

# 40 Years in Mormonism

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**Denver C. Snuffer, Jr**

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The series of lectures that began in Boise and end[ed] in Phoenix are one talk.... Each one of the talks builds on earlier material. If you are interested in understanding, then it would be beneficial to rehear or reread the previous ones. The later talks will connect things that were raised in the earlier ones. It is not possible to state everything at once. Pieces must be put together systematically. (Denver Snuffer, "One Talk")

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## Be of Good Cheer, Be of Good Courage

Denver Snuffer 9-10-13

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It was 40 years ago today, about at this moment, when I was baptized in the North Atlantic at Sea Point Beach in Kittery, Maine. The fellow who presided at the service was named Jim Mortensen. He had just moved into the ward, immediately replaced one of the counselors in the Bishopric, but still no one knew who Jim Mortensen was as yet. There he was presiding over my baptism on the beach. And he has become infamous among some of us who were there for his statement: "Let's move it up the beach, Elders."

We had another baptism 18 days later and he didn't like that there were people in the area, somehow enjoying that awfully cold water. Again he relocated the service: "Let's move it up the beach, Elders." He was an old Marine; he used to fly combat missions off of a flat top carrier in Vietnam. He had all the demeanor of a flat top carrier pilot.

His wife was Monty. Her maiden name was Bunker. She was from the Nevada Bunkers. Bishop Bunker got into a whole lot of trouble because he did not buy the "Adam God" doctrine (now "theory" because of him). And Bishop Bunker had a trial for excommunication because of heresy. Well Bishop Bunker's court couldn't quite reach a conclusion on what to do because he defended his beliefs so well from the scriptures. And as a consequence of that, it was tabled without a decision.

Wilford Woodruff came down and they had another convening of the church court and in the second court presided over by President Woodruff ultimately they decided to punt rather than to do anything. And the doctrinal exposition that Bishop Bunker made has since become the doctrine of the church, although at the time it was dangerous heresy for the man to preach it.

Monty was, at the time and is still today, one of the loveliest women I have ever met. She texted me a little earlier today on my way here and said: "You beware of pride." Their son, Jimmy, texted me today too.

You know, shortly after that ceremony, I was ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood by George Hoger. George was the Elders Quorum President. Since I was not in a position to know what one ought to do to be ordained, and George being the primary guy leading the priesthood group I attended, I asked him to ordain me. So I have a priesthood line of authority that reckons through George.

George's wife was Judy. Judy was a nun who converted to Mormonism while she was living in a Catholic convent. She asked Mother Superior for permission to be baptized. And of course consent was given, but she was told you got have new premises, because you can't reside here.

Judy grew up Catholic, she was devout, became a nun, and she was for goodness sake "Christ's bride." And therefore, when George proposed to her, and they were going to actually have marital relations she tells the most hilarious stories about her pre-marital schooling from a doctor, when she asked about what was to be expected. I'll leave that aside.

Eighteen days after my baptism, I baptized a fellow. We remain good friends still. Eighteen days from now we will give the second of these talks, commemorating the gratitude that I hold for the doctrines that I have been taught. I mention these events and people's names because converting to the church is a lifelong experience. Friendships are established which endure. They are founded in eternal expectations.

You know, no one should be allowed to work in the Missionary Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who isn't a convert. Better still, an adult convert to the Church. Because no one joins the church because of some silly program. You only join because of doctrine. And when you choke away the doctrine, there's no reason to stay.

And so in gratitude for the principles which brought me aboard the restoration we are going to spend this next year looking at the doctrines which invite belief. Doctrine which doesn't abuse, control, or compel, but invites and entices, that is delicious, that makes you hunger for more. The principles of the gospel that not only edify but enlighten and enliven. The kinds of things which despite everything else that separates you from one another, you nonetheless can come together in love and appreciation. That's the gospel. That's the restoration.

I know of no more cheerful being in the universe than Christ. When he says: "Be of good cheer," we ought to all accept that as our own mantra. There is nothing that any of us will ever go through that he hasn't gone through, with a considerable greater degree of difficulty. He lived with a higher 'specific gravity' than any of us have ever had to fight against. And he won for each of us a prize that is potentially eternal. It will be eternal one, way or the other. But if you take full measure of what he offers it will be delightfully eternal.

