

The Holy Order, Part 2

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Salvation comes through Jesus Christ. He was assigned the role of Redeemer before the foundation of the world. Resurrection is only available through Jesus Christ. Forgiveness of sins is only possible because of the atonement of Jesus Christ. This paper is about how from time to time Christ sends authority and order into this world, for His purposes. How He chooses to establish order does not change His essential, central, and singular role as our Savior.

Seven years ago, after a solar eclipse that traversed the United States, I gave a talk titled “The Holy Order.” Now, another solar eclipse will traverse the United States tomorrow. This is titled “The Holy Order, Part 2.”

The previous talk is both a paper that can be downloaded from my website and one of the essays in the book *Eight Essays*.¹ The talks (or papers) belong together.

Footnote 9 to that earlier talk explains a concern when we receive more Gospel light:

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 with 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.

I’ve notice when something new is added, there are those who start discussing it as if it were their own insight—even when they have never said one word about it until after they first learn of it from me. The same caution as set out in footnote 9 in the earlier talk applies equally here.

I am not going to repeat anything from that earlier talk, but will assume you understand what was taught there and this will follow-up from that discussion.

The earlier Holy Order talk explained the term “‘fullness of the priesthood’ was used by Joseph Smith at different times with different meanings.” We can do better than that. This talk will clarify the term.

¹ *Eight Essays*, Mill Creek Press, Salt Lake © 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The fullness of the Priesthood, including the rites of the Holy Order, is not something that has ever been or can be publicly explained in complete detail. The fullness of the Priesthood is different from the fullness of the Gospel. The Book of Mormon contains the “fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”² The fullness of the Gospel was intended openly for everyone. In contrast, the “fullness of the Priesthood” (which is the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God) is not something that was restored to the church Joseph Smith organized, nor is it publicly available, nor is it intended for everyone. It may serve everyone, but will never be held by everyone.

The fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ produces faith in the Savior and will save you if accepted and obeyed. The Book of Mormon reports that some of what Jesus Christ taught “cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by man.”³ Joseph Smith could not write all that God revealed to him.⁴ Much of those unspeakable things belong to the fullness of the Priesthood, but will not be publicly available before the Lord’s return.

Adam and Eve were the original priestly patriarch and matriarch to whom God gave the right of “dominion over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”⁵ That appointment by God giving them dominion was (and is) part of the Holy Order. They held it jointly, as companions. Joseph Smith explained,

[The Holy Order] was first given to Adam;⁶ 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

² The Introduction to the New Covenants edition of the Book of Mormon explains: “The Book of Mormon teaches man that he can come into the presence of God in this life. God wants to reveal himself; knowledge of God is the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is nothing greater than Christ, the originator and finisher of man’s faith. All have equal access to the Lord. The conditions are the same for everyone: forsake sins, come to Christ, call on his name, obey his voice, and keep his commandments. The Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the gospel — a collection of testimonies about Jesus Christ as man’s personal Redeemer and Guide to salvation and, in turn, Christ’s role as universal Savior and Redeemer of mankind. In other words, the ascent to God is the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see [T&C 69:3](#)).

³ NC 3 Ne. 9:5; see also 3 Ne. 8:4.

⁴ See T&C 1 JSH 2:5: “and many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time.” T&C 69:29: “But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he shewed unto us, which surpasseth all understanding, in glory, and in might, and in dominion, which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the spirit, and are not lawful for men to utter, neither is man capable to make them known[.]”

⁵ See OC Genesis 2:8-9.

⁶ Bear in mind that when referring to “Adam” the Lord means both the man and woman: “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; in the image of his own body, male and female, created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created and became living souls in the land, upon the footstool of God.” OC Genesis 3:14.

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.⁷

This ties together parenthood, priesthood, dominion and the Holy Order. All of these elements were necessary for Adam and Eve to be at the head of the Holy Order, and are necessary for it to exist today. In *Our Divine Parents* the nature of eternal unity between the man and woman, and the dual nature of God are explained.⁸

The Holy Order is not synonymous with having calling and election made sure. You can have your calling and election made sure without having the Holy Order.

The Holy Order is not synonymous with being redeemed from the fall and returning to God's presence. That also can happen without having the Holy Order.

Nor is the Holy Order synonymous with having the fullness of revelations from before the creation of the world through the end of this cycle of creation. That, also, can be given to a person while they still lack the Holy Order.

An individual does not need to possess the Holy Order to be able to enter into a covenant. Covenants have been offered mankind by God through the Holy Order. Once offered, covenants are still honored even if the Holy Order is no longer present. The condition for a covenant to remain in effect requires only that the covenant never change. If officiators make changes, the covenant is broken and is no longer in effect.⁹

⁷ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* ("TPJS") p. 157; see also *JSP Documents Vol. 6*, pp. 542-543. When a source is quoted it is identified first in the footnote, and all quotes unless otherwise indicated use the exact spelling from the source. That often results in the word being "misspelled" in this text because it reflects the original.

⁸ That talk and paper are available to download from my website.

⁹ See, e.g., Isaiah 7:1: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."

Further, it is not required for you to be initiated into the Holy Order to become a member of the eternal Family of God. All those who will be exalted will be members. Only a tiny fraction of the Family will experience that in mortality.

Finally, any position in the Holy Order here may change after this life. Christ reminded the mother of Jacob (James) and John that positions in the afterlife will be assigned by His Father.¹⁰ The Holy Order must return before the Second Coming to re-establish God's "house of order." But organizing and ordering for the afterlife will not happen until some time after the Lord's return. Restoring and organizing God's Family is necessary because of the disorder caused by the fall of Adam. That disorder has been compounded by additional repeated apostasies from the periodic restorations of the Holy Order.

Despite what the Holy Order is not, it is important to understand. Most of our scriptures are the writings of members of the Holy Order. The Order must return. This talk is to confirm God is vindicating His promises, whether the world takes any notice or not.

The Holy Order function requires both a father and mother, and is the reason Joseph Smith wrote, "[T]here are many teachers but perhaps not many Fathers."¹¹ There are times coming when God will signify many things which are expedient for the well being of the saints but the times have not yet come but will come as fast as there can be found place and receptions for them."¹² That time did not come during Joseph's life, and therefore the return of the Holy Order¹³ did not happen in his day.¹⁴ Because of the failure in Joseph's day,¹⁵ the Family or House of God still needs to be set in order. As is always the case, there will need to be a temple prepared for the Holy Order to function. It was first given to Adam and Eve in sacred space and therefore, sacred space like the Garden of Eden is required for its function.¹⁶

¹⁰ "But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is for whom it is prepared of my Father, but not mine to give." Matt. 10:2.

¹¹ The word "Fathers" is capitalized in the original.

¹² *JSP Documents Vol. 6, February 1838-August 1839*, pp. 396-397.

¹³ That is, a return of the Order in a way that would permit it to be enduring, passed from "father" to "son" by rites and teachings that would allow it to remain across generations.

¹⁴ T&C 141:10: "For there is not place found on the earth that he may come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he has taken away, even the fullness of the Priesthood."

¹⁵ This talk will clarify that the Holy Order was restored and conferred upon Hyrum Smith in 1841. It was not transferrable and ended with the deaths of Hyrum and Joseph.

¹⁶ They met with God in the Garden, and even after being driven out of the Garden they still "heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden speaking unto them, and they saw

Abraham received the records going back to Adam and were passed down through generations to him.¹⁷ Despite having the records and testimony of the first fathers from which he learned about the Holy Order, Abraham did not hold it merely because he learned of it. It inspired him to seek “for the blessings of the Fathers and the right whereunto [he] should be ordained to administer the same.”¹⁸

Abraham spoke with God “face to face”¹⁹ when he was not yet a member of the Holy Order. God also revealed to Abraham a vision of the creation of this world, and its destiny,²⁰ while still not a member of the Holy Order.

Joseph Smith told us exactly when Abraham received his priestly appointment that is ‘without father or mother, beginning or end of days, but is endless and eternal.’ He also clarified who bestowed it. Despite all Abraham had received before, the Holy Order was not conferred upon him until he met and was initiated by Melchizedek. Abraham explained the process: “it came down from the Fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning (or before the foundations of the earth) to the present time, even the right of the firstborn (or the first man — who is Adam — or first Father) through the Fathers unto me.”²¹ Melchizedek, was a ‘king and priest’ and “stood as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam” and from him Abraham received the required initiation into the Holy Order.²²

In the talk *Religion of the Fathers*, I explained that the Book of Abraham covered events in Abraham’s life before he entered Egypt.²³ It was years after he left Egypt before Abraham met with Melchizedek and was initiated into the Holy

him not, for they were shut out of his presence.” OC Gen. 3:2. The Family of God must welcome God’s presence again by providing sacred space for that return.

¹⁷ T&C 145: Abr. 2:3: “I shall endeavor hereafter to delineate the chronology running back from myself to the beginning of the creation, for the records have come into my hands, which I hold unto this present time.”

¹⁸ Id., 1:1.

¹⁹ Id., 5:3.

²⁰ Id., 6-7.

²¹ Id., 1:1.

²² “what was the power of Melchisedick twas not. P[riesthood] of Aaron--&c—a king and a pri[e]st & bless[in]gs) stood as God to give laws to the people. administer[i]ng endless lives to the sons and daughter[r]s of Adam, kingly powe[r]s, of ano[i]nting.—Abram says Melchsidek.—away I have a pr[i]esthood.—“ *JSP Documents Vol. 13 August-December 1843*, p. 74 (all as in original).

²³ The paper is available as a download from my website: <https://denversnuffer.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/The-Religion-of-the-Fathers4-1.pdf> and is a book available through Amazon: *Religion of the Fathers: Context for the Book of Abraham*.

Order.²⁴ Abraham honored the Order and received it because he was not aspiring to supplant the man who presided. Instead he respected and honored the rights that belong to the Fathers. Had he wanted to supplant Melchizedek he would not have qualified for the ordinance:

I 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, and to be a Father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a high priest, 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, yea, even from the beginning (or before the foundations of the earth) to the present time, even the right of the firstborn (or the first man — who is Adam — or first Father) **through the Fathers unto me**. I sought for my appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the Fathers concerning the seed.²⁵

That could never have happened for Abraham if he did not obtain it in the right way, with the right intent, from the one who could confer it upon him. Periodic fighting over who had the right was always evidence of aspiring, untrustworthy men seeking their own vainglory. Abraham was faithful and unaspiring, but also seeking and willing.²⁶

The Lord trusted Abraham because he (Abraham) respected the man chosen by the Lord to stand at the head before him. By respecting Melchizedek, Abraham also respected all the fathers, from Adam through Melchizedek, chosen by God as His representatives on earth. Because Abraham was to become part of that Family, the Lord could say to him:

And you shall be a blessing unto your seed after you, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all

²⁴ As explained in *Religion of the Fathers*, “If the Book of Abraham materials were added to the Genesis text, it would replace and expand the text from Genesis Chapter 6, midway in [paragraph] 8 through Chapter 7, midway through [paragraph] 4. The Book of Abraham supplies the missing, important details we need to know that were omitted from the Genesis account of the Inspired Version of the Bible.”

²⁵ T&C 145: Abraham 1:1, emphasis added.

²⁶ It should not be understood that his seeking and willingness implied any sense of aspiring or ambition. That was not in his character. He did not go to Melchizedek asking for ordination, but showed only those attributes to God. God chose him. God identified him to Melchizedek.

nations. And I will bless them through your name; for as many as receive this gospel shall be called after your name and shall be accounted your seed, and shall rise up and bless you, as unto their Father. And I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you. And in you (that is, in your Priesthood) and in your seed, (that is, your Priesthood) — for I give unto you a promise that this right shall continue in you and in your seed after you (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 life eternal.²⁷

For the purpose of this talk, it is important to understand certain terms. The term “this gospel” includes not just the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but also the fullness of the Priesthood. Those who become part of the Holy Order necessarily recognize Abraham as a Father to them, and they in turn become his “seed” or descendants. Abraham was adopted as son to Melchizedek, which made Melchizedek father to Abraham. Subsequently, all those who were added to the line holding the fullness of the Priesthood became adopted descendants to Abraham. That is why it is written they “shall rise up and bless you, as unto their Father.”

Melchizedek was “Father” to the righteous at the time Abraham was seeking for the blessing of the Fathers. Because Abraham honored the position occupied by Melchizedek, heaven took notice. As stated before, Abraham was faithful and unassuming, but also seeking and willing. If he hoped to displace, or compete, or stand independent of Melchizedek he would not have been qualified, nor even considered by heaven.

If Lehi had not respected Jeremiah as the Lord’s messenger, the heavens would not have opened for him. If Nephi had not respected his father Lehi as God’s messenger, Nephi would not have had the heavens open for him. An aspiring spirit is toxic, and while aspiring men may gain some measure of spiritual understanding, they forfeit any blessing that might have been gained by accepting and honoring the Holy Order.

Abraham received the promise from the Lord that: “I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you.” Abraham qualified for this blessing because Abraham honored the position occupied by Melchizedek. Abraham was not like Nephi’s older brothers, who assumed because they were older they were entitled to rule, not to be ruled. As Nephi described his brothers:

²⁷ Id., 3:1.

[T]hey did seek to take away my life. Yea, they did murmur against me, saying, Our younger brother thinks to rule over us, and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more because of his words. For behold, we will not have him to be our ruler, for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people.²⁸

This refusal to respect God's choice doomed them and their descendants to continual apostasy. That apostasy led to open warfare beginning with the first generation. Centuries later, Lamanite fighters were inspired by hatred because they believed, "your fathers did wrong their brethren, insomuch that they did rob them of their right to the government when it rightfully belonged unto them."²⁹ This hatred was grounded in religious resentment. Father Abraham was nothing like Laman. Instead he willingly accepted and honored the Holy Order. Consider for a moment how unlike Abraham his great-grandsons were. They destroyed their father's garment and perhaps other artifacts handed down within the Holy Order.³⁰

The only qualified man in Abraham's day, (who obtained it from Adam through the Fathers), was Melchizedek. Although Abraham had been rescued by an angel, conversed with the Lord, and had the heavens opened to him, the Holy Order could only be obtained from Melchizedek, who was the heir and officiator of that Order.

In the restoration edition of the scriptures, Abraham entered Egypt in Genesis Chapter 7, paragraph 4. He left Egypt in paragraph 6. It is not until Chapter 7, paragraph 14 (many years later) when Abraham met with Melchizedek. It was

²⁸ NC 2 Ne. 4:1.

²⁹ NC Alma 25:4. This same claim appears in 3 Ne. 2:2 where the "rights of government" are claimed by Giddianhi.

