear relating, did not the truth require it. The Elder moved upon the floor, his legs inclining to a bend; one shoulder elevated above the other, upon which the head seemed disposed to recline, his arms partly extended; his hands partly clenched; his mouth partly open, and contracted in the shape of an italic O; his eyes assumed a wild ferocious cast, and his whole appearance presented a frightful object to the view of the beholder. — "Speak, Brother Harvey" said Smith. But Harvey intimated by signs, that his power of articulation was in a state of suspense, and that he was unable to speak. Some conjectured that Harvey was possessed of the devil, but Smith said, "the Lord binds in order to set at liberty." After different opinions had been given, and there had been much confusion, Smith learnt by the spirit, that Harvey was under a diabolical influence, and that Satan had bound him; and he commanded the unclean spirit to come out of him. It now became clearly manifest, that "the man of sin was revealed," for the express purpose that the elders should become acquainted with the devices of Satan; and after that they would possess knowledge sufficient to manage him. This, Smith declared to be a miracle, and his success in this case, encouraged him to work other and different miracles. Taking the hand of one of the Elders in his own, a hand which by accident had been rendered defective, he said, "Brother Murdock, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to straighten your hand;" in the mean while endeavoring to accomplish the work by using his own hand to open the hand of the

other. The effort proved unsuccessful; but he again articulated the same commandment, in a more authoritative and louder tone of voice; and while uttering with his tongue, his hands were at work; but after all the exertion of his power, both natural and supernatural, the deficient hand returned to its former position, where it still remains. But ill success in this case, did not discourage him from undertaking another. One of the Elders who was decrepit in one of his legs, was set upon the floor, and commanded, in the name of Jesus Christ to walk. He walked a step or two, his faith failed, and he was again compelled to have recourse to his former assistant, and he has had occasion to use it ever since. A dead body. Which had been retained above ground two or three days, under the expectation that the dead would be raised, was insensible to the voice of those who commanded it to awake into life, and is destined to sleep in the grave till the last trump shall sound, and the power of God easily accomplishes the work, which frustrated the attempts, and bid defiance to the puny efforts of the Mormonite.** That an attempt was made to raise the child, is denied, of course, as every other attempt has been, after the entire failure was obvious to all. The parents of the deceased child, however, state, that they were prevented from procuring medical aid for the child, by the representations of the elders, that there was no danger -- that it would certainly be restored. The father had no other idea but that the child was to be raised; neither did his faith fail him till preparations were made for its interment. He then awoke from his dream of delusion, and dissolved his connection with the impostors. Under these discouraging circumstances, the horizon of Mormonism gathered darkness, and a storm seemed to hang impending over the church. The gloom of disappointed expectation, overspread the countenances of many, while they labored to investigate the cause of this failure. To add, if possible, to their mortification, a larger assembly collected on the Sabbath, in order to hear preaching. In the midst of the meeting the congregation was dismissed by Rigdon, and the people sent to their homes. He was directed to do this, he said, by the spirit. But it was generally believed, that he was directed solely by fear; and that he had mistaken the spirit of cowardice, for the spirit of the Lord. Several of the Elders said they "felt the spirit to preach" to the congregation: and Rigdon felt the spirit to send the people home: such was the unity which then prevailed among them. You will doubtless say, can it be possible that the minds of men, and men who possess the appearance of honesty, can be so strangely infatuated, as still to adhere to a system, after it had occasioned so much agitation, and so much disappointment. One reason which can be assigned for this, is, the adherents are generally inclined to consider the system so perfect, as to admit of no suspicion; and the confusion and disappointment, are attributed to some other cause. Another, and principal reason is, delusion always effects the mind with a species of delirium, and this delirium arises in a degree proportionate to the

magnitude of the delusion. These men, upon other subjects, will converse like other men; but when their favorite system is brought into view, its inconsistencies and contradictions are resolved into inexplicable mystery; and this will not only apply to the delusions now under consideration, but in my view, to every delusion, from the highest to the lowest; and it matters not whether it carries the stamp of popularity or its opposite. (*Ezra Booth, Letter 3*, September 1831.)