Cowardice is largely predicated upon fear. Don't be cowardly. Don't be fearful. Fear is the opposite of faith. For goodness sake, you're already in the battle! You're already going to be overtaken. The fact of the matter is no one gets out of here alive. Live this life nobly, fearlessly. When you take the wounds that come your way make sure that they come to your front! Don't let them shoot you in the back. Go about your life boldly, nobly, valiantly. Because it is only through valiance in the testimony of Jesus Christ that you can hope to secure anything. Not valiance in your fidelity to anything other than Jesus Christ. The fact of the matter is that faith must be based in Him, and in Him alone. We'll get to that in Idaho Falls.

Tonight I want to introduce some ideas that are essential to salvation coming through the prophet Joseph Smith, which we really need to become reacquainted with.

But first a deviation. And I have to say, I'm deviating because I like the quote. I like the quote because of the substance of what is being said. I don't like object of the adoration so I'm not heaping praise upon the fellow who is the object of this statement. But I like the quote. It's good wording, and I like it. Andrew St. Victor made the statement in 1170. He was talking about St. Jerome, who is largely responsible for the compilation of the Latin Vulgate Bible. The Bible is something which the Book Mormon has absolutely nothing good thing to say about. It leads you into darkness. It takes away the covenants. It's part of making you blind. It's a big problem. Despite that, let us take this phrase and let us assume this phrase is applicable to someone who is worthy of it. In this case Joseph.

"That learned man knew...how obscure truth is, how deep it lies buried,  
how far from mortal sight it is plunged into the depths, how it will admit only a few,  
by how much work it is reached,  
how practically no one ever succeeds, how it is dug out with difficulty,  
and then only bit by bit."

Joseph said: "Knowledge saves a man. And in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 357, hereafter "TPJS.") He also said in another talk: "When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step-by-step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel---you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It's not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave." (TPJS, p. 348)

Now if you go back and reread that quote, and you comprehend that it is possible to pass through the veil before you leave here, then the words: "it will be a great while after you pass through the veil before you will have learned them. It's not all to be comprehended in this world" begins to take on new meaning. You begin to say, Ah, I think I understand why after 40 years of reflection Nephi commented about how it was his constant meditation to think upon the things upon which he had seen and heard. (See 2 Ne. 4:15-16) The knowledge obtained from heaven is dynamic. It unfolds with deeper meaning as you ponder upon it.

In another place Joseph said: "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God." (TPJS, p. 217)

We equate in large measure, repentance, with whatever it is you're doing with your genitals. Joseph equates redemption and repentance with whatever it is you're doing with your heart and with your mind. The problem we must overcome to obtain salvation is our profound ignorance. And what the gospel offers defies ignorance, subdues it, challenges it, destroys it, and leaves it in the dark. So let's try and search into, and obtain some illumination.

First I want to read a passage from Job and misapply it, if you will. I want you to imagine that what I am reading is not merely a description of a mortal horse. What I am reading is a description of those horses which pull the chariot upon which Elijah ascended to heaven. This is the horse *you* need to ride in your quest for heaven. This is the way *you* to are to mount up:

**Job 39:19-25**

Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils *is* terrible.  
 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in *his* strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.  
 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.  
 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that *it is* the sound of the trumpet.  
 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

As the battle engages ride the horse. Not away, but toward the sound.

1838 was a terrible year. It followed a terrible year. Late 1837 the church in Kirtland was in turmoil. Several hundred saints questioned Joseph Smith's divine calling and withdrew from the church. In July 1837 the Kirtland Safety Society was forced to close its doors. There were a number of people who tried to take over leadership of the Church, to get Joseph voted out. They wanted to force the First Presidency from office and then oust them from Kirtland entirely. Among the people who had dissented was Warren Parrish, the one-time scribe and secretary to Joseph Smith. Also three of the apostles, John F Boynton, Luke and Wyman Johnson departed the faith. Seventies, Hasten Aldridge, Leonard Ridge, Sylvester, Smith, John Gould, John Grayson, and even Martin Harris, one of the witnesses of the Book Mormon.