³⁰ Hugh Nibley explained: "The idea of a garment of many colors is an invention. If you look in your Bible every time it mentions many colors the word colors (even in the commentary) is in italics [the word in italics is actually many] because it is put in there by modern editors. It's found in no ancient source. It's not a garment of many colors at all. A garment of certain marks is the term that's used here. We'll see what it is in a second. 'This garment had belonged to Abraham, and it already had a long history.' It's history was lengthy because it went back to the Garden of Eden, you see. That's the garment; it's the only one. Just as we treat the story of Cain and Abel, we trivialize this. We say, 'Joseph was the youngest kid, so his father favored him and gave him a pretty garment of many colors.' There is no mention in any ancient source of a garment of many colors. That's an invention of modern editors trying to explain it. But here it was the garment he gave him. It was the garment of the priesthood. No wonder they were jealous of him, they being the elder brothers and he the younger in the patriarchal line coming down from Abraham. This garment had belonged to Abraham and had come down to Joseph instead of to the other brethren. ((Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, 51-52)) Other artifacts were likely also handed down to Joseph and destroyed by his jealous brothers. They mistook Joseph as their rival, rather than their teacher.

then “he [Melchizedek] blessed him [Abraham] and said, Blessed Abram, you are a man of the Most High God, possessor of Heaven and earth.”³¹

It may seem odd that this Order is so rare that it is withheld from righteous men who have stood in God’s presence. Nevertheless, there are good reasons, established before the foundation of the world, setting conditions that strictly confine the Order.

The Holy Order inducts couples into the Family of God. That Family is the government of God. The Family of God can only have one father and one mother standing at the head. Abraham could not receive it from anyone other than the singular couple who stood at the head. God’s House is a house of order, and there is never more than one parental couple at a time at the head. There is no more reason to aspire or envy that couple than there was for you to jealously want to replace your own father or mother. We should hope for it to return. Early Christians prayed for the Lord’s quick return: “μαρὰν ἀθά” mar'-an ath'-ah (Lord come quickly). We should also hope for His quick return. However, unlike others who follow the Lord without understanding the prophecies, promises and covenants we should also hope and pray for the return of the Holy Order that must be restored before His return.

Unlike Abraham, people of this fallen world have rebelled against God’s governance. Despite mankind’s rebellion, God has been willing to gather people like a hen gathering her chicks under her wings, but we’ve rejected those offers. The heavens have not withdrawn, they have been evicted.³² A false “god of this world” has reigned from the rivers to the end of the earth.³³ He demands mankind worship him.³⁴ Unfortunately, mankind has too often accommodated that demand with their idolatry. For that to change, at least a small group of people must accept and welcome God’s governance. Abraham did not assert independence from, nor compete with, Melchizedek. Had he done otherwise he would not have qualified. He recognized the officiant, respected his position, and paid tithes to Melchizedek.³⁵ This gained favor from

³¹ Gen. 7:14; see also paragraph 17: “And Melchizedek lifted up his voice and blessed Abram.” It is interesting to consider whether the description “possessor of Heaven and earth” were about “the Most High God” or about “Blessed Abram” in Melchizedek’s salutation. It could easily be either (or both).

³² This includes God and His ministering angels.

³³ When the Lord returns, the Psalms tell us He will: “have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” (Psalms. 72:1.) Satan, the imposter, falsely claims that authority. Of course, many people are deceived into submission to his lies, and therefore he effectively does exert dominion over misled people who give heed to his lies.

³⁴ OC Gen. 1:3.

³⁵NC Hebrews 1:18; Alma 10:1. Today tithes are gathered in fellowships and distributed there to those in need.

God for Abraham. Had Abraham been aspiring to compete with, or held any reservations about honoring the officiator Melchizedek, Abraham would never have received the ‘blessings of the Fathers and the right to be ordained to officiate in that Order.’

Joseph Smith wrote a discourse the day after announcing plans to build the Nauvoo Temple. He explained, in relevant part:

It is the highest and holiest Priesthood and is after the Order of the Son of God, and 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 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.

Commencing with Adam, who was the first man, who is spoken of in Daniel as being the Ancient of Days, or in other words, the first and oldest of all, the great grand progenitor, of whom it is said in another place, He is Michael, because he was the first and father of all, not only by progeny, but he was the first to hold the spiritual blessings, to whom was made known the plan of ordinances for the salvation of his posterity unto the end, and to whom Christ was first revealed, and through whom Christ has been revealed from Heaven and will continue to be revealed from henceforth. Adam³⁶ holds the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of times; i.e., the dispensation of all the times have been and will be revealed through him, from the beginning to Christ, and from Christ to the end of all the dispensations that are to be revealed.³⁷

It may sound odd that Joseph Smith said Melchizedek “stood as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam.”³⁸ That is, however, the actual purpose of the Holy Order. Joseph Smith was not unique in teaching a man can act in the place of God for the benefit of God’s people. When Moses was called to restore Israel to God’s presence, Moses was given that same role:

³⁶ “Adam” is the name of both Adam and Eve. OC Gen. 3:14.

³⁷ T&C 140:2-3.

³⁸ *JSP Documents Vol. 13 August-December 1843*, p. 74.

And you shall speak unto him and put words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be your spokesman unto the people, and he shall be, even he shall be to you in stead of a mouth, and you shall be to him in stead of God.³⁹

Joseph Smith's comment on this scripture confirms the principle:

These scriptures are a mixture of very strange doctrines to the Christian world, who are blindly led by the blind. I will refer to another scripture. "Now," says God, when He visited Moses in the bush, (Moses was a stammering sort of a boy like me) God said, "Thou shalt be a God unto the children of Israel" God said, "Thou shalt be a God unto Aaron, and he shall be thy spokesman." I believe those Gods that God reveals as Gods to be the sons of God, and all can cry, "Abba, Father!" Sons of God who exalt themselves to be Gods, even from before the foundation of the world, and are the only Gods I have a reverence for."⁴⁰

In his first letter, John mentioned there are those who are God's "sons" and very like God: "now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him[.]"⁴¹

Jesus Christ defended teaching He was the Son of God by explaining that there had been other mortal men who substituted for God. He taught that He was serving on God the Father's behalf, and got accused of blasphemy because of it:

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law: I said, you are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, do you say of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, You blasphemere, because I said I am the Son of God?⁴²

It is a hard matter to hear, and a harder one to teach. There is nothing about this subject that should be understood in a worldly sense. It involves a heavenly order of things, and not something to be divided from God's purpose to save all mankind, and exalt those He can. Not everyone is suited to become part of God's Family. The reality is that very few are.

³⁹ NC Exo. 2:7.

⁴⁰ *TPJS*, pp. 374-375; see also *JSP Documents, Vol 15*, p. 274.

⁴¹ NC 1 John 1:13.

⁴² NC John 6:30.

Jesus taught from Isaiah and would certainly have been acquainted with the Isaiah passage that states, “I am the Lord, and there is none else. ...And there is no God else besides me — a just God and a Savior, there is none besides me. Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.”⁴³ And yet Christ also recognizes there are “gods unto whom the word of God came.” Therefore, the idea of men who are called “gods” in scripture ought to be understood as an appointment to represent, and a calling to teach, and never as making a man anything more than a fellow servant. In the Book of Revelation, an angel was sent to John and testified of his message that, “These are the true sayings of God.” John fell to the earth to worship the angel, and was rebuked for showing him that honor, “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, Do you not see that I am your fellow servant? And of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus? Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”⁴⁴ Bear this in mind and understand that messengers can be acknowledged in scripture as “gods, even the sons of god”— while we are commanded at the same time to only worship the Father in Heaven and His Son.

Jesus Christ, the greatest of all,⁴⁵ is the best example of this principle in action. He stood as God, and was in fact the Son of God. Yet when Christ was asked about His kingship and kingdom, He explained:

My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now is my kingdom not from here. Pilate therefore said unto him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king; to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world — that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice.⁴⁶

This is an example of how the Holy Order should operate. He came to fill the role of a servant. Jesus Christ set the pattern and demonstrated how God’s House is correctly ruled:

But Jesus called them and said, You know that the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you.

⁴³ OC Isa. 15:19.

⁴⁴ NC Rev. 7:10.

⁴⁵ T&C 145: Abr. 5:4: “These two facts do exist — that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they. I am the Lord, your God; I am more intelligent than they all.”

⁴⁶ NC John 10:7.

But whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life, a ransom for many.⁴⁷

The Lord's Holy Order is not designed to impose rule, control, or assert dominion over the unwilling. It is designed to teach correct principles and then let those who are taught govern themselves. The Holy Order empowers and frees. It assumes the individual will decide to give heed to what is taught. In contrast, ambitious men crave control over others. They enslave and subjugate. They oppose freedom and self-rule. The Holy Order relies on man's agency. The adversary wants to limit, and destroy man's agency.

Jesus Christ explained His role, which is similar to the role entrusted to the Holy Order:

My doctrine does not come from me, but from God who sent me. Anyone who walks in God's path will understand his doctrine, because that path increases light and knowledge. I testify of that path. Follow it and you will know whether I am sent by God or I am not sent by God. Teachers who preach from their own understanding only gratify their pride, but a teacher of truth teaches only what God tells him, and that teacher provides a light worth heeding.⁴⁸

If God gave Christ the words to teach, then those who believed and followed those teachings were following Christ's Father. This is the same as when the angel asked Nephi if he believed the words of his father. Nephi said emphatically that he did. Upon hearing this the angel proclaimed, "blessed art thou, Nephi, because thou believest in the Son of the Most High God[.]"⁴⁹ Believing the words of truth from a messenger is to believe in the Son of the Most High God! That is as true today as when the angel said this to Nephi.

Enoch is another example of a teacher from the Holy Order. He was sent by God to teach a message. When called by God, Enoch responded, "Why is it that I have found favor in your sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me, for I am slow of speech; why am I your servant?"⁵⁰ He was no braggart. The task sobered him, and he believed himself unequal to the task. But he

⁴⁷ NC Matt. 10:3.

⁴⁸ T&C 171: TSJ 6:4.

⁴⁹ NC 1 Ne. 3:6.

⁵⁰ OC Gen. 4:2.

taught, some people repented, and without any compulsion those willing to be taught lived together in peace.

When he was commissioned by God to teach Israel, Moses reacted similarly to Enoch: “And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before now nor since you have spoken unto your servant, but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue.”⁵¹ Moses also described the difference between himself (all mankind) and God, “Now for this once I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.”⁵²

Those who have been part of the Holy Order have been trustworthy to God because they know they are weak. When the Lord says He will make weak things become strong,⁵³ I do not believe that means a man will become strong. But instead means God will provide the strength to those who rely on Him.⁵⁴

If every angel from Adam down to the present time who ministered to Joseph Smith were to minister to you, and if Joseph and Hyrum were added to those who ministered to you, and if you knew more about the heavens than any man now living, you would still be nothing. We do not and cannot comprehend enough to understand God’s works. The Lord explained to Moses, “for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease. Wherefore, no man can behold all my works except he behold all my glory, and no man can behold all my glory and afterward remain in the flesh on the earth.”⁵⁵ Even if a man knows more about heaven than any one alive at the time, he still remains incapable of knowing all that God has in store for mankind.⁵⁶

We are feeble, unprofitable servants.⁵⁷ None of us have anything to brag about. Any boast about being great and having some wonderful assignment from God is arrogant and vainglorious. DO something for God, don’t claim you are going

⁵¹ OC Exo. 2:7.

⁵² OC Gen. 1:2.

⁵³ NC Ether 5:5: “I will shew unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness, that they may be humble. And my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”

⁵⁴ See, e.g., OC Psalm 18:1; 28:2; 68:6; 1 Chron. 8:19; NC 2 Cor. 1:43; Mosiah 6:11; Alma 14:17; among others.

⁵⁵ OC Gen. 1:1.

⁵⁶ King Benjamin said, “believe that [God] has all wisdom and all power both in Heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.” (NC Mosiah 2:3.)

⁵⁷ “I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole soul, yet ye would be unprofitable servants.” NC Mosiah 1:8.

to do so. Then, if you accomplish something, “Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.”⁵⁸

The arrogance of men is astonishing. Nephi understood this vanity and described it:

Oh the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves. Wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not; and they shall perish.⁵⁹

The Holy Order is not for the benefit of the holder. No one who views himself or herself as worthy has ever been trusted with it. They (the man and woman) must be meek like Moses, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.”⁶⁰ It is troubling, daunting and perilous. There is no great reward in this life. Here, those members of the Holy Order will be doubted, criticized, envied, accused, feared, and cast out from those they are asked to teach. Only a very few will be willing to give them heed, and many who do listen will still be poor disciples, wayward in their conduct, and misunderstand what is taught. People rejected the Lord, and more have (and will) reject His messengers.

God’s message given through a member of the Holy Order is not to be trifled with, either by the holder or by people who are taught. Everything is always voluntary and teaching must still persuade. Pure knowledge and love unfeigned are the approved tools. Sometimes reproving with sharpness is necessary as well.⁶¹ Gratifying pride or vain ambition are forbidden.

The approved tools are necessarily what the world regards as “weak.” It is intentionally designed by the Lord to be weak.⁶² It is the opposite of the ‘strong man’ model. But if followed, the Holy Order can teach people to become strong in faith, hope and charity. As it is written, “if they humble themselves before me and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them. Behold, I will shew unto the gentiles their weakness. And I will

⁵⁸ Proverbs 4:49.

⁵⁹ NC 2 Ne. 6:9.

⁶⁰ OC Num. 7:22.

⁶¹ See T&C 139:6.

⁶² “By the weak things of the earth, the Lord should thresh the nations of the earth by the power of his spirit.” T&C 58:7; see also 54:4; NC Ether 5:5.

shew unto them that faith, hope, and charity bringeth unto me, the fountain of all righteousness.”⁶³

Just like Jesus Christ, we believe in being subject to and obeying the law. We are not our own “sovereign,” but are subject to obey rulers and laws of the land.⁶⁴ We render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.⁶⁵ There is something called the “sovereign citizen movement” which has no place in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Sovereign citizens claim the right to reject laws, claiming they have no application to them.

The “sovereign citizen movement” refers to a group of people who see themselves as answerable only to the laws as they interpret them, not as they are written. Members of the sovereign citizen movement include everyone from litigants and tax protesters, to those who promote financial schemes. They do not believe they are subject to the same governmental statutes that govern the rest of the country.⁶⁶

The worst examples of this are Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols whose Oklahoma bombing killed 168 people, 19 of whom were children. They injured another 680 people. The most tranquil examples are tax protestors who refuse to pay federal, state and local taxes. We should reject all of the “sovereign citizen” ideas because they are contrary to the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. They are contrary to the restored faith.