These harsh but candid words were printed in the local newspaper immediately before a second conference in October 1831. Joseph again conferred the high priesthood on a second group during that conference. It is noteworthy, that despite his failure in June, Joseph tried again in October.

In addition to the discouraged participants, there were others who reflected on the ordinations for years before concluding Joseph made a mistake. David Whitmer (one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon) was not present when the first ordinations took place. He heard of them, and read the account written by his brother John, the church historian. David Whitmer remained faithful for seven more years. However, later he would claim that he never believed these ordinations were proper, and would dissent and reject Joseph's leadership altogether. Eventually he published a stinging criticism of the ordinations performed in June 1831 as improper and unscriptural. He retold early Mormon history in his pamphlet, *Address to All Believers in Christ*, published in 1887. It included these reflections regarding the June 1831 conference:

This matter of priesthood, since the days of Sydney Rigdon, has been the great hobby and stumbling block of the Latter Day Saints. Priesthood means authority; and authority is the word we should use. I do not think the word priesthood is mentioned in the New Covenant of the Book of Mormon. Authority is the word we used for the first two years in the church—until Sydney Rigdon's days in Ohio. This matter of the two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, all originated in the mind of Sydney Rigdon. ...In Kirtland, Ohio, in June, 1831, at a conference of the church, the first High Priests were ordained into the church. Brother Joseph ordained Lyman Wight, John Murdock, Harvey Whitlock, Hyrum Smith, Reynolds Cahoon and others to the office of a High Priest. When they were ordained, right there at the time, the devil caught and bound Harvey Whitlock so he could not speak, his face being twisted into demon-like shape. Also John Murdock and others were caught by the devil in a similar manner. How brethren, do you not see that the displeasure of the Lord was upon their proceedings in ordaining High Priests? Of course it was. These facts are recorded in the History of the Church—written by my brother, John Whitmer, who was the regularly appointed church historian. I was not at that conference, being then in Hiram, which is near Kirtland, Ohio. I also have the testimony of Harvey Whitlock whom the devil caught and bound; also John Whitmer, who was present, and others who were present at the time, so I know it is true. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Chapter 9: High Priests.)

Joseph's followers may have been confused and discouraged by the priesthood ordination, but he was not. They did not share his vision, but that did not discourage Joseph. He proceeded with confidence and conviction to help others see that something great could be gained from heavenly priesthood. He never showed any sign of doubt about his own experience with God and angels. He described his certainty: "I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation." (JS-H 1:25.) Because Joseph was certain God appeared to and spoke with him, there was nothing in the priesthood failure to cause him doubt. Despite the mess created by Ezra Booth's nine letters, Joseph proceeded confidently to address his followers' lack of faith.

At the next round of ordinations in October 1831, Joseph tried to address the problem directly. This time, Joseph instructed, admonished and encouraged, while Rigdon warned about God's rejection of them if they failed to faithfully measure up. The minutes of the conference report that Joseph Smith told the new priests, "It is the privilege of every Elder to speak of the things of God &c, And could we all come together with one heart and one mind in perfect faith the veil [sic] might as well be rent to day as next week or any other time and if we will but cleanse ourselves and covenant before God, to serve him, it is our privilege to have an assurance [sic] that God will protect us at all times." (*JS Papers, Documents, Vol. 2: July 1831-January 1833*, p. 81.) He continued, "the order of the High priesthood is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life. And said it was the privilege of every Elder present to be ordained to the Highpriesthood [sic]." (*Id.* at p. 82.)

Sidney Rigdon was far less encouraging. He warned the newly ordained, "it was the privilege of those Elders present to be ordained to the High Priesthood, telling them that if they then should doubt God would withdraw his Spirit from them." (*Id.* p. 83.) Thereafter Joseph interviewed the candidates. He concluded, "he had a testimony that each had one talent and if after being ordained they should hide it God would take it from them." (*Id.* p. 86.)

As the conference concluded, Rigdon was apparently unimpressed with some of the new priests. His closing comments included this frank assessment, "the Lord was not well pleased with some of them because of their indifference to be ordained to that office, exhortation to faith and obedience setting forth the power of that office." (*Id.*) These conference minutes reveal the low expectations of both Joseph and Sidney Rigdon. Low expectations were justified. No mountains moved, no rivers turned out of their course, and Zion did not appear.