In January 1838 Joseph Smith got a revelation that said, and I'm reading from it, "Thus saith the Lord Let the presidency of my Church take their families as soon as practical, and the door is open for them and move on to the west as fast as the way is made plain before their faces and let their hearts be comforted for I will be with them." On the night of the day on which that revelation came (January 12, 1838), Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon fled Kirtland. Fled at night. They were chased by people for 200 miles trying to kill Joseph. This is in January 1838, the beginning of this terrible year.

Now if we back up, and you can look it up in Doctrine and Covenants Section 47:1, we run into something that is of interest to our topic. This is a revelation given on March 8, 1831.

**D&C 47:1**

BEHOLD, it is expedient in me that my servant John

[That's John Whitmer, brother of David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses of the Book Mormon.]

My servant John should write and keep a regular history, and assist you, my servant Joseph, in transcribing all things which shall be given you, until he is called to further duties.

And so beginning on March 8 of 1831, and going on thereafter, the history of the Church was maintained by John Whitmer, the church historian. John would have kept the history when the Saints had been expelled from Jackson County in 1833. And 1834, Zion's camp. In 1837 the Kirtland Safety Society collapsed. The rebellion, the loss of Kirtland, the night time flight and the departure to Missouri. John Witmer was the church's historian throughout these events.

Beginning early in 1838, there were rumors of immoral conduct that were levied against Joseph Smith. There was a Church court by April 12, 1838. The Far West High Council brought nine charges against Oliver Cowdrey, the Assistant President to the Church. One of the charges was:

"For seeking to destroy the character of President Joseph Smith Junior by falsely insinuating that he was guilty of adultery etc."

The court in that proceeding ultimately excommunicated Oliver Cowdrey. David Whitmer left the church and likewise was excommunicated. John Whitmer, the church historian was excommunicated. Hiram Page, W.W. Phelps, all these were gone in 1838.

Sidney Rigdon in June 1838 delivered the "Salt Sermon" where he talked about how dissenters were worthy of being trodden, like salt that lost its savor, under the feet of the Saints. That ignited the anti-Mormons. It caused some of the disaffected people to go over and to encourage the further rebellion and hostility toward the church.

There were affidavits that year from Thomas Marsh, who was the President of the Quorum of the 12, testifying against Joseph and the Church. Orson Hyde also signed an affidavit condemning Joseph Smith. There was Mormon war in 1838. The battle of Crooked River was fought in October 24, 1838. The extermination order was issued on October 27, 1838. Hauns Mill massacre occur on October 30 and Joseph Smith surrendered at Far West, while it was under siege. On November 1 he was sentenced to death "at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning in a public square at Far West."

Well, this is the year in which Joseph Smith, because there was no history left once John Whitmer left, set about to compose a replacement history. This is the year and these are the circumstances in which the Joseph Smith History in the Pearl of Great Price got composed. Joseph Smith, against all of the odds, against all of the opposition, against all the treachery, against all the betrayal by his brethren who ought to know better, against all of those who should have known the man's heart and instead turned on him, composed what is as an act of faith and kindness a testimony that seeks to reclaim those who misapprehend the work of God. He put it plainly. It was not his (Joseph's) work. It was God's.

You can say that Joseph Smith wrote various versions of the First Vision and what we have in 1838 version is an innovation, a new invention. But the fact of the matter is that Nephi did not compose what he composed, until about 40 years after the event. Because it was time and distance and reflection that gave him the ability to put into words the truth of what it was he had experienced.

In the terrible circumstances of 1838, when Joseph Smith set about to compose his testimony of his history, this statement was itself an audacious, faith filled act of revelation, to defend what had gone on and in turn to explain what had gone on.