While Christ declared His “kingdom is not of this world”⁶⁷ there are those who think they can found their own heavenly kingdom. The advocates display the worst form of hypocrisy because they cannot detect their own inconsistencies. I have a pamphlet that advocates a form of withdrawing from “Babylon” by denouncing US Citizenship and claiming to be a citizen of the “Kingdom of Heaven.” The pamphlet advocating this is bound with a plastic spiral binding. This ignores the fact that the plastic is likely produced by hydrocarbons requiring an entire fossil fuel industry to provide the pamphlet’s binding.

It is printed with ink. The ink-making process requires raw materials of pigments, binders, solvents and additives to produce. All of which require multiple industries to provide the ink for the “Kingdom of Heaven” pamphlet.

⁶³ NC Ether 5:5.

⁶⁴ T&C 146:32.

⁶⁵ See NC Matt. 10:20; Mark 5:41; Luke 12:9.

⁶⁶ <https://legaldictionary.net/sovereign-citizen/>

⁶⁷ See NC John 10:7.

It is printed on paper that uses cellulose pulp from a lumber operation, transported by logging trucks to mills, where sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide are used to break down the lignin of the wood for paper manufacture.

The transportation trucks move along roads paid for by federal and state tax collection. They are safe because of federal, state, and local law enforcement that keep the roads safe for commerce to take place.

All of raw ingredients used to make the pamphlet were produced and supplied by Babylon. The author is oblivious to his obvious dependence upon what he calls “Babylon.”

While pretending to be separated from “Babylon,” their hypocrisy knows no limits. They are parasitic and require the ongoing support of the same society, government and taxpayers they judge as morally inferior.

Part of the difficulty with those who believe this way is that they seem to be possessed with a false spirit that will not suffer common sense to be spoken in their presence. They advocate their withdrawal from society relentlessly, and do not see and will not hear how things really are. It is as if the spirit possessing them will not tolerate truth to be spoken.

Those who believe they can be more pure by living “off grid” are fooling themselves. Some, for example, use solar panels instead of connecting to the electrical grid. Solar panels are built using rare earth minerals, mined using heavy equipment, burning fossil fuels, transported using public roadways, and utterly dependent on the proper functioning of a complex society that clothes, powers, protects and serves them. We should be grateful to society, humble about our own dependence, and accepting of our plight. We may not like “Babylon” [as the fool calls the functioning society that succors them] but as long as it exists we are not and cannot be independent of it.

Unfortunately, I know people who have bought into these false ideas. Their lives have been burdened, and many of the responsibilities they should take care of for themselves have been imposed on others. Some have lost family homes, one has been jailed, vehicles without licenses have been impounded, and countless difficulties have resulted from their lawlessness. They foolishly believe they are living a ‘more pure’ and ‘godly’ way of life, while the sad reality is that they are forsaking basic responsibilities they should discharge for themselves.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord gave us this instruction to follow:

Truly, truly I say unto you, I give unto you to be the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Behold, do

men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick, and it gives light to all that are in the house. Therefore, let your light so shine before this world, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.⁶⁸

How do you suppose rebellion and lawlessness to be “good works” that “glorify your Father who is in Heaven?” They will instead resent your imposition upon society. We may fool ourselves into believing we are independent of society, but we are not. All of us who obey, honor and sustain the law⁶⁹ are symbiotic with the government and society at large. Those who claim sovereign citizenship are parasitic. None of us are independent. We should acknowledge our plight and stop fooling ourselves.

There would have been no governments of man if the original Holy Order had been followed from the beginning. Because of rebellion against God’s plan, societies divided into governments that supplanted God’s order with kings, magistrates, governors, dictators and ministers. For the present, governments are necessary for peaceful and ordered societies to function, and therefore deserve our obedience to their laws. But loyalty to God must remain. God’s “kingdom” is indeed not of this world. Man’s kingdoms will be supplanted by a returning Lord.⁷⁰ Before then, we should respect and submit to the order of society and contribute to the peace and safety of our communities.

Society will only welcome us if we benefit others. Letting our light shine includes making our towns and neighborhoods better places by our service to others. People should want us. Because we are commanded to become the “salt of the earth”⁷¹ or the “leaven” that benefits the entire meal,⁷² we cannot abandon principles that make us valuable to society.

The First Amendment gives religious societies exemption from taxation. Not individual taxpayers, but the society itself is exempt from taxation. The Lord’s House will be built when a command is given,⁷³ and will be exempt from

⁶⁸ NC Matt. 3:16, see also 3 Ne. 5:21.

⁶⁹ See T&C 146:32.

⁷⁰ The Lord has declared: “But verily I say unto you that in time, you shall have no king nor ruler, for I will be your King and watch over you. Wherefore, hear my voice and follow me, and you shall be a free people, and you shall have no laws but my laws, for I am your lawgiver, and what can stay my hand?” T&C 22:7.

⁷¹ See NC Matt. 3:15; 3 Ne. 5:20.

⁷² NC Matt: 7:7.

⁷³ “I will visit my house, which the remnant of my people shall build, and I will dwell therein, to be among you, and no one will need to say, Know ye the Lord, for you all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” T&C 158:15.

property taxes. However, despite this Constitutional protection, a voluntary payment to support the surrounding community as an act of appreciation to neighbors is consistent with being “leaven,” “salt,” or a “shining light.” I would hope everyone would want to do this.

While we should not be in rebellion against our government, sadly the time will come when:

[W]ith famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed has made a full end of all nations[.]⁷⁴

That is not something to look forward to. It will be a time of great mourning and sorrow. Whatever we can do to delay that day and preserve our nation we should do.

Prophecies in the Book of Mormon and modern revelation will be vindicated. Society will degenerate into violence. The Book of Mormon warns us of the coming destruction of all the gentile nations, upon the Americas and all other lands.

But behold, in the last days, or in the days of the gentiles, yea, behold, all the nations of the gentiles, and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land and those who shall be upon other lands, yea, even upon all the lands of the earth, behold, they will be drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations. And when that day shall come, they shall be visited of the Lord of Hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and with a great noise, and with storm and tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire. And all the nations that fight against Zion and that distress her shall be as a dream of a night vision.⁷⁵

Although there are gentile nations that seem sturdy, enduring and capable, to God they are no more substantial than a dream. They will pass away. The Lord’s people do not need to fight against these governments, nor cheer on their demise. Fleeing from the coming societal failure is first internal. Our fears, jealousies, shame, guilt separate us from God and each other. We owe honesty and candor to one another. We are living a lie when we fail to honestly speak to each other. I’ve observed how we deceitfully fail to speak directly to one

⁷⁴ T&C 85:3.

⁷⁵ NC 2 Ne. 11:15.

another but instead tell our complaints to uninvolved others. That is not only wrong, it turns an opportunity to improve one another with honest feedback into gossiping behind our backs.

Gossiping about someone's misbehavior only makes society worse. On the other hand, honestly confronting each other and truthfully sharing our concerns can heal society. We either grow together peacefully, honestly, and candidly, or we will never have peace between each other. We are told to prepare to live in peace with our fellow man.⁷⁶ Fleeing Babylon is first emotional and internal and will become physical and external as the world's institutions fail.

There is nothing about becoming radical, aloof, or isolated that shows we have fled Babylon. Although we should have our eyes open to the wickedness around us, we can still have compassion on the victims of terrible ideas, false beliefs, and destructive and corrupting social and governmental trends. The world is flooded with lies. Lies were used by Satan to wrap the world in chains at the time Noah.⁷⁷ The widespread lies today are much like the days of Noah. If you want to escape the destruction of Babylon, study and hold tight to truth.

Mormon recorded a specific plea God commanded him to write to us:

Turn, all ye gentiles, from your wicked ways, and repent of your evil doings — of your lyings and deceivings, and of your whoredoms, and of your secret abominations, and your idolatries, and of your murders, and your priestcrafts, and your envyings, and your strifes, and from all your wickedness and abominations — and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may receive a remission of your sins and be filled with the holy ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.⁷⁸

Our world is filled with lying, deceit, whoredoms, murder, priestcrafts, envy and strife. While the exact number is not known, it is estimated that approximately 60 million American children have been murdered in the womb. When the US Supreme Court decided in 1973 that abortion was a constitutional right, the nation had no say about it. When that decision was reversed in 2022, the issue was returned to each state to decide. As soon as

⁷⁶ T&C 157:10.

⁷⁷ Enoch was caught up to heaven before the flood, looked down on the earth and “beheld Satan, and he had a great chain in his hand, and he veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced.” OC Gen. 4:15. That chain and the veil of darkness was made of lies.

⁷⁸ NC 3 Ne. 14:1.

states were given the choice, the people became accountable for the continued slaughter of innocent children. The United States has engaged in a half-century genocidal slaughter of unborn children.⁷⁹ Continuing it when given a choice to end it by the voice of the people, makes Americans complicit in mass-murder. Consider this warning from the Book of Mormon: “And if the time cometh that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you. Yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction, even as he has hitherto visited this land.”⁸⁰ That warning is as applicable to us now as it was to the earlier people who inhabited this land. France recently amended their constitution to call abortion a right. It is now legal in at least 75 countries where 40% of the world’s women reside.

Political parties have learned that fear motivates people to follow politicians who promise safety and protection. Class envy, resentment of others, false allegations of racism, and sexual confusion are political tools. If that course continues uninterrupted, the outcome will be violence. Already the rhetoric of violence is justified as “restorative justice” and “ending oppression.”

Eventually the gentile nations will become unsustainable as they descend into violence and confusion. The only preparation for that inevitability is to reject the growing tidal wave of lies. We cannot live in peace with each other if we believe lies about one another.

And it shall come to pass among the wicked that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety, and there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven, and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another. And it shall be said among the wicked, Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible, wherefore we cannot stand. And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all

⁷⁹ Although abortion kills children of every race, the earliest advocate, Margaret Sanger, intended to target primarily the African race: “Feeble-mindedness perpetuates itself from the ranks of those who are blandly indifferent to their racial responsibilities. And it is largely this type of humanity we are now drawing upon to populate our world for the generations to come. In this orgy of multiplying and replenishing the earth, this type is *pari passu* [side by side] multiplying and perpetuating those direst evils in which we must, if civilization is to survive, extirpate by the very roots.” Margaret Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization*, 1922; can be found at <https://www.scribd.com/document/2396503/The-Pivot-of-Civilization-by-Sanger-Margaret-1883-1966>

⁸⁰ Mosiah 13:7.

nations, and shall come to Zion singing with songs of everlasting joy.⁸¹

There will be a place of peace. But “peace” is not possible if your mind has been demented by confusion and deceit. The truth alone can make you free. Jesus Christ was confronted by false religious teachers, and explained why they missed the mark. He explained:

Only if you continue to follow my teachings will you be my students indeed, because you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. The leaders interrupted to claim, We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been slaves to any man. Why do you say we will become free? Jesus answered them, ... I say unto you, Whoever misses the mark is the slave of errors. And such a slave will not be allowed to be within Abraham’s house in the resurrection, but the Son will remain part of God’s Family forever.

If the Son sets you free from sin, you are free indeed. ... If you were really Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. ... I am a man that has only told you the truth that I have heard from the Most High God; Abraham would never do such a thing. You follow the example of your real father. ... If God were your Father, you would love me, for I am sent by and represent God. I am not speaking my own words or pursuing my own agenda, but the Father’s words and agenda. Why do you fail to comprehend my words? Your refusal to hearken and submit to my teachings makes you deaf indeed. Your father is the accuser, and you share the envy and rebellion of your father. He was a rebellious destroyer from the beginning, and fought against the truth, because he prefers lies. When he spreads a lie, he advances his agenda. He is the source of deceit in this fallen world. And because I am the Source of truth, you are unable to believe me. Which of you can truthfully show that I have missed the mark? And if I teach the truth, why do you refuse to believe me? Everyone who follows the Most High God hearkens to God’s words. Because you do not follow the Most High God, you cannot hear him.⁸²

⁸¹ T&C 31:15.

⁸² T&C 171: TSJ 6:18-19.

The test for mankind is always the same. It is no different now than when Adam, Enoch, Noah, or Abraham were here. It is no different now than when Christ was here. When the Lord commissions a member of the Holy Order to declare His message, some will hear and be numbered as His sheep. The rest will reject the warning and forfeit accordingly. It has always been necessary for mankind to face and choose the truth while being confronted with widespread and relentless lies.

If you can find a messenger with a godly message, then give heed. The Holy Order will return as part of the end time being like the days of Noah.⁸³ I doubt you will hear anyone with real authority from the Lord speak about it as if it were a credential. When it comes to something that is most sacred, fools will damn themselves by falsely claiming that which they do not have:

Wherefore, let all men beware how they take my name in their lips, for behold, verily I say that many there be who are under this condemnation, who use the name of the Lord and use it in vain, having not authority. Wherefore, let the church repent of their sins and I the Lord will own them, otherwise they shall be cut off. Remember that that which comes from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care and by constraint of the spirit, and in this there is no condemnation.⁸⁴

Those who hold it are unlikely to boast of it. Those who boast of it are not likely to be trusted by God. True holders let the false claimants go in peace. Abraham did not challenge the false, feigning claim of Pharaoh.

Truth alone should be proof of the position. God will do work through whom He chooses, and will provide whatever knowledge and authority is necessary to complete the work. Although His servant may be misunderstood, the Lord will see that he is like Moses⁸⁵ and can be trusted with the His work because he will pursue the Lord's will and not his own. He will hardly mention authority or keys. There will be no need or desire for a hierarchy to accomplish the work.⁸⁶ Much like Enoch and Melchizedek, they will teach.

⁸³ See NC Matt. 11:11; Mark 6:10; Luke 10:3.

⁸⁴ T&C 50:14-15.

⁸⁵ OC Numbers 7:22: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.

⁸⁶ Joseph Smith spoke often about these things, but the Lord knew there would be no Zion or New Jerusalem in his day. After the murders of Joseph and Hyrum, the church was corrupted and morphed into a multi-billion-dollar enterprise. That allowed the Book of Mormon, Joseph's revelations, and historical materials to be preserved long enough for the Lord to resume the work. That organization has now fulfilled its purpose, and will not be replaced. The state of Zion will not

In a letter from Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith explained how the highest order of Priesthood, or any portion of it, should be used:

[Men's] hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson — that the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and that the Powers of Heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the Heavens withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. 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; ... your bowels also being full of charity toward all men, and to the household of faith; and virtue garnish your thoughts unceasingly. Then shall your confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrines of the Priesthood shall distill upon your soul as the dews from heaven. The holy ghost shall be your constant companion, and your scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth, and your dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto you for ever and ever.⁸⁷

God the Father, who upholds the worlds by His power, uses that power to bless and benefit all of us. Both the good and the evil benefit from the power of God the Father. Christ explained that we should treat one another kindly, “that you may be the children of your Father who is in Heaven; for he makes

invite corruption by ambitious, aspiring souls. It will require eternal words, a fountain of truth, to set in order the House of God.