Still Joseph was not shaken in his belief that God would allow mankind to receive the same miraculous priesthood the ancients held. The power, visions, control over elements, and outpouring of gifts would be given again. He likewise believed God had authorized it to be conferred. But nothing positive happened. Ordinations had been most noteworthy in what they did NOT accomplish. Those ordained did not even remain faithful. The dilemma was how to fix the failure. Joseph did not view the meager results as evidence of his or God's inability, but man's. Joseph often explained that a man was saved no faster than he gains knowledge. (See, e.g., *TPJS*, p. 217; D&C 130: 18-19.) Therefore, the failure could be cured if only those ordained learned enough to become adept priests.

In this first, great crisis, Joseph Smith's response reveals more about him than all that happened before in his life. He composed a series of lectures designed to teach others how to have faith. These lectures were delivered first orally, and later published. When printed in 1835 as part of a volume of new scripture titled Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph edited the lectures and vouched for them as true doctrine. The lectures were the first portion of the book, and constituted the "Doctrine" of the volume. The Lectures were part of the Mormon scripture from 1835 until they were later dropped. The various Mormon churches discarded them, until only the LDS church retained them as scripture. In 1921, a committee of LDS church leaders thought the lectures had errors. Mormonism's founder prepared the lectures to encourage faith. Later Mormon leaders discarded them because they did not have any faith in their reliability.

In 2010, Boyd K. Packer, the President of the Twelve Apostles for the LDS Church, lamented in general conference that their church lacked priesthood power. As he put it, "We have done very well at distributing the authority of the priesthood. We have priesthood authority planted nearly everywhere. We have quorums of elders and high priests worldwide. But distributing the authority of the priesthood has raced, I think, ahead of distributing the power of the priesthood. The priesthood does not have the strength that it should have and will not have until the power of the priesthood is firmly fixed in the families as it should be." (Boyd K. Packer, *The Power of the Priesthood*, April 2010 LDS General Conference, emphasis in original.) Joseph Smith provided the cure for the lack of priesthood power in *Lectures on Faith*. But the LDS Church discarded Lectures only to find they are now just like the confused and powerless 1831 priests.⁹⁸

The disarray following the ordinations in June 1831 illustrates how difficult it is to restore any great portion of priesthood. The Holy Order is much greater than what was attempted in 1831. The Kirtland Temple was built 5 years later. There, additional light and truth was given, but that also stopped short of restoring what Adam and the first patriarchs held.

More was to be given in the Nauvoo Temple. The Nauvoo Temple was not finished before Hyrum and Joseph died, and nothing further was given to the institutional churches that claim Joseph as founder.

What was given in the Kirtland Temple in 1836 has been recently clarified by additional revelation. What has been Section 110 was replaced by a more accurate revelation of the event included below:

On the third day of April 1836 Joseph and Oliver were in the temple in Kirtland, Ohio, The veil was taken from their minds, and the eyes of their understanding were opened. They saw the Lord in his glory standing above them and the breastwork of the pulpit; and under his feet appeared as it were a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

⁹⁸ *A Man Without Doubt*, pp. 19-34.

I am the Alpha and the Omega; I am he who was slain, I am he who lives; I am your advocate with the Father.

Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice. Let the hearts of your brethren also rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name. For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house. Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house.

Behold and see: the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings that shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants will be endowed in this house. Behold: the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessings I shall pour out upon my people.

Even so. Amen.

As this vision closed, the heavens were again opened to their view, and they saw and beheld, and were endowed with knowledge from the beginning of this creation to the ends thereof. And they were shown unspeakable things from the sealed record of Heaven which man is not capable of making known but must be revealed by the Powers of Heaven.

They beheld Michael, the archangel; Gabriel and Raphael, and divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the end of time, showing in turns their dispensations, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the Powers of their Priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; endowing them with knowledge, even here a little, and there a little; holding forth hope for the work God was yet to perform, even the revelation of all things which are to come upon the earth until the return of the Lord in glory with His holy angels—to pour out judgment upon the world, and to reward the righteous.