As a document, we don't have Joseph Smith's 1838 history anymore. It has been lost and never recovered. When you look at the history in the *Joseph Smith Papers* what you find is an 1839 copy that was prepared by Mulholland. And it is the Mulholland version that appears in the Joseph Smith History in the Pearl of Great Price. But we reckon it is a copy of what Joseph wrote in 1838 because of the internal dating of the document. He says: "...being now [1838] the eighth year since the organization of the said Church." That's verse 2 of the Joseph Smith History. In brackets they've inserted the year 1838. That was the year in which Joseph wrote his version and therefore it is apparent that Mulholland copied Joseph's writing from the previous year.

When you start out with the Joseph Smith History and read the words:

### **Joseph Smith History 1:1**

OWING to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons, in relation to the rise and progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

Recognize that what he's talking about are the statements that are made by people of his own faith, about him. These reports arise from Apostles, from Seventies, from the Three witnesses. This is Joseph Smith referring to the problems that are circulating in 1838 as a result of members of the Quorum of the Twelve aligned against him and other close associates and pretended friends who are aligned against him. And as prophets often do they have to way to put it back into context and into clarity with inspired words. In verse 2 he says: "In this history I shall present the various events in relation to this Church, in truth and righteousness, as they have transpired, or as they at present exist, being now [1838] the eighth year since the organization of the said Church."

Therefore as he begins to defend the Church, he starts with what is essential about the Church: "was born in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five, on the twenty-third day of December, ..." Because if you want to know the truth about the *Church*, you must know the truth about its founding prophet. To the extent that there is anything that is desirable that exists within it, it exists as a consequence of the ministry of this prophet. Therefore if you want to find the truth, you have to look at Joseph.

Born on the 23rd day of December, the day after the winter solstice. The day in which the sunlight won it's triumph over the darkness. The first day in which the hours of light and the hours of darkness begin to switch and light begins to prevail. A moment

that is reckoned anciently as one of the four corners of the earth. Joseph's coming into the world at that moment was no accident. It was cosmic, and God alone controlled the moment of his birth.

In verse 5 he starts talking about how there is "no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying 'Lo, here!' and others, Lo, there!' Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, some for the Baptists." Here we have the religious divides, because religion always divides. It divided in 1820, and again in 1838, and it still does in 2013-- and it ought not.

Joseph in verse 6 commends to us something. One of the litmus tests he's suggesting that ought to be applied, perhaps those who are in a state of rebellion, those who were in a state of rejection, those who are fighting against the Word of the Lord that comes through him, perhaps they will take a step back and look at what Joseph has to say. Because: "...it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued— priest contending against priest, and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions."

You know, at the time Joseph inserts clause, "if they ever had any," you can't help but think that he was lamenting the potential false feelings that it been demonstrated by of those of his own faith who had pretended to have affection for him. How bitter it must be for those whose friendship turns out in the end to be merely feigned. Well, verse 8 reads: "...so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong."

See that's the way it is. In verse 10 we see: "In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions,..." There's always this war of words and tumult of opinions. And so Joseph is confused. You will have a 'war of words and tumult of opinions' whenever there is a prophet sent by God to speak His Word. How do you resolve this? Verse 11: "While I was laboring..." There is a key. "While I was laboring." It is always labor.

Folks, in general, have your skulls so junked up with the crap of the Internet that you don't even have the capacity to labor (the way it needs to be labored) in order to solve the questions that need to be solved. It is labor for anyone seeking to know God. It is labor over the Scriptures. It is labor always under the extreme difficulties caused by these parties of religionists who will speak in opposition to one another always contending, always claiming "Lo, there" when there is nothing "there" to offer. He was one day reading: "...the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him*"...

Let him (let you) ask of God. God gives to all men liberally. And upbraideth not. And it shall be given him. I can ask God, God will give to me, God will give to me liberally. God will not tell me there are lines I you must not cross and there are things about which I must not inquire. He will not respond that there are things my heart is not yet prepared to receive, or that I don't have standing. He gives liberally. He can let you know what you need to know from your study and inquiry into the truth. And no man can stop that! Because this is a matter only between you and God. It's always been a matter between you and God. There is no friar with a brown frock that you need to bend the knee to in order to please God. If Joseph had believed in subjecting himself to a friar with a brown frock he would never have achieved the revolution that he achieved.