⁸⁷ T&C 139:5-6.

his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.⁸⁸

Generations have wanted to hear the words that are being taught today, and have not heard them. To hear them is to become accountable for receiving and then acting on what is taught.

King Benjamin put authority and “kingship” into perspective:

I have not commanded you to come up hither that ye should fear me, or that ye should think that I of myself am more than a mortal man. But I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind. Yet as I have been chosen by this people, and was consecrated by my father, and was suffered by the hand of the Lord that I should be a ruler and a king over this people, and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power to serve thee with all the might, mind, and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me,

He did not presume his position made him anything more than another mortal man, subject to infirmities. But he could not deny that the Lord had made him a ruler over the people. Continuing:

I say unto you that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold, nor silver, nor any manner of riches of you, neither have I suffered that ye should be confined in dungeons, nor that ye should make slaves one of another, or that ye should murder, or plunder, or steal, or commit adultery, or even I have not suffered that ye should commit any manner of wickedness, and have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord in all things which he hath commanded you.

He was not motivated by wealth, but by service. He was a “ruler” and a teacher. And he taught his people to obey the commandments. Continuing:

And even I myself have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne. ... I have not done these things that I might boast,

⁸⁸ NC Matt. 3:26.

neither do I tell these things that thereby I might accuse you; but I tell you these things that ye may know that I can answer a clear conscience before God this day. Behold, I say unto you that because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God.

This head of the Holy Order performs his obligation to God and his fellow believer by serving. He is not served. He labors with his own hands to support himself and his family. He does not receive compensation for serving God. Alma abandoned secular authority to serve in the Holy Order. “Alma delivered up the judgment seat to Nephiah, and confined himself wholly to the High Priesthood of the Holy Order of God, to the testimony of the word, according to the spirit of revelation and prophecy.”⁸⁹ Teaching and persuading are best accomplished without exerting authority over people. Continuing:

Behold, ye have called me your king. And if I, whom ye call your king, do labor to serve you, then had not ye ought to labor to serve one another? And behold also, if I, whom ye call your king, who has spent his days in your service and yet has been in the service of God, doth merit any thanks from you, oh how had you ought to thank your Heavenly King!⁹⁰

God chooses people to serve, and their role is to provide service. God approves of those who desire to help others, bless lives, and lose their own ambition. Only a mere servant can be trusted with the Holy Order. This is why the Holy Order can act in the stead of God and those who benefit from it are *not* trusting in the arm of flesh. Quite the contrary, the words of a servant in the Holy Order are the words of the Lord Himself:

“What I, the Lord, have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself. And though the heaven and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by my own voice or by the voice of my servants it is the same.”⁹¹

⁸⁹ NC Alma 2:5.

⁹⁰ NC Mosiah 1:7-8.

⁹¹ T&C 54:7.

This principle of equivalency does not apply to pretenders. They certainly apply to the man and woman of the Holy Order. They did apply to Joseph Smith in 1831. They would apply to Hyrum Smith in 1841 when he was given the assignment as Joseph's older brother.⁹² When the Lord appoints such a servant to bless His people, then trust in that servant it is not trust in the arm of flesh, but trust in the arm of the Lord. It was not 'idolatry' for Abraham to go to Melchizedek for authority and blessing, to pay tithing to him, and recognize and respect him as God's king and priest.⁹³ The name "Melchizedek" is a compound word-name that means "king" and "priest."⁹⁴

That name-title was given to Shem, the son of Noah.⁹⁵ Shem obtained it by descent from Adam through his father, Noah. As revelation has explained:

Abraham received the Priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah, and from Noah till Enoch, through the lineage of their fathers, and from Enoch to Abel who was slain by the conspiracy of his brother, who received the Priesthood by the commandment of God, by the hand of his father Adam, who was the first man,

⁹² See T&C 141:32, 41: "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, that 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 whatever he shall bind on the earth shall be bound in Heaven, and that whatever 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," ... "I now give unto you the offices belonging to my Priesthood, that you may hold the keys thereof, even **the Priesthood which is after the Order of Melchizedek, which is after the Order of my Only Begotten Son. First, I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a patriarch** unto you, to hold the sealing blessings of my church, even the Holy Spirit of Promise whereby you are sealed up unto the day of redemption, that you may not fall[.]"

⁹³ A messenger with a message from God does not invite idolatry. They give the message and men either accept or reject it, the messenger being irrelevant to the listener's choice. This is what Joseph Smith had reference to when he said, "when men open their lips—they do not injure me—but injure themselves." Discourse 16 June 1844, *JSP Documents Vol. 15*, p. 272.

⁹⁴ The name has been translated by Hebrew scholars as "king of righteousness" however, while there is agreement that the first syllable is derived from the Hebrew word "Melek" and means "king" the second syllable's meaning is debated. It is derived from the name "Zadok." This was a priestly family name. Centuries later "Zadok" was the name of the first high priest in Solomon's temple. The Qumran community was called "Zadokites" because their members were priestly. The syllable has also been rendered "'sadeq" meaning "to be just" and in that version it means "king of righteousness." Either interpretation makes the title venerable and worth respecting.

⁹⁵ See *Times and Seasons*, 5:746, Dec. 15, 1844.

which Priesthood continues in the church of God in all generations, and is without beginning of days or end of years.⁹⁶

The Holy Order was and is intended to establish a “house of order.” In 1836 the saints were invited to reestablish the Lord’s house of order. They hoped to accomplish that by their own initiative: The Lord wanted His House, “Even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a House of God.”⁹⁷ They were offered the Holy Order, or fullness of the Priesthood, but it was “lost unto [them]” and taken away from that generation.⁹⁸ This was not unexpected. The Lord knew they would fail and had previously promised there would come a time when His House would be “set in order.”⁹⁹ This will happen when the Lord reestablishes the Holy Order. The Lord’s “House” is not merely a physical building, but includes His Family/House as well.

Egypt’s first Pharaoh tried to perpetuate the Holy Order by imitating what had been in the first generations:

Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first Patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.¹⁰⁰

The name “Pharaoh” in Egyptian means “great house.” Pharaoh wanted to recreate the “House” meaning “Family” of God. That is why he was trying “earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first Patriarchal reign.” He wanted to be the head of God’s Family on earth. However, men cannot establish the Holy Order. It can only be established by God, or (as Joseph Smith explained) through Adam (the original father and holder of the right) under the direction of Jesus Christ.

⁹⁶ T&C 82:10.

⁹⁷ T&C 123:3.

⁹⁸ See T&C 141:10.

⁹⁹ T&C 83:4.

¹⁰⁰ T&C 145: Abr. 2:3.

Those who falsely claim to be apostles of the Lord are not to be trusted and following them *is* putting trust in the arm of flesh. When Zion returns it will be clear who the Lord's servants are.¹⁰¹

The Apostle Paul explained that you cannot have faith unless God sends a messenger to preach the truth:

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they are sent? — as it is written: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! So then faith comes by hearing the word of God.¹⁰²

Those who deliver a living message from the Living Lord are indispensable ministers whose work is needed so that the “residue of men” can have faith in God, but only God can save us. As it is written:

[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, shewing 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 fulfill 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. And Christ hath said, If ye will have faith in me, ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me. And he hath said, Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me, that ye may be saved.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ T&C 51:10: “For it shall come to pass that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion, and all liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they which are not apostles and prophets shall be known.”

¹⁰² NC Rom. 1:49.

¹⁰³ NC Moroni 7:6.

The Holy Order requires both a man and woman in similitude of Adam and Eve. The couple holds dominion as a father and mother over the Family of God on earth. That is different than acting as a priest and priestess. God's House is a house of order. To set it right is something far more important than administrating a church or performing priestly rites.

We know that Adam is the one with authority over the Holy Order. "Adam holds the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of times; i.e., the dispensation of all the times have been and will be revealed through him, from the beginning to Christ, and from Christ to the end of all the dispensations that are to be revealed."¹⁰⁴ However, the identity of "Adam" is not just the first man, but includes his helpmeet. It is the first couple who were named "Adam" and Eve stands as partner in this order. "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; in the image of his own body, male and female, created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created and became living souls in the land[.]"¹⁰⁵

The role of the woman is greater than most have imagined. We have enough in modern revelation to know of the mother's importance and power. Consider these words from the Answer to Prayer for Covenant:

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.¹⁰⁶

The covenant-making to secure a throne requires the direct participation of the woman. The Holy Order involves both the husband and wife. Refer back to *Our Divine Parents* regarding Heavenly Mother, and the other mothers involved in the Holy Order. The Heavenly Mother declared, "By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."¹⁰⁷ That talk went on to explain it was Eve who identified the successor to Adam. That was her right, just as it is the Heavenly Mother's right over Her offspring. It was Rebecca's right to choose Jacob over Esau. We should

¹⁰⁴ T&C 140:3.

¹⁰⁵ OC Gen. 3:14.

¹⁰⁶ T&C 157:42.

¹⁰⁷ See *Our Divine Parents*, p. 7 (quoting from Proverbs 8).

therefore expect the woman/mother/wife/priestess to be involved directly with covenant making, who positions her husband in the Holy Order. And we should anticipate that the senior-most mother would likewise have a say in who succeeds her husband as heir-successor in the Holy Order.

It was the Holy Order that existed as the singular government organization for mankind at the first. There was no “church” or other institution. There was only a family, and it had at the head a father and mother set there by God. They were given dominion over all others. They were to be “husbandmen” to raise up a righteous posterity who would walk in the pathway leading back to God.

With the exception of Abraham, all subsequent dispensations were organized different from the first. But the end will return to the beginning, and what was once will be again for the prophecy must be fulfilled: “Now this same Priesthood which was in the beginning shall be in the end of the world also (now this prophecy Adam spoke as he was moved upon by the holy ghost).”¹⁰⁸

This Order has been offered in earlier dispensations, but can be and has been repeatedly rejected. For example, the Holy Order was refused by the Israelites and therefore taken from them:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew two other tablets of stones, like unto the first, and I will write upon them also the words of the law, according as they were written at the first on the tablets which you broke. But it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the Priesthood out of their midst. Therefore, **my Holy Order and the ordinances thereof shall not go before them**, for my presence shall not go up in their midst lest I destroy them. But I will give unto them the law as at the first; but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment, for I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage. Therefore, do as I have commanded you, and be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me in the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with you, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount...¹⁰⁹

Modern revelation explains this was a terribly significant loss for ancient Israel.

¹⁰⁸ OC Gen. 3:14.

¹⁰⁹ OC Exo. 18:5, emphasis added.

And this greater Priesthood administers the gospel and holds the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

It is their responsibility to “know”—but not necessarily to teach. Some things are necessary for the greater priesthood holder to understand, but to be kept in sacred silence.

Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest, and without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the Priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto man in the flesh, for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.

Part of the instruction of the knowledge of God’s mysteries is given through “ordinances.” These are also kept from public display.

Now, this, Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God, but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence. Therefore, the Lord, in his wrath (for his anger was kindled against them) swore that they should not enter into his rest — which rest is the fullness of his glory — while in the wilderness.

Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also. And the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holds the key of the ministering of angels, and the preparatory gospel, which gospel is the gospel of repentance, and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron, among the children of Israel, until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the holy ghost from his mother’s womb.¹¹⁰

Like Israel at the time of Moses, the Latter-day Saints at the time of Joseph and Hyrum also rejected the Holy Order. In January 1841, the LDS were commanded to, “build a house unto my name for the Most High to dwell therein. For there is not place found on the earth that he may come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he has taken away, even the

¹¹⁰ T&C 82:12-14.

fullness of the Priesthood.”¹¹¹ Although Joseph Smith restored the fullness of the Gospel, he was unable to deliver the fullness of the Priesthood, or Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. The required temple was never completed, and the time and opportunity available to them passed. That rejection was foreshadowed in an 1831 revelation foretelling a future moment when the Lord will speak from heaven declaring:

Hearken, O you nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you: O you nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you would not? How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by my 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 judgments, 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 you would not?¹¹²

The question remains open as to whether we will allow the Holy Order to function among us. The Lord will permit it. He is willing to identify those He will permit to enter into His House (meaning His Family). The question is, who will welcome it? The conditions today are the same as at the time of Adam, Enoch, Melchizedek, and Abraham. Few there be that will find it.

Predictably, as soon as some learn the content of this talk they will claim to be worthy, perhaps even in possession of the Holy Order. All such claimants are liars and deceivers.¹¹³ Whenever there is a couple appointed to the Holy Order, there are always competing voices, pretenders, opponents, and deluded others acting in direct opposition.¹¹⁴

The Book of Mormon explains for us the direct connection between repentance and obedience in obtaining this Order. This was and is required not only for Melchizedek but also for the people who welcome the return of the Order:

¹¹¹ T&C 141:10.

¹¹² T&C 28:8.

¹¹³ Members of the Order will be known to the Lord and to each other, but not publicly disclosed. Public claims are always untrustworthy, and likely only made to exert control or authority claims.

¹¹⁴ Opposition is always necessary. See, e.g., T&C 1:JSH 10:11; NC 2 Ne. 1:7; Alma 6:12.

Now as I said concerning the Holy Order, or this High Priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God. And it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish. Therefore, they were called after this Holy Order and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. Now they, after being sanctified by the holy ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence. And there were many, an exceeding great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God. And now, my brethren, I would that ye should humble yourselves before God and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest. Yea, humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek, who was also a high priest after this same Order which I have spoken, who also took upon him the High Priesthood for ever. And it was this same Melchizedek to whom Abraham paid tithes — yea, even our father Abraham paid tithes of one-tenth part of all he possessed. Now these ordinances were given after this manner, that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God, it being a type of his Order, or it being his Order, and this that they might look forward to him for a remission of their sins, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord.

Now this Melchizedek was a king over the land of Salem, and his people had waxed strong in iniquity and abominations — yea, they had all gone astray; they were full of all manner of wickedness. But Melchizedek, having exercised mighty faith and received the office of the High Priesthood according to the Holy Order of God, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent. And Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore, he was called the Prince of Peace, for he was the King of Salem; and he did reign under his father. Now there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater. Therefore, of him they have more particularly made mention. Now I need not rehearse the matter; what I have said may suffice. Behold, the scriptures are

before you; if ye will wrest them, it shall be to your own destruction.¹¹⁵

When he was the servant, Melchizedek preached repentance. He didn't claim self-importance, establish an organization, or claim an office. He preached repentance.