And they were unable to take it in; therefore they were commanded to pray and ask to comprehend by the power of the Spirit, to bring all things to their remembrance, even the Record of Heaven which would abide in them.

Amen and Amen.

This clarifies that Joseph and Oliver were “unable to take it in” at the time this event took place. Oliver Cowdery would not mention anything about it, even in his final testimony recounting the visions and visitations he and Joseph witnessed. Six years later Joseph was able to write a letter shedding further light on what happened.⁹⁹ The visitations in the Kirtland Temple laid a foundation that could have led to the recovery of the original Holy Order, had enough time been granted Joseph and Hyrum. Michael the Archangel, or Adam, as the head of the human family, provided this outpouring as proof that the dispensation given Joseph was a legitimate opportunity for mankind to recover the original Holy Order. The failure was not because of unwillingness in heaven. It was because of apostasy on earth.

The Holy Order is familial. It does not involve establishing a church, but instead connecting together the Family of God, or in other words the Government of God. This can only be done in a temple prepared for that purpose. The Nauvoo Temple was intended to be the place where God

⁹⁹ See, D&C 128.

could come to restore again that which has been lost, even the fullness of the Holy Order.¹⁰⁰ Before they died, Hyrum was given “the office of Priesthood and Patriarch.”¹⁰¹ Joseph began to construct a ceremony for the planned temple to portray in ritual form some of the information held by the Holy Order. That incipient effort was never completed. Joseph also initiated a ritual ordination of himself and Emma as a “king and queen” as well as “priest and priestess.” On September 28, 1843 in the upper room of the Mansion House they were initiated into the Quorum of the Anointed together.¹⁰² Emma was the first woman to be initiated into this ritual. Joseph was “anointed and ord[ained] to the highest and holiest order of the priesthood (and companion [Emma Hale Smith]).”¹⁰³ This new 1843 highest and holiest order did not include plural wives.¹⁰⁴

The first mention I can find by Joseph of “adoption” in a discussion about the Kingdom of God was in October 1843, eight months before his death.¹⁰⁵ He began the actual practice of adopting men, but it did not get well enough defined for the rite to continue following his death. As I explained about adoption earlier in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*:

“Joseph’s original instruction... connected the living faithful to the ‘fathers’ Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The connection was through Priesthood, not genealogy... Joseph was connected by his priesthood, becoming the ‘father’ of all who would live after him. Families would be organized under Joseph, as the father of the righteous in this dispensation. Accordingly, men were sealed to Joseph Smith as their father, and they as his sons. This was referred to as ‘adoption’ because the family organization was priestly, according to the law of God, not biological. As soon as Joseph died, the doctrine began to erode, ultimately replaced by the substitute practice of sealing genealogical lines together. In between the original adoptive sealing to Joseph Smith, and the current practice of tracking genealogical/biological lines, there was an intermediate step when families were tracked back as far as research permitted, then the line was sealed to Joseph Smith. That practice is now forgotten, and certainly no longer practiced.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ See, D&C 124:28.

¹⁰¹ *Id.*, v. 91.

¹⁰² See Anderson, Devery S., *Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed 1842-1845*, pp. 25-26 (Signature Books: Salt Lake 2005); citing both *Joseph Smith Diary* and *Meetings of Anointed Quorum*; also referring to the February 26, 1867 retrospective account in Wilford Woodruff’s *Historian’s Private Journal*.

¹⁰³ *Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed 1842-1845*, p. 25, supra.

¹⁰⁴ “On September 28, 1843, Emma received the highest ordinance of the church, that of the second anointing. This ordinance, also referred to as the ‘fullness of the priesthood,’ assured the recipient exaltation if he or she did not shed innocent blood or blaspheme against the Holy Ghost. In order to participate, Emma would have been endowed sometime between her sealing to Joseph on May 28 and the latter date. Joseph did not teach plural marriage in the Endowment Council; only first wives of male members and widows were admitted.” Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, p. 161, (Doubleday: Garden City, 1984).