In a sermon on August 27, 1843 Joseph Smith explained, "The Holy Order is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from Heaven."¹¹⁶ Because it is the mechanism God uses to reveal from heaven what is necessary for the salvation of mankind, His messenger will preach repentance.

This world was organized to provide an opportunity for every soul sent here to be "added upon."¹¹⁷ But it was never expected that souls would develop equally. Because of apostasy, an overwhelming number of mankind have lived without any opportunity to receive and accept the Gospel. It will nevertheless be "tolerable" for them in the resurrection.¹¹⁸ But when the Gospel is taught to and rejected by people, the resurrection will not be "tolerable" for them.¹¹⁹ People who live and die without learning of God's law are also redeemed and unaccountable for what was never shown to them.¹²⁰

From among the few who have the Gospel preached to them, the "fullness of the Priesthood" has been available to teach very few indeed. How often God would have gathered people as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings? But mankind has continually returned to a state of apostasy, rejecting the gift that was (and now is) continually offered by a gracious God:

You who are quickened by a portion of the Celestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fullness. And they who are quickened by a portion of the terrestrial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fullness. And also, they who are quickened by a portion of the telestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fullness. And they who remain, shall also be quickened. Nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were not

¹¹⁵ Alma 10:1-2.

¹¹⁶ See *JS Papers Documents Vol. 7, p. 435*; *TPJS*, p. 166-167; *WJS*, p. 38.

¹¹⁷ T&C 145: Abr. 6:2.

¹¹⁸ See T&C 31:12.

¹¹⁹ T&C 67:5.

¹²⁰ "For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law, for the power of redemption cometh on all they that have no law." Moroni 8:4.

willing to enjoy that which they might have received. For what does it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift.¹²¹

If there is a need to fix blame for the limited opportunities mankind has had for being gathered by God and protected by Him, then the blame is upon our ancestors who rejected the Gospel. The blame is not on a willing God. Our unwillingness to let Him govern us through the Holy Order has resulted in this world descending into chaos and sin. The path back is through repenting and returning to God's path.

The Holy Order was established before the world, and was conferred on Adam. It could have been a continuous guide to all of Adam's descendants, but men loved sin and surrendered to carnality because of their weakness. Even as Adam was preaching the truth, "Satan came among them, saying, I am also a Son of God. And he commanded them, saying, Believe not. And they believed not, and loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish."¹²²

Although mankind rejected Adam's preaching, God never withdrew Adam's commission. He continues to hold that position and will do so until the end of this cycle of creation, or the end of the world.¹²³ All of the later forms of priesthood are inferior to the original.

The Holy Order requires a restoring of great knowledge that is hidden from the world. The fathers knew it would be restored in the last days, and anxiously anticipated its return.¹²⁴

¹²¹ T&C 84:4.

¹²² Gen. 3:5.

¹²³ *TPJS*, p. 157.

¹²⁴ See T&C 138:21: "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 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."

The Holy Order was conferred during the creation, when Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden and were given dominion over the creation. Then, after the fall, Adam's initiation into the Order continued in this documented event:

And it came to pass when the Lord had spoken with Adam our father that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the spirit of God descended upon him. And thus he was born of the spirit and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of Heaven saying, You are baptized with fire and with the holy ghost. This is the record of the Father and the Son, from henceforth and for ever. And you are after the Order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. Behold, you are one in me, a son of God. And thus may all become my sons. Amen.¹²⁵

Adam would teach his descendants these principles as part of the initiations. Our scriptures do not provide the details. However, we learn more about the Holy Order from the account involving Melchizedek in OC Gen. 7:17-23:

And Melchizedek lifted up his voice and blessed Abram. [Melchizedek ordained Abraham. However, details are missing. But the record tells us why Melchizedek was chosen to hold the Holy Order:]

Now Melchizedek was a man of faith who wrought righteousness. And when a child, he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained a 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 men, 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.

For God, having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself that everyone 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

¹²⁵ Gen. 4:10.

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. And men having this faith, coming up unto this Order of God, were translated and taken up into Heaven.

And now Melchizedek was a priest of this Order, therefore he obtained peace in Salem and was called the Prince of Peace. And his people wrought righteousness, and obtained Heaven, and sought for the city of Enoch which God had before taken, separating it from the earth, having reserved it unto the latter days, or the end of the world, and has said and sworn with an oath that the heavens and the earth should come together, and the sons of God should be tried so as by fire. And this Melchizedek, having thus established righteousness, was called the King of Heaven by his people — or in other words, the King of Peace.

And he lifted up his voice and he blessed Abram, being the high priest and the keeper of the storehouse of God, him whom God had appointed to receive tithes for the poor. Wherefore, Abram paid unto him tithes of all that he had, of all the riches which he possessed, which God had given him, more than that which he had need. And it came to pass that God blessed Abram, and gave unto him riches, and honor, and lands for an everlasting possession, according to the covenant which he had made and according to the blessing with which Melchizedek had blessed him.

And it came to pass that after these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram. I will be your shield. I will be your exceedingly great reward. And according to the blessings of my servant, I will give unto you. And Abram said, Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless and Eliezer of Damascus was made the steward of my house? And Abram said, Behold, to me you have given no seed and one born in my house is my heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him again, saying, This shall not be your heir, but he that shall come forth out of your own body shall be your heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and he said, Look now toward heaven and tally the stars, if you are able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall your seed be. And Abram said, Lord God, how will you give me this land for an everlasting

inheritance? And the Lord said, Though you were dead, yet am I not able to give it to you? And if you shall die, yet you shall possess it. For the day comes that the Son of Man shall live. But how can he live if he be not dead? He must first be quickened.

And it came to pass that Abram looked forth and saw the days of the Son of Man, and was glad. And his soul found rest, and he believed in the Lord, and the Lord counted it to him for righteousness.¹²⁶

The Book of Mormon has 25 different mentions of the Holy Order,¹²⁷ more than any other book of scripture. It is first mentioned in 2 Nephi, Chapter 5 in the New Covenants version.¹²⁸

The words of Jacob, the brother of Nephi, which he spake unto the people of Nephi: Behold, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, having been called of God and ordained after the manner of his Holy Order, and having been consecrated by my brother Nephi, unto whom ye look as a king or a protector and on whom ye depend for safety, behold, ye know that I have spoken unto you exceeding many things. (2 Ne. 5:1.)

For Jacob to have been “called of God and ordained” it required someone to ordain him, and he identifies Nephi as the source.

When and how did Nephi obtain the Holy Order of God? Before his family migrated across the Arabian peninsula God spoke to him,

the Lord spake unto me, saying, Blessed art thou, Nephi, because of thy faith, for thou hast sought me diligently with lowliness of heart. And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper and shall be led to a land of promise, yea, even a land which I have prepared for you, a land which is choice above all other lands. ... And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my

¹²⁶ OC Gen. 8:18-23.

¹²⁷ See, NC Alma 2:5; 3:8, 9, 10, 4:1, 2; 5:6; 7:2; 9:9 (five times), 10:1 (four times), 2; 20:1; 22:42; Helaman 3:9; and Ether 5:2. These references and explanations make the Book of Mormon the preeminent scripture for understanding this subject.

¹²⁸ “Behold, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, having been called of God and ordained after the manner of **his Holy Order**, and having been consecrated by my brother Nephi, unto whom ye look as a king or a protector and on whom ye depend for safety[.]” Emphasis added.

commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over thy brethren.¹²⁹

Those words, “a ruler and teacher” identify a role that belongs to the Holy Order. But this is a conditional promise of a future ordination. After that promise, by faith Nephi obtained the plates of Laban,¹³⁰ studied the records of the fathers and prophets,¹³¹ broke the bands from his hands and feet,¹³² beheld a vision of God’s condescension,¹³³ witnessed things not lawful for him to teach,¹³⁴ held the power of God in his hands,¹³⁵ built a ship and led others across the oceans to a promised land,¹³⁶ recorded God’s dealings in scripture for his people,¹³⁷ and summarized God’s blessings to him in these words:

I know in whom I have trusted. My God hath been my support, he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep. He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh. He hath confounded mine enemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me. Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the night time. And by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high, and angels came down and ministered unto me. And upon the wings of his spirit hath my body been carried away up on exceeding high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things — yea, even too great for man — therefore I was bidden that I should not write them.

...I have seen so great things, [and] the Lord, in his condescension unto the children of men, hath visited me in so much mercy,¹³⁸

These accomplishments are evidence of Nephi’s ordination, however, he omits mention of the actual event for himself. He does record his brother, Jacob’s,

¹²⁹ 1 Ne. 1:9.

¹³⁰ Id. ¶¶17-18.

¹³¹ Id. ¶22.

¹³² 1 Ne. 2:4.

¹³³ 1 Ne. 3:7-11, which includes learning of “the Mother of the Son of God.” This acquainted him with the Family of God.

¹³⁴ Id. ¶¶30-31, “I have not written but a small part of the things which I saw.”

¹³⁵ 1 Ne. 5:23.

¹³⁶ Id. ¶¶24-32.

¹³⁷ Id. ¶¶34-35.

¹³⁸ 2 Ne. 3:7-8.

ordination to the Holy Order by him. This is also typical of someone having authority. The evidence is not in proclaiming status, but in providing service.

The Holy Order continued for generations with the descendants of Nephi. Alma the Younger claimed to have been called after the Holy Order, and what he taught about it is the best proof he was a member of the Order. Here is what he wrote¹³⁹ about his calling:

And Alma went and began to declare the word of God unto the church which was established in the valley of Gideon, according to the revelation of the truth of the word which had been spoken by his fathers, and according to the spirit of prophecy which was in him — according to the testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who should come to redeem his people from their sins — and the Holy Order by which he was called. And thus it is written. Amen.¹⁴⁰

Alma the Younger gives the best scriptural exposition and the foremost description for why an individual is ordained to the Holy Order in this life:

And again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children. And I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests after his Holy Order, which was after the Order of his Son, ...

This clarifies that Alma is speaking of the original Holy Order that was after the Order of the Son of God. This is the priestly authority that many of the Nephite prophets held. This is why Joseph Smith called the record of the Nephites the most correct book, and keystone of our religion.¹⁴¹ The text was composed by people within the Holy Order who were adept in the required knowledge, experience and wisdom to compose a correct account.

...to teach these things unto the people.

¹³⁹ These words are part of Mormon's abridgement, but are based on Alma's record used to make the abridgement.

¹⁴⁰ NC Alma 4:2.

¹⁴¹ "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book," *DHC* 4:461.

This is the primary role of the Holy Order. Enoch led a city to peace by teaching. By obeying Enoch's teachings his city was translated into heaven.

And those priests were ordained after the Order of his Son in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.

The holders of the Holy Order were and are intended to reflect the Son of God. It is the Son of God who will provide redemption. But only one generation was there and heard Him teach. Other generations needed examples that allowed them to believe in and anticipate redemption through the Son of God. That is also needed now.

The Son would only teach what the Father told Him to teach. "I am Son Ahman, and that I have done nothing on my own; but as my Father has taught me, I repeat his words."¹⁴² This is what the Son would do, and what every one ordained after His Order would likewise do. That is the manner to look forward to Christ, and to also to look back and understand about Christ.

And this is the manner after which they were ordained: being called and prepared from the foundation of the world, according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works in the first place, being left to choose good or evil; therefore they, having chosen good, and exercising exceeding great faith, are called with a holy calling — yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.

All the qualifying for the Holy Order happened before this cycle of creation.¹⁴³ When the "foundation" or beginning planning of the world was first underway, God in His Wisdom knew it would be necessary to send messengers who would reliably teach others. Those chosen had already proven to be loyal to God and shown great faith in God's Son. However, even if they were prepared

¹⁴² T&C 171: TSJ 6:16; see also ¶5: "My doctrine does not come from me, but from God who sent me."

¹⁴³ This is why Nephi could teach, "Moses did not only testify of these things, but also all the holy prophets from his day, even to the days of Abraham. Yea, and behold, Abraham saw of his coming, and was filled with gladness and did rejoice. Yea, and behold, I say unto you that Abraham not only knew of these things, but there were many before the days of Abraham who were called by the Order of God, yea, even after the Order of his Son — and this that it should be shewn unto the people a great many thousand years before his coming that even redemption should come unto them." NC Helaman 3:9. Their qualification and foreordination happened before the foundation of the world.

before the foundation of the world, they needed to be initiated into the Order in mortality. Abraham was chosen before the creation,¹⁴⁴ but still was not part of the Holy Order in mortality until initiated by Melchizedek.¹⁴⁵

And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds (while, if it had not been for this, they might had as great privilege as their brethren — or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren — thus, this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, ...

Before the foundation of the world, some had shown unwavering devotion to God. They had proven reliable. Others would not qualify because they would risk failing and leading souls astray. They risked rejecting God's spirit because of hardness of hearts—or in other words pride and lack of humility. They questioned and argued, doubted and challenged. They had an inconsistent record of conduct, sometimes hesitating when others remained steadfast and true.

The risk of blind guides falling in a ditch and leading others to fall into that same ditch¹⁴⁶ was disqualifying. And yet we still see those who, without possessing the required calling and ordination, claim they should be leaders and teachers. Even the pre-qualified still needed “calling” here.

...being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son who was prepared), and thus, being called by this holy calling and ordained unto the High Priesthood of the Holy Order of God to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest — this High Priesthood being after the Order of his Son, ...

The Holy Order is not for the benefit of the servant. Its purpose is to allow others to “enter into his rest” or receive the redemption the Son of God offers to all. The Holy Order is to “teach his commandments” in a reliable,

¹⁴⁴ See T&C 145: Abraham 6:1.

¹⁴⁵ *JSP Documents Vol. 13 August-December 1843*, p. 74.

¹⁴⁶ Christ said of the Pharisees: “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” NC Matt. 8:9.

authorized and dependable way. It is not to get acclaim, attract a following, or preside over anyone. The responsibility is to teach God's commandments.

...which Order was from the foundation of the world, or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity according to his foreknowledge of all things.

Because the qualification and ordination was first accomplished from the foundation of the world, it took place before the first day was set for this world.¹⁴⁷ Therefore it is without any beginning of days.¹⁴⁸ And because that authority will endure into the afterlife, it will not come to any end in this world¹⁴⁹ where years are counted. Hence it is 'from eternity to all eternity.'

Now they were ordained after this manner, being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the High Priesthood of the Holy Order — which calling, and ordinance, and High Priesthood is without beginning or end; thus, they become high priests for ever after the Order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen.¹⁵⁰

Alma confirms there is a required "holy ordinance" for someone who qualified before the foundation of the world. They need to receive that holy ordinance before they are part of the High Priesthood of the Holy Order. This is why Abraham went to Melchizedek to obtain the ordinance.

The description of those who obtain the Holy Order was given in the Vision of the Three Degrees of Glory on February 16, 1832. They are identified as those,

who overcome by faith and are sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise, which the Father sheddeth forth upon all those who are just and true.

They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.

They are they into whose hands the Father hath given all things.

¹⁴⁷ OC Gen. 2:3.

¹⁴⁸ See NC. Heb. 1:17.

¹⁴⁹ See T&C 69:13-14.

¹⁵⁰ NC Alma 9:10.

They are they who are priests and kings, who, having received of his fullness and of his glory, are priests of the Most High after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the Order of the Only Begotten Son. Wherefore, as it is written, **they are gods, even the sons of God.** Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. And they shall overcome all things. Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let them glory in God who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.¹⁵¹

Here scripture uses the present tense to call them, “gods, even the sons of God;” not they “will be” but they “**are**” presently in that position. And yet, consistent with all we have been told about worship of God only,¹⁵² this same description teaches, “let no man glory in man, but rather let them glory in God who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.” The appointment to the Holy Order does not make the recipients anything other than servants, teachers, and guides who can reliably report on their errand from the Lord. They deliver God's words, but are not to be worshipped.

While these words have been around since 1832 and generally regarded as promising status to the faithful in the afterlife, when understood in light of the Holy Order they take on a different meaning. They describe specifically and exclusively that group.

Some comparatively few qualified for the Holy Order before this world's current cycle of creation. But remember, “the course of the Lord is one eternal round.”¹⁵³ Things repeat, and there are “worlds without end.”¹⁵⁴

This is not our ‘first estate’ nor will it be our last. Creation is endless and God has declared that His “works are without end, ... for they never cease[.]”¹⁵⁵ God explained to Moses:

For behold, there are many worlds which have passed away by the word of my power, and there are many also which now stand, and

¹⁵¹ T&C 69:10-13, emphasis added. We have read these words all our lives without recognizing they clearly identify the Holy Order.

¹⁵² See, e.g., OC Gen. 1:1; 1:4; also Isa. 15:19.

¹⁵³ NC 1 Ne. 3:5; see also, Alma 5:5; T&C 2:1; 18:1; 110: *LoF* 3:10, 15, 21, 38.

¹⁵⁴ T&C 69:28-referring to the progression of those who fail to rise above a telestial state in the afterlife. See also, NC Eph. 1:11; T&C 157:38; TSJ 10:3, 9, 30, 5:18-19; OC Gen. 1:1; among other places.

¹⁵⁵ OC Gen. 1:1.

numberless are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.

And it came to pass that Moses spoke unto the Lord, saying, Be merciful unto your servant, O God, and tell me concerning this earth and the inhabitants thereof, and also the heavens; and then your servant will be content. And the Lord God spoke unto Moses of the heavens, saying, These are many and they cannot be numbered unto man, but they are numbered unto me for they are mine. And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come. And there is no end to my works, neither my words.¹⁵⁶

We have a partial account of events before this cycle of creation. There were those who rebelled during this earlier existence, or estate. Because it happened prior to this cycle of creation, it is referred to as the “first estate” but might as well be called an “earlier estate” or “prior estate.” We read:

And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon, and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.

And the Lord said, Who shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man, Here am I, send me. And another answered and said, Here am I, send me. And the Lord said, I will send the first. And the second was angry and kept not his first estate, and at that day many followed after him.¹⁵⁷

The second who did not keep his first estate was cast down and drew a third of the stars of heaven with him as he fell to earth.¹⁵⁸ It is described as,

an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son (whom the Father loved, who was in the bosom of the Father), was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son, and was called Perdition, for the Heavens wept over him.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Id., 1:6-7.

¹⁵⁷ T&C 145: BoA 6:2-3.

¹⁵⁸ NC Rev. 4:2.

¹⁵⁹ T&C 69:6.

That earlier tragedy before this cycle of creation is not dissimilar to a description of events to happen later, at the end of this cycle:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be set loose out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.¹⁶⁰

It is all one eternal round, worlds without end, estates without end, opportunities to prove faithful without end. Accordingly, we can prove faithful in this present estate, so that what comes in the next cycle will let it be said of us:

[B]eing called and prepared from the foundation of the world, according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works in the first place, being left to choose good or evil; therefore they, having chosen good, and exercising exceeding great faith, are called with a holy calling[.]¹⁶¹

“We tip the scales by our choices, and by so doing, we change all eternity. We change eternity by the choices we make here.”¹⁶²

“There is an eternal balance, with infinite results, hanging on our every choice. We stand in peril or stand in glory depending upon our every thought and deed.”¹⁶³

“Five minutes of mortality are more precious than all the prior eternities of pre-earth life. Only here can you demonstrate the faith from which creation itself was born.”¹⁶⁴

Why not consider this moment as another “first place” and choose to obey God, in faith, to have your good works then follow you into your next estate?

¹⁶⁰ NC Rev. 8:6.

¹⁶¹ NC Alma 9:10.

¹⁶² T&C 159:13.

¹⁶³ Id., 14.

¹⁶⁴ Id., 15.

“Our failures are mourned in the corridors of Heaven with groans for our shortcomings. We have angels and gods wishing our choices were always tipping the scale of balance in this life in favor of obedience to God.”¹⁶⁵

“Our noble acts and righteous deeds are celebrated in joy and song in the corridors of Heaven. As we choose God and His ways, the Hosanna Shout rings out in Heaven for such choices. We are the place where eternity’s conflicts are now being played out. We are the battleground between infinite good and infinite failure.”¹⁶⁶

What you do with your thoughts, words and deeds NOW matters. Whether you will repent and follow Christ determines an eternal course.

In contrast, those consigned to hell to suffer until the end follow a religion with only a form of godliness, while denying the redemptive power of following Christ’s servants. They are described in the revelation in these words:

These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on the earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of Eternal fire. These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fullness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet, and shall have perfected his work, when he shall deliver up the kingdom and present it unto the Father[.]¹⁶⁷

They love lies because they are comforting. Lies tell you there is no need to repent. Lies promise you salvation without obedience. The scope of their lies is particularly alarming. They claim to follow true, but deceased prophets, but never accept a living testimony of Jesus:

For these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas. These are they who say they are some of one and some of another: some of Christ, and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch, [every one of whom were actual servants sent with messages from the Lord] but received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets,

¹⁶⁵ Id., 16.

¹⁶⁶ Id., 17.

¹⁶⁷ T&C 69:27.

neither the everlasting covenants. [They rejected the living Holy Order servant sent to them. They prefer to think themselves safe by acknowledging known but dead prior messengers; but they dare not risk letting a living, contemporary representative of the Holy Order teach them.]

Reestablishing the Holy Order involves a new dispensation with those who went before providing the foundation for the work to go forward. Angelic ministers needed to come at the start of Joseph's dispensation, and were needed again,

[A]ll declaring each one: Their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their Priesthood.

Going line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come and confirming our hope.¹⁶⁸

This is required to restore the Holy Order any time it has been lost. The Order is not just a form of priesthood, but also involves a family connection to the first fathers. For the holder, it establishes a role within that family. The senior-most living couple in that order stands in the same position as did Adam and Eve. It is essential that the Holy Order be reestablished prior to the Second Coming so that the events of Adam-On-di-Ahman can take place. To link together God's Family necessarily follows the precedent of Abraham because it includes adoption of the living holder on earth to the "fathers who are in heaven"¹⁶⁹ (as Joseph Smith put it). The identity of those "fathers in heaven" and the identity of those who have held the Holy Order are the same. God's family must be linked together on both sides of the veil.

The fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is open to everyone and publicly invites all to accept it and benefit. Each person must decide if they will repent, forsake their sins, be baptized and accept Christ's offer. The fullness of the Priesthood, or Holy Order, is not open to everyone, but when it exists it can

¹⁶⁸ T&C 151:15-17.

¹⁶⁹ Joseph's teaching about sealing for the afterlife explained for salvation there must be someone to "have power to hold the keys of the revelations 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." (*WJS* p. 329.)

benefit all those who accept the fullness of the Gospel. Only Adam, under the direction of Jesus Christ, can decide if a couple will be inducted into the fullness of the Priesthood, or Holy Order.

Not all people are going to want the fullness of the Gospel. Every soul is different from every other soul, and no two have the same desire for light and truth.¹⁷⁰ Some souls are added upon by only having the opportunity to witness light and dark each day and night, or to experience hot and cold each yearly cycle. Newborn children experience hunger and thirst, and eat and drink to understand the contrast. This world presents contrasts to inform everyone of eternal truths in this mortal experience. The fullness of the Gospel has only been present intermittently, with long periods of apostasy. Even when present, the majority of those living at the time know nothing about it.

This is wise and fair. It is part of a grand design to patiently allow all of mankind to progress suitably. “For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore, we see that the Lord doth counsel in his wisdom, according to that which is just and true.”¹⁷¹ Apart from the fullness of the Gospel there are deeply spiritual, singularly understanding, very pure souls who inherited Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, or other forms of God’s word. They are also remembered by and precious to the Lord. Contrast that with some who have the fullness of the Gospel, miss the point altogether and are marred with conceit, animosity, and self-righteousness.

As the fullness of the Priesthood or Holy Order is restored, do not expect it to be broadly distributed, openly available, or discussed in public forums. Some portions of the Gospel have always been unlawful to disclose in that manner. The Apostle Paul wrote in his second letter to the Corinthians about being caught up to the third heaven: “he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”¹⁷² The heavens

¹⁷⁰ The definition of “intelligence” is: “the glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth.” (T&C 93:11.) The variety of intelligence we have in this world is described in the Book of Abraham: “if there be two spirits and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits — notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other — yet they have no beginning (they existed before), they shall have no end (they shall exist after), for they are gnolaum, or eternal. And the Lord said unto me, These two facts do exist — that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they. I am the Lord, your God; I am more intelligent than they all.” (T&C 145: Abr. 5:4.)

¹⁷¹ NC Alma 15:13.

¹⁷² NC 2 Cor. 1:41.

were opened, and the witness ascended to hear something true and faithful. Yet it was not lawful for him to tell it.

Some things belong to God alone to tell. We have no right to impose those things on others, particularly if the result will be to condemn them for their rejection of truth.

Yet all are invited to behold and learn from God. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon reported after the heavens were opened to them:

This is the end of the vision that we saw which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the spirit.

But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he shewed unto us, which surpasseth all understanding, in glory, and in might, and in dominion, which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the spirit, and are not lawful for men to utter, neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the holy ghost, which God bestows on those who love him and purifieth themselves before him, to whom he grants the privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves, that through the power and manifestation of the spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory.¹⁷³

There are true things that are part of the Gospel. God is willing to reveal them. They include:

- things not lawful for man to speak
- things man is not capable of explaining
- things God grants the privilege of seeing and knowing to those who love Him and purify themselves
- things that surpass all understanding in glory, might and dominion.

But we don't get to teach them and we aren't able to help others to understand them. They are God's. And those who behold them are gods.

Alma explained how any of us gain this sacred but hidden knowledge:

¹⁷³ T&C 69:28-29.

It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless, they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart — only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him. And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word. And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God, until they know them in full. And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the Devil and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.¹⁷⁴

But notice that even as they get the knowledge, “they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart.” There are people who use their spiritual experiences as a credential. One fellow tries to get people to listen to him because he claims to have meetings with Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and even the ancestors of the person he attempted to persuade. He uses his spiritual experiences as a credential. Another fellow claims that without having accomplished anything to fulfill an assignment from the Lord, he is special, deserving deference, respect and financial support for his mission.

Then we have so many versions of the sealed Book of Mormon that it would now require a library card catalogue to get a complete inventory. And the ‘fan fiction’ volumes of apocryphal, pseudo-prophetic material multiplies at an astonishing rate. All around us there are false claims of new scripture.

More alarming, however, are our own weaknesses and foolishness. We gossip, and assume, and condemn. The Lord has told us how He deals with our failures: “If men intend no offense, I take no offense, but if they are taught and should have obeyed, then I reprove and correct, and forgive and forget.”¹⁷⁵

We welcome many false ideas and errors. We shouldn’t. We can do better.

Alma’s extensive teaching about the Holy Order continued in Chapter 10 of the New Covenants. We return to his account:

¹⁷⁴ NC Alma 9:3.

¹⁷⁵ T&C 157:58.

Now as I said concerning the Holy Order, or this High Priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God. And it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish. Therefore, they were called after this Holy Order and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. ...

God's conditions are the same for everyone. We are all required to repent and work righteousness. That is required before the Holy Order is conferred. The words "ordain," "sanctified," and "washed" should be understood in the context of an ordinance (or process). There is an initiation that is needed. It results in "white garments," or in other words, a cleansed and forgiven soul, through the Lamb of God.

... Now they, after being sanctified by the holy ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence. And there were many, an exceeding great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God. ...

To clarify, they could not consider returning to a sinful life without it being abhorrent to them. Their gratitude to God is the product of knowing Them. The Family connection alters the way they view themselves, God, and this life. The "rest of the Lord" removes uncertainty about their relationship to God. They understand They have made them Theirs. On that subject their minds are at rest, but in this world there is continuing trouble and challenges. The term "rest" is a characteristic of the afterlife, not something involving ease in this world where the sweat of our brow remains our lot.¹⁷⁶

... And now, my brethren, I would that ye should humble yourselves before God and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest. ...

Notice that, as in many other places, actual "repentance" requires "fruit" or action to be undertaken. It is not enough to just feel regret, behavior must also change. Repentance always is accompanied by outward evidence of an inner change.

¹⁷⁶ See OC Gen. 3:1.

...Now these ordinances were given after this manner, that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God, it being a type of his Order, or it being his Order, and this that they might look forward to him for a remission of their sins, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord. ...

Abraham was faithful to, and showed respect for, the head of the Holy Order before he could be initiated into that Order. Here Alma confirms that “these ordinances were given” to induct a couple into the Order. It is not just laying on hands. More was/is required, and even Father Abraham, with all he had experienced, still needed those ordinances. Alma understood this subject and wrote truthfully about it.