¹⁰⁵ The first time Joseph tied the word “adoption” to the Kingdom of God that I have been able to find was on October 15, 1843: “one thing to see the kingdom. & another to be in it. must have a change of heart. to see the kingdom of Good [God]. & subs[c]ribe the articles of adoption to enter therein.” *JSP Journals, Vol. 3: May 1843-June 1844*, p. 114.

¹⁰⁶ See, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, pp. 481-482.

When Joseph died, all understanding of the practice of “adoption” was quickly lost. As Jonathan Stapley has explained:

The period after Taylor’s death in July 1887 appears to have been one of continued confusion regarding the law of adoption. Two months later in September 1887, John M. Whitaker, John Taylor’s son-in-law wrote: “I went back to the office where I found [Apostle] Brother Lorenzo Snow and [First Council of the Seventy member] Jacob Gates. They conversed a long time. He finally entered into a deep subject on ‘The Law of Adoption.’ Brother Gates said he didn’t believe in it as did also bother Snow. He reference back to the time that Brigham Young was in Kirtland[;] he had a person asked him about it and he said ‘I don’t know nothing about it.’ President Taylor on one different occasion had a letter written to him for the following reason: it was [two undecipherable words] of Prophet J Smith or rather sister Eliza R. Snow Smith (Brother Gates didn’t know which[;] a bout [sic] 70 persons were adopted into President J Smith’s [family;] Sister Snow Smith said ‘she didn’t understand the law’ but had no objections to them being sealed to her husband. And this led Brother Gates to write to President Taylor asking him if he knew anything about it. He never answered the letter. But on another occasion Brother Gates saw him and asked him plainly. President Taylor said he knew nothing about it. And also just lately when asked by Brother Snow, President Wilford Woodruff knew nothing about it. [;]It hadn’t been revealed to him.’ I know this at this time to say [or show] a prevailing feeling among the Twelve that they don’t understand it. George [undecipherable] Cannon also said he didn’t understand it.”¹⁰⁷

Joseph Smith regarded adoption to be important for salvation. It was lost when he died. Before the Lord’s return, this will need to be clarified by the Lord returning to a place on the earth, in which He can “come and restore again what has been lost, even a fullness of the priesthood” and its attendant rites.¹⁰⁸ This is an orderly process ordained in heaven before the creation and implemented at the time of Adam, and it must be followed in every generation. Until we receive the “kingdom” or Family of God, and the fathers in heaven, in strict order, we will remain unprepared for the Lord’s return. The hearts of the fathers and hearts of the children must be sealed together. Pretenders cannot accomplish it, because they will neither know how nor have the authority.

Like almost all the late developments introduced by Joseph Smith, there was no fixed ordinance well enough defined to be perpetuated once he died. But these steps taken by Joseph certainly pointed the direction the restoration would take if Joseph and Hyrum had been allowed to live on. They are also what God intends to have practiced in the temple He has commanded must always be built by His people.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Stapley, *Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism*, *The Journal of Mormon History*, pp. 53-117; citing to *John M. Whitaker, Diary, Book No. 4, September 16, 1887 to September 20, 1888*, November 16, 1887, MS 0002, Marriott Special Collection; transcription from Pitman shorthand by LaJean Purcell Carruth.

¹⁰⁸ See D&C 124:28.

¹⁰⁹ In the Answer to Prayer for Covenant the Lord explained: “Whenever I have people who are mine, I command them to build a house, a holy habitation, a sacred place where my presence can dwell, or where the Holy Spirit of Promise can minister, because it is in such a place that it has been ordained to recover you, establish by my word and my oath your marriages, and endow my people with knowledge from on high that will unfold to you the mysteries of godliness, instruct you in my

The way to understand the role of Peter, James and John is that they came, not for the purposes of conferring priesthood, but for reconnecting the genealogical line to link the living with the fathers who are in heaven. Some have argued that meant Joseph Smith was **the** birthright holder in the line from Ephraim. Given the way genealogical lines run, and given all of the intermarriages in history, there are probably many who could qualify as potential holders of the birthright. Because of disruptive events in history like the Black Plague, Thirty Years War, World War I, and World War II, there is no way for man to determine who God has designated to possess the birthright.