... But Melchizedek, having exercised mighty faith and received the office of the High Priesthood according to the Holy Order of God, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent.¹⁷⁷

Preaching repentance was and is the distinguishing role for the Holy Order in this world. In this description we should ask who was identified as “his people?”—meaning Melchizedek’s people. I do not think it was just a random audience who heard him teach. I think “his people” were those few who heard him teach and responded by repenting. There were likely far more who heard him than who repented. As with any age in history, few will be gathered because only few ever respond and repent.¹⁷⁸

Melchizedek was qualified to teach and preach reliably and truthfully by his knowledge of God’s great mysteries. Similarly, a messenger like Joseph Smith had far more experience beyond the veil than he ever taught or revealed. His First Vision ends with this comment: “and many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time.”¹⁷⁹ Melchizedek and Joseph were no different from many other messengers who likewise knew far more than they revealed. God does not trust a gossip. Nor are the heavens supposed to be the object of voyeurism.

¹⁷⁷ NC Alma 10:1-2.

¹⁷⁸ See NC Matt. 3:45; 3 Ne. 6:9.

¹⁷⁹ T&C 1: JSH Part 2:5.

“Heed and diligence” are recited like a formula in the scriptures.¹⁸⁰ The great difference between Nephi and his older brothers was the heed and diligence present in Nephi and absent in the older brothers. The first verse of the Book of Mormon describes Nephi being “taught somewhat in all the learning of my father.”¹⁸¹ As a result he was able to gain knowledge of the mysteries of God, and had command of “the learning of the Jews, and the language of the Egyptians.”¹⁸² Later, Nephi reported about how he and his father had responded to God:

And it came to pass that thus far **I and my father** had kept the commandments wherewith the Lord had commanded **us**. And **we** had obtained the record which the Lord had commanded **us** and searched them and found that they were desirable, yea, even of great worth unto **us**, insomuch that **we** could preserve the commandments of the Lord unto our children. Wherefore, it was wisdom in the Lord that **we** should carry them with **us** as **we** journeyed in the wilderness toward the land of promise.¹⁸³

This is about Lehi and Nephi and how they had treated the commandments and the scriptures. Nephi’s older brothers lacked that same diligence in pursuing godliness. The older brothers apparently lacked even the ability to read the scriptures, and therefore Nephi read the plates of brass to them:

I, Nephi, did teach my brethren these things. And it came to pass that I did read many things to them which were engraven upon the plates of brass, that they might know concerning the doings of the Lord in other lands among people of old. And I did read many things unto them which were written in the books of Moses. But that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer, I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning.¹⁸⁴

Nephi’s ability to read and teach were the result of his heed and diligence over his lifetime. Like oil in the lamps of the virgins, heed and diligence secured for Nephi a lifetime of light and truth.

¹⁸⁰ See, e.g., NC 1 Ne. 5:8; Mosiah 1:3; Alma 5:7; 9:3; 13:6; 21:42; T&C 157:7.

¹⁸¹ NC 1 Ne. 1:1.

¹⁸² Id.

¹⁸³ Id. ¶23; emphasis added.

¹⁸⁴ Id. 6:1.

Although they claimed the right of government over Nephi, the older brothers could not understand the scriptures even when they were read to them:

[A]fter I, Nephi, had read these things which were engraven upon the plates of brass, my brethren came unto me and said unto me, What mean these things which ye have read? Behold, are they to be understood according to things which are spiritual, which shall come to pass according to the spirit and not the flesh? And I, Nephi, said unto them, Behold, they were made manifest unto the prophets by the voice of the spirit, for by the spirit are all things made known unto the prophets which shall come upon the children of men according to the flesh. Wherefore, the things of which I have read are things pertaining to things both temporal and spiritual.¹⁸⁵

Without heed and diligence, Nephi would not have been appointed by God to be a “ruler and teacher over his brethren.”¹⁸⁶ He studied, obeyed and taught from the scriptures.

The scriptures are central to our discussions, teachings and focus. The words of the Covenant ask us to, “receive the scriptures approved by the Lord as a standard to govern you in your daily walk in life, to accept the obligations established by the Book of Mormon as a covenant, and to use the scriptures to correct yourselves and to guide your words, thoughts, and deeds.”¹⁸⁷ Teachings should be anchored in the scriptures. It should be rare when it becomes necessary to provide any new personal revelation. If there is any scriptural precedent that can be used to teach or reveal a point, then that should be used. Nephi taught and wrote, using the words of Isaiah to introduce his great revelation.¹⁸⁸ His brother, Jacob, also taught and wrote this way, using the words of Zenos as his own prophecy.

It takes experience to distinguish true revelation from false revelation. Every gift of the spirit can be the route a lying spirit uses to deceive us. Joseph Smith delivered a lengthy sermon on the presence of false spirits, and the necessity of detecting and dismissing them. I adopt his words:

¹⁸⁵ Id. 7:1.

¹⁸⁶ Id. 1:9.

¹⁸⁷ T&C 158:3.

¹⁸⁸ I've discussed this in some detail in the book *Nephi's Isaiah*, Mill Creek Press, 2006.

Recent occurrences that have transpired amongst us render it an imperative duty devolving upon me to say something in relation to the Spirits by which men are actuated. **It is evident from the Apostle's writings that many false spirits existed in their day, and had "gone forth into the world," and that it needed intelligence which God alone could impart to detect false spirits, and to prove what spirits were of God.** The world in general have been grossly ignorant in regard to this one thing, and why should they be otherwise, "For no man knows the things of God, but by the Spirit of God." The Egyptians were not able to discover the difference between the Miracles of Moses, and those of the magicians until they came to be tested together; and if Moses had not appeared in their midst they would unquestionably have thought that the miracles of the magicians were performed through the mighty power of God; for they were great miracles that were performed by them; a supernatural agency was developed; and great power manifested. The witch of Endor is no less singular a personage; clothed with a powerful agency she raised the Prophet Samuel from his grave, and he appeared before the astonished king and revealed unto him his future destiny. Who is to tell whether this woman is of God, and a righteous woman? or whether the power she possessed was of the devil, and her a witch as represented by the bible? it is easy for us to say now; but if we had lived in her day, which of us could have unravelled the mystery? It would have been equally as difficult for us to tell by what spirit the apostles prophesied, or by what power the apostles spoke, and worked miracles. Who could have told whether the power of Simon, the Sorcerer was of God, or of the devil? There always did in every age seem to be a lack of intelligence pertaining to this subject. **Spirits of all kinds have been manifested, in every age and almost amongst all people: if we go among the Pagans they have their Spirits, the Mahommedans, the Jews, the Christians, the Indians; all have their Spirits, all have a supernatural agency; and all contend that their Spirits are of God. Who shall solve the mystery?** "Try the Spirits" says John, but who is to do it? The learned, the eloquent, the philosopher, the sage, the divine, all are ignorant. The heathens will boast of their Gods, and of the great things that have been unfolded by their oracles. The Mussulman will boast of his Koran and of the divine communications that his progenitors have received, and

are receiving, The Jews have had numerous instances both ancient and modern among them of men who have professed to be inspired and sent to bring about great events, and the Christian world has not been slow in making up the number. "Try the Spirits;" but what by? are we to try them by the creeds of men? What preposterous folly, what sheer ignorances, what madness. Try the motions and actions of an eternal being, (for I contend that all Spirits are such,) by a thing that was conceived in ignorance, and brought forth in folly.— a cobweb of yesterday. Angels would hide their faces, and devils would be ashamed and insulted and would say, "Paul we know, and Jesus we know, but who are ye?" Let each man or society make a creed and try evil spirits by it and the devil would shake his sides, it is all that he would ask, all that he would desire. Yet many of them do this and hence **"many spirits are abroad in the world," One great evil is that men are ignorant of the nature of Spirits; their power, laws, government, intelligence &c, and imagine that when there is any thing like power, revelation, or vision manifested that it must be of God:—** hence the Methodists, Presbyterians, and others frequently possess a spirit that will cause them to lay down, and during its operation, animation is frequently entirely suspended; they consider it to be the power of God, and a glorious manifestation from God— a manifestation of what?— **is there any intelligence communicated? are the curtains of heaven withdrawn, or the purposes of God developed?** have they seen and conversed with an angel; or have the glories of futurity burst upon their view? No! but their body has been inanimate, the operation of their spirit suspended, and all the intelligence that can be obtained from them when they arise, is a shout of "glory", or "hallelujah", or some incoherent expression; but they have had "the power." The Shaker will whirl around on his heel impelled by a supernatural agency, or spirit, and think that he is governed by the Spirit of God: and the Jumper will jump, and enter into all kinds of extravagancies, a Primitive Methodist will shout under the influence of that spirit, until he will rend the heavens with his cries; while the Quakers (or Friends) moved as they think by the Spirit of God, will sit still and say nothing. Is God the author of all this? If not of all of it, which does he recognize? surely such a heterogeneous mass of confusion never can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Every one of these professes to be competent to try his neighbor's

spirit, but no one can try his own, and what is the reason? because **they have not a key to unlock, no rule wherewith to measure, and no criterion whereby they can test it**; could any one tell the length, breadth, or height of a building without a rule? test the quality of metals without a criterion, or point out the movements of the planetary system without a knowledge of astronomy? certainly not: and if such ignorance as this is manifested about a spirit of this kind who can describe an angel of light: **if Satan should appear as one in glory? Who can tell his color, his signs, his appearance, his glory? or what is the manner of his manifestation?** Who can detect the spirit of the French Prophets, with their revelations, and visions and power and manifestations? or who can point out the spirit of the Irvingites with their apostles, and prophets, and visions, and tongues and interpretations, &c, &c; or **who can drag into day light and develope the hidden mysteries of the false spirits that so frequently are made manifest among the Latter Day Saints?** We answer that **no man can do this without the Priesthood, and having a knowledge of the laws by which Spirits are governed;** for as “no man knows the things of God but by the Spirit of God,” so no man knows the spirit of the devil and his power and influence but by possessing intelligence which is more than human, and having unfolded through the medium of the Priesthood the mysterious operations of his devices; without knowing the angelic form, the sanctified look, and gesture, and the zeal that is frequently manifested by him for the glory of God:— together with the prophetic spirit, the gracious influence, the godly appearance, and the holy garb which is so characteristic of his proceedings, and his mysterious windings. A man must have the discerning of spirits, before he can drag into daylight this hellish influence and unfold it unto the world in all its soul destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors: for nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit, when they think they have the spirit of God. Thousands have felt the influence of its terrible power, and baneful effects; long pilgrimages have been undertaken, penances endured, and pain, misery and ruin have followed in their train; nations have been convulsed, kingdoms overthrown, provinces laid waste, and

blood, carnage and desolation are the habilaments in which it has been clothed.

The Turks, the Hindoos, the Jews, the Christians, the Indians, in fact all nations have been deceived, imposed upon and injured through the mischevious effects of false spirits. As we have noticed before, the great difficulty lays in the ignorance of the nature of spirits, of the laws by which they are governed, and the signs by which they may be known; if it requires the Spirit of God, to know the things of God, and the spirit of the devil can only be unmasked through that medium, then it follows as a natural consequence that **unless some person, or persons, have a communication or revelation from God, unfolding to them the operation of spirit, they must eternally remain ignorant of these principles:— for I contend that if one man cannot understand these things but by the Spirit of God, ten thousand men cannot; it is alike out of the reach of the wisdom of the learned, the tongue of the eloquent, and the power of the mighty. And we shall at last have to come to this conclusion, whatever we may think of revelation, that without it we can neither know, nor understand any thing of God, or the devil;** and however unwilling the world may be to acknowledge this principle, it is evident from the multifarious creeds and notions concerning this matter, that they understand nothing of this principle, and it is equally as plain that without a divine communication they must remain in ignorance. **The world always mistook false prophets for true ones, and those that were sent of God they considered to be false prophets; and hence they killed, stoned, punished and imprisoned the true prophets, and they had to hide themselves “in deserts, and dens, and caves of the earth”; and although the most honorable men of the earth, they banished them from their society as vagabonds; whilst they cherished, honored, and supported knaves, vagabonds, hypocrites, imposters and the basest of men.** A man must have the discerning of spirits as we before stated to understand these things, and how is he to obtain this gift if there are no gifts of the Spirit? And how can these gifts be obtained without revelation?

A power similar to this existed through the medium of the priesthood in different ages. Moses could detect the magicians power and shew that he was God’s servant, he

knew when he was upon the mountain (through revelation,) that Israel was engaged in idolatry; he could develop the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, detect witches and wizards in their proceedings, and point out the true prophets of the Lord. Joshua knew how to detect the man who had stolen the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment, Michaiah could point out the false spirit by which the four hundred prophets were governed; and if his advice had been taken, many lives would have been spared. 2 Chronicles xviii Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and many other prophets possessed this power. Our Savior, the Apostles, and even the members of the Church were endowed with this gift, for says Paul 1 Corinthians xiii, “to one is given the gift of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues, to another the working of miracles, to another prophesy, to another the discerning of spirits,” all these proceeded from the same spirit of God, and were the gifts of God. The Ephesian church were enabled by this principle “to try those that said they were apostles, and were not, and found them liars.” Revelations ii, 2. In tracing the thing to the foundation, and looking at it Philosophically we shall find a very material difference between the body and the Spirit:— the body is supposed to be organized matter, and the Spirit by many is thought to be immaterial, without substance. With this latter statement we should beg leave to differ— and state that Spirit is a substance; that it is material, but that it is more pure, elastic, and refined matter than the body;— that it existed before the body, can exist in the body, and will exist separate from the body, when the body will be mouldering in the dust; and will in the resurrection be again united with it. Without attempting to describe this mysterious connexion and the laws that govern the body and spirit of man; their relationship to each other, and the design of God in relation to the human body and spirit, I would just remark that the spirits of men are eternal, that they are governed by the same priesthood that Abraham, Melchisedek, and the Apostles were; that they are organized according to that priesthood which is everlasting, “without beginning of days or end of years”— that they all move in their respective spheres, and are governed by the law of God;— that when they appear upon the earth they are in a probationary State, and are preparing if righteous, for a future and a greater glory:— that the Spirits of good men cannot interfere with the wicked beyond their prescribed bounds for

“Michael the Arch angel dared not bring a railing accusation against the devil, but said, the Lord rebuke thee Satan.” It would seem also that wicked spirits have their bounds, limits, and laws by which they are governed or controlled, and know their future destiny¹⁸⁹

Spiritual gifts or sensitivities are just as likely to be influenced by a lying spirit as a truthful one. This means the head of the Holy Order is required to gain experience to be equipped to tell the difference between the two. Adam and Eve witnessed Satan deceive their sons and daughters.¹⁹⁰ The one they first expected to be their successor in the Order loving Satan more than God.¹⁹¹ Adam’s many experiences made him the one best to detect the Devil when he appeared as an angel of light to deceive Joseph Smith.¹⁹² By the time of the April 1, 1842 sermon, it is clear that Joseph also knew the difference between a true and a false spirit.

Moses had no difficulty determining Satan’s demand that he worship him as a “son of God” was deceitful. Moses declared, “I can judge between you and God.”¹⁹³

Other members of the Holy Order who have experience with and knowledge about the opposition, have been qualified to distinguish true from false spirits by that experience and knowledge. That is necessary. That is why they are called to preach and teach, and their instructions are trustworthy. The efforts of false spirits to mislead are ineffective because, like Moses, they can say, “For it is blackness unto me[.]”¹⁹⁴

Comprehending these things about the Holy Order allows us understand Alma’s (the father of Alma) account of his authority from God. Remember he had been one of the wicked priests of King Noah. He heard Abinadi’s warnings and was converted. He fled in order to save his life, and began preaching, converting and baptizing in the wilderness. Members of the Holy Order are commanded to not publish details of the Order. Therefore the testimony is discrete. Look carefully at what he tells us:

¹⁸⁹ *JSP Documents Vol. 9*, pp. 324-329, discourse Friday April 1, 1842 (spellings as in original) (emphasis added); see also *DHC*, Vol. 4, pp. 571-576.

¹⁹⁰ OC Gen. 3:4-5.

¹⁹¹ Id., ¶7.

¹⁹² T&C 151:15.

¹⁹³ OC Gen. 1:3.

¹⁹⁴ Id.

[A]fter he had poured out his whole soul to God, the voice of the Lord came to him, saying, Blessed art thou Alma, and blessed are they who were baptized in the waters of Mormon. Thou art blessed because of thy exceeding faith in the words alone of my servant Abinadi. And blessed are they because of their exceeding faith in the words alone which thou hast spoken unto them. ...

The Lord calling Alma “Blessed” is significant.¹⁹⁵ Alma is becoming something and acquiring status recognized by God. But the Lord is likewise blessing those who would accept Alma’s teaching.

... And blessed art thou because thou hast established a church among this people. And they shall be established, and they shall be my people. Yea, blessed is this people who are willing to bear my name, for in my name shall they be called, and they are mine. ... Thou art my servant, and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life. ...

For Alma, this is the Day of Judgment. He has obtained the Lord’s favorable judgment and with that the promise of “eternal life.”

... And thou shalt serve me, and go forth in my name, and shall gather together my sheep. And he that will hear my voice shall be my sheep; and him shall ye receive into the church, and him will I also receive. ...

Like Enoch, Moses, and others who are “gods, even the sons of God,” Alma is now a living doorway for salvation. The Lord trusts him with His (God’s) message. Therefore, the words taught by Alma are delivered as the messenger of God. Whoever receives Alma likewise receives Christ. Jesus taught: “He who receives you, receives me. And he who receives me, receives him who sent me. He that receives a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he that receives a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man’s reward.”¹⁹⁶

... For behold, this is my church. Whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance, and whosoever ye receive shall believe

¹⁹⁵ I’ve explained this in *Beloved Enos*.

¹⁹⁶ NC Matt. 5:8.

in my name, and him will I freely forgive. For it is I that taketh upon me the sins of the world, for it is I that hath created them. And it is I that granteth unto him that believeth unto the end a place at my right hand. For behold, in my name are they called; and if they know me, they shall come forth and shall have a place eternally at my right hand. And it shall come to pass that when the second trump shall sound, then shall they that never knew me come forth and shall stand before me. And then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, that I am their Redeemer, but they would not be redeemed. And then will I confess unto them that I never knew them, and they shall depart into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. Therefore I say unto you that he that will not hear my voice, the same shall ye not receive into my church, for him will I not receive at the last day.

Therefore I say unto you, go, and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed. And if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also. Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me. And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses. For verily I say unto you, he that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation. Now I say unto you, go, and whosoever will not repent of his sins, the same shall not be numbered among my people. And this shall be observed from this time forward.¹⁹⁷

These words of the Lord to Alma belong to Him because of the Holy Order. This is why the Lord originally established the Holy Order. Whenever it is present on earth, it is the means provided for mankind's salvation. When it is absent, then darkness prevails. The prophet Amos declared:

Behold, the days come, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land — not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east. They shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ NC Mosiah 11:20-22.

¹⁹⁸ OC Amos 1:27.

Because mankind refuses to allow God to gather them as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, this has been the condition of the world generation after generation. Mankind prefers apostasy. The Holy Order has not generally appealed to the children of Adam. Rejecting teachers from the Holy Order results in being cut off from God. When God appointed Nephi to be a “ruler and a teacher” over his brethren, it was accompanied by this condemnation: “And inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.”¹⁹⁹ Rejecting Nephi as a teacher was rejecting the Lord’s presence. God’s presence is made available to the faithful through His messengers.

That having been said, remember that you can have your calling and election made sure without having the Holy Order. You can be redeemed from the fall and return to God’s presence without it. You can receive the fullness of revelation from before the creation of the world through the end of this cycle of creation, and still not have the Holy Order. Nor do you need it to enter into a covenant with God. It serves God’s purposes when He allows it to be restored, and is governed strictly by Him. Because “this same Priesthood which was in the beginning shall be in the end of the world also (now this prophecy Adam spoke as he was moved upon by the holy ghost),”²⁰⁰ it needed to return and function again before the Lord’s return. Do not expect that to be a particularly spectacular thing, or for the world at large to take any notice. God’s prophecies are always fulfilled while devout scholars,²⁰¹ disbelieving skeptics, worldly fools and disinterested mankind remain ignorant of His ‘strange acts.’ There will be no announcement. The Holy Order will set about teaching and working to obey the Lord’s every command. Of course, some day what has been accomplished will be shouted from the rooftops after the Lord’s return. When men complain that it was done in secret, the Lord will remind them they are like the Jews who rejected Him: “We have piped for you and you have not danced. We have mourned for you and you have not wept.”²⁰² Proud people never accept those the Lord sends. They always find reasons to not be persuaded. Like Joseph said, when a real servant is sent, “they banished them from their society as vagabonds; whilst they cherished, honored, and supported knaves, vagabonds, hypocrites, imposters and the basest of men.”

¹⁹⁹ NC 1 Ne. 1:9.

²⁰⁰ OC Gen. 3:14.

²⁰¹ These are often the most vocal opponents of God’s work. They think they understand the prophecies, and refuse to recognize God’s capacity to fulfill His word in modest and unexpected ways.

²⁰² NC Luke 5:18.

Given the limited availability of the Holy Order, and the limited way it can be exercised, the question arises: “Why have it at all?” Certainly it is not designed to accomplish compulsion, control or dominion in any degree of unrighteousness. Nor can it be asserted as holding any privilege entitling the holder to any automatic and unquestioned respect. It is merely a God-given opportunity to learn, made available for anyone who is persuaded to the truths taught. But when it has been here, there are always competing voices teaching contrary things, and asserting claims that conflict with the Holy Order.

Moses gave a final, inspired blessing to the tribes of Israel. For the tribe of Joseph, Moses prophesied:

And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that crouches beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelled in the bush. Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of re’ems. With them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth. And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.²⁰³

This blessing, hundreds of years after the blessing given to Joseph by Father Jacob whose new name was Israel, echoes the earlier blessing:

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have severely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), even by the God of your father who shall help you, and by the Almighty who shall bless you with blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph

²⁰³ OC Deu. 9:27.

and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.²⁰⁴

Upon Joseph, who was separated from the other 11 patriarchs, blessings were conferred that foretold his posterity would locate in “the ancient mountains” and upon “the lasting hills.” How is that location to be identified? Will not authority from God be required to inform us? How will Joseph “push the people together to the ends of the earth?” Will not authority from God be required to accomplish it? How is a “crown” to be placed upon the head of Joseph if not by God?

We have a revelation from Joseph Smith that foretells some of what will be involved with the fulfillment of these ancient prophesied events:

And the Lord, even the Savior, shall stand in the midst of his people and shall reign over all flesh. And they who are in the north countries shall come in remembrance before the Lord, and their prophets shall hear his voice and shall no longer stay themselves, and they shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down at their presence, and a highway shall be cast up in the midst of the great deep. Their enemies shall become a prey unto them, and in the barren deserts there shall come forth pools of living water and the parched ground shall no longer be a thirsty land. And they shall bring forth their rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim, my servants, and the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall tremble at their presence, and there shall they fall down and be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim, and they shall be filled with songs of everlasting joy. Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the heads of the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows. And they also of the tribe of Judah, after their pain, shall be sanctified in holiness before the Lord, to dwell in his presence day and night, for ever and ever.²⁰⁵

How will the children of Ephraim be able to crown the Lord’s people with “glory”²⁰⁶ unless they have received from God the knowledge to do so? If

²⁰⁴ OC Gen. 12:29.

²⁰⁵ T&C 58:3.

²⁰⁶ The definition of God’s glory is: “The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one.” T&C 93:11.

blessings are to be administered “upon the heads²⁰⁷ of the tribes of Israel,” will it not require the Holy Order to accomplish it?

Ignorant people will not re-gather scattered Israel and confer glory upon the “heads of the tribes.” A great deal of missing knowledge is necessary, or the promises of God will not be fulfilled. The Family of God will have an order.²⁰⁸

Remember the greatest fulfillment of prophecy in the past happened in relative obscurity, unnoticed by the world, and with very few directly involved. When the prophesied Messiah came to Israel, His birth was known to only a handful of people. When His ministry began, most who heard Him teach rejected Him. Ultimately, He was killed rather than welcomed by His people. Why should anything different be expected before His return in glory? Shouldn't we expect fulfilling the prophecies at the end to also seem uneventful?²⁰⁹ If His people did not recognize Him, why would they recognize someone commissioned as His servant²¹⁰ who is far less than Him?

The purpose of the Holy Order is to serve God. It is not to get noticed, or acquire fame or fortune. It serves only God's purposes. The return is related to the last-days' work. For Zion to put on her strength, it will require the Holy Order, or as Joseph Smith explained about Zion putting on strength:

[Isaiah] had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of Priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel. And to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the Priesthood, which she, Zion, has a

²⁰⁷ It is blessings “upon the heads [meaning adopted fathers] of the tribes” specifically because of the need to adopt and integrate them into the Holy Order, to provide each tribe with a living “Father.”

²⁰⁸ See, e.g., Orson Hyde, *A Diagram of the Kingdom of God*, Millennial Star 9 [15 January 1847]: 23-24), which was based on his understanding of how the Family would be organized for eternity.

²⁰⁹ The repeated statement that His return will be as a “thief in the night” will happen because the preliminary events take place unnoticed. See, e.g., NC Luke 8:26; 1 Thes. 1:13; 2 Peter 1:12; T&C 108:21 177:4; among others.

²¹⁰ The only criteria describing the messenger states: “Question: What is the Rod spoken of in the 1st verse of the 11th chapter [Isa. 5:4] that should come of the stem of Jesse?

Answer: Behold, thus says the Lord: It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim, or of the House of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power.

Question: What is the Root of Jesse spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter [Isa. 5:4]?

Answer: Behold, thus says the Lord: It is a descendant of Jesse as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the Priesthood and the keys of the Kingdom, for an ensign and for the gathering of my people in the last day.” T&C 129:2-3. Nothing about this description would make the person notable or noticeable. These are merely genealogical criteria, likely held by tens of thousands of people at any given time in the last ten generations.

right to by lineage; also to return to that Power which she had lost.²¹¹

The only “authority of the Priesthood” that would be adequate to “bring again Zion” is that same authority held in the cities of Enoch and Melchizedek. It would be contrary to the Lord’s consistent pattern for there to be a final City of Zion without the Holy Order that established these prior cities of peace.

Remember the words of the covenant our Lord gave to us in 2017:

All you who have turned from your wicked ways and repented of your evil doings, of lying and deceiving, and of all whoredoms, and of secret abominations, idolatries, murders, priestcrafts, envying, and strife, and from all wickedness and abominations, and have come unto me, and been baptized in my name, and have received a remission of your sins, and received the holy ghost, are now numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.²¹²

Everyone who entered into the covenant and abides by its terms has “now been numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.” Meaning that when the Lord returns He will acknowledge you as His and spare you from condemnation as He did the people in Bountiful.²¹³ That is a great gift from the Lord to us.

Zion cannot be imposed. There can be no hierarchy, no one greater and no one lesser. Even a teacher assigned by the Lord to teach others cannot be esteemed above another. We have a description in the Book of Mormon that gives us a correct pattern:

And when their priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God, they all returned again diligently unto their labors, and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers; for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner. And thus they were all equal; and they did all labor, every man according to his strength. And they did impart of

²¹¹ T&C 129:4.

²¹² T&C 158:10.

²¹³ NC 3 Ne. 4:10.

their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted. And they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely. And thus they did establish the affairs of the church; and thus they began to have continual peace again[.]²¹⁴

You can respect, even honor, the teaching. However, the teacher is no better than the learner, otherwise there is no equality. When there is a hierarchy that maintains a right to control others, it perverts the meaning of “keys” to get gain. Such churches always descend into the direful condition prophesied by Mormon: “[T]he power of God shall be denied, and churches become defiled and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts, yea, even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers, in the pride of their hearts, even to the envying of them who belong to their churches.”²¹⁵ It cannot be like that for Zion to come.

There is still a great gulf separating us from the promised New Jerusalem. There is a need for order, and order should be the result of following correct principles. If we are taught correct principles, then we should be able to govern ourselves.²¹⁶ None of us is better than any other. Some of us know a great deal more than others about framing, farming, masonry, engine repair, plumbing, electrical wiring, and other skills. Every one of those will be needed in a functioning community. When the Lord provides His people a teacher, then that teacher is no different or better than the framer. All of us should willingly contribute, and no one should be prideful.

The Lord Jesus Christ does indeed intend to accomplish a “strange act” that eludes the wisdom of the wise or the understanding of the prudent.²¹⁷ But then again, that could be said of almost every significant achievement of the Lord from the beginning.

The final mention of the Holy Order in the Book of Mormon is this: “Behold, it was by faith that they of old were called after the Holy Order of God.”²¹⁸ That is the right point to end with and leave for you to ponder.

²¹⁴ NC Alma 1:5.

²¹⁵ NC Mormon 4:4.

²¹⁶ As Joseph Smith explained how he managed his people: “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.” John Taylor, *The Organization of the Church*, Millennial Star, Nov. 15, 1851, p. 339.

²¹⁷ See OC Isa. 9:5.

²¹⁸ NC Ether 5:2.

-oo0-The End-0oo-