Even if the living heir can be identified, he may not qualify because of a lack of righteousness. Esau was older than Jacob, but Jacob was more righteous. Seth had older brothers who were grandfathers by the time he was born. But the birthright went to Seth because he was true and faithful. It may be possible there are many people living who could qualify.

The heir must receive the same gospel as Abraham. That requires a dispensation from heaven to restore what has been lost. Correct information must be restored. It is either amusing or depressing for people in their arrogance to assume that they know enough to understand what God is doing or has done. The things of God are of deep import and careful and solemn and ponderous and prayerful thought can only find them out. Understanding has to reach into Heaven itself and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss to save any soul including your own.¹¹⁰ That will not be accomplished casually. Nor is it accomplished without sacrifice. The Lord, whose own heart was broken, ultimately requires us to give a broken heart and a contrite spirit. It requires trials, tests and temptations to prove us. The Holy Order will return before the Lord comes again in glory. It will be necessary before the return of the Lord for the original Holy Order to exist in all of its ramifications. It must be established on the earth and include all of the rights that originally belonged to Adam. It must be accounted for and returned back to Adam and then to Christ.

Christ will return to exercise dominion over the earth. Therefore everyone who has held dominion must recognize His right to claim the earth. If dominion belonged to someone other than Him, He would not be able to interfere with that right. His word cannot be broken.

The Holy Order, including the right to dominion, must return to the earth. It will be fully restored. It will be in the possession of those who will not covet it. Those who will not, like Cain, attempt to influence the conditions of salvation for souls of men. The right candidates are those who look upon it merely as a burden to be held under the authority of God, belonging to Him, to be returned to Him, so that He can come and fix this broken world and bring wickedness to an end. If an aspiring, ambitious, vain person were to hold such a position, all of the Lord's plans can be frustrated. Therefore, we need to be like our Lord, the greatest of all,¹¹¹ the most intelligent of all,¹¹² who came here to serve, who knelt and washed the feet of others. He gave His life as a sacrifice. Despite His reluctance He partook of the bitter cup, to the dregs.¹¹³ He was slain, and He gave all

ways, that you may walk in my path. And all the outcasts of Israel will I gather to my house, and the jealousy of Ephraim and Judah will end. Ephraim will not envy Judah and Judah will not provoke Ephraim.”

¹¹⁰ See *TPJS*, p. 137.

¹¹¹ D&C 19:18.

¹¹² Abr. 3:19.

¹¹³ D&C 19:18-19.

glory and all majesty to the Father.¹¹⁴ That is the kind of person who will be trusted to hold the Holy Order.

The restoration of all things literally means the restoration of ALL things, including the Holy Order. It will not and cannot stop with organizing a New Testament church. The restoration must reach back to the beginning, to the days of Adam.

This generation does not seem to value the truth enough for the Lord to reveal what will save them. God truly does have things that the eyes of man have not seen, nor have the ears heard; nor has yet entered into the hearts of man.¹¹⁵ God sends knowledge into the world for the meek and humble, and He perpetually keeps great things hidden from the strident, vulgar, proud, haughty and foolish. Whether the Lord completes His work and fulfills His promises in this generation, or in a future generation, will be decided by us. We must repent and offer a broken heart and a contrite spirit if we hope to please God.

There is a great deal more that needs to be restored. There is so much resistance to restoring truths from the worldly that this journey may not be possible until man has been humbled by God's hand. The Lord really is trying to restore the original fullness and Holy Order. But there is a sobering prophecy of a coming moment when the Lord will lament to the living and the dead over the way in which the world has responded to His messages:

“And again, the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven, saying: Hearken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you. O, ye nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunderings, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trump, and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not!” (D&C 43:23-25.)¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ 3 Ne. 11:11.

¹¹⁵ D&C 76:10.

¹¹⁶ Many of those sent by the Lord have labored in their ministries without hope of seeing Zion. Mormon explained: “But behold, I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities, but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them.” (Mormon 5:2.) Joseph Smith said, “There has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand. I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen.” (DHC 6:184-185.) We are very late in history, and have greater reason to humble ourselves and obey God than

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

any previous generation. Yet most of us also seem far too disinterested to spare ourselves from the coming tribulations by establishing Zion and dwelling in peace with one another.