Well, when you're laboring as verse 11 suggests. And when you hit the right verse, as verse 11 recites, then verse 12 confirms how you get answers to these kind of inquires. "Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force..." Turn back to Doctrine and Covenants 76:18. This is the vision of the degrees of glory telling us of the Celestial, Terrestrial and Telestial post-mortal conditions. Joseph and Sidney Rigdon were reading in John. And in Section 76 verses 16 and 17, it gives you the verses they were reading in John. Look at the description in verse 18: "Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given unto us of the Spirit."

The Spirit cannot lean upon you and cannot focus your mind upon the revelation that you are entitled to receive unless you use the Scriptures as they were intended to be used: as a Urim and Thummim. They must become a basis from which you draw out the truths of God. And the best material in scripture is, of course, the Book of Mormon. This is why the Book of Mormon is the primary scripture I've used in all my writings.

You can look at D&C section 138 and you find that Joseph F. Smith sat in his room pondering over the Scriptures. He's near death at the time; it's about eight weeks before the death of Joseph F. Smith. The Church had a lot of challenges going on at that time. Fortuitously for us the man who sat at home infirm and worried about his impending death happened to happily be the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He got an answer (not to any inquiry about leading the Church and not



about anything having to do with his position, or with budgets, or with anything else that manages an organization) to his personal concerns, his deepest apprehensions, his impending death. He would die about eight weeks after this. The Scriptures opened like a Urim and Thummim to his view and we get the vision of the redemption of the dead, which we have now canonized. Labor over the scriptures and revelation go hand in hand. The restoration began as a consequence of laboring over the scriptures. It will continue when you finally stop what you're doing and return to study of them.

Back to the Joseph Smith History verse 12: "It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again,..." Now that's an interesting statement. Because it doesn't appear that this "labor" was a one-off event. It occurred over and over as he sought more understanding, searching deeper and deeper into trying to understand what he ought to do and how he ought to accomplish it. He thought about it "again and again knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did..." You should be asking God so that you can understand Scripture. You should not be trusting the expositions of anyone, myself included. These Scriptures have a message for you. God has a message for you. God would like to talk to *you*. Not through me or any other man. God would like to talk with *you*. To be saved by knowledge the things you need to know are uniquely situated. The things you have the right to get from God are uniquely situated. Therefore unless you ask of Him, you will never recover the unique message intended for you.

I got an answer from God. That's why 40 years ago today, I got baptized. Elder Brian Black baptized me. During the baptismal service it was approaching sundown, the moon had emerged overhead and the first stars began to shine. Brian Black commented in the talk given by him before laying on hands that all the signs of heaven, the Sun, the moon and the stars, had been visible during my baptismal ceremony. I have felt the presence of God with me from that moment through today. Just this morning I checked into my office before coming here. When I arrived at my office there was a dove on the lawn to meet me. And she stayed there as I went by. Now it's a small thing. But if you're acquainted with the Scriptures, you understand what such a symbol can mean, and to me did mean this morning.

Your lives should be filled with wonder. Be not faithless, but be believing. And be of good cheer. He knows you better than you know yourself.

I was bellyaching about an idiot friend in prayer a while ago. During this particular session in which I asked the Lord to do something to fix the obvious defects of the fellow, the answer I got redirected the subject from my idiot friend to myself. The Lord pointed out the reason I could so readily recognize my friend's shortcoming was because I had the same irritating defect. I could detect it in him but not in myself. It was an interesting reply from the Lord.

Well, my Stake President asked me a few weeks ago about whether I was praying at the time I had one of the encounters he and I were discussing, and I said, 'It's not a fair question. I'll wake up in the morning and I start to pray. Throughout the day, I will take care of a thousand things. And whenever I am free, my mind will revert back to the prayer, and we'll continue the dialogue. And it goes on all day. There's not a moment in my life in which I am not being prayerful. And so the answer to his question is, I suppose, yes I was praying. Because there's hardly a moment when I'm idle, when I am not praying.' Prayer, scripture study, laboring to know God, all go together.

Well, God intends to speak to each of us about us, and about what matters to us, and most importantly about what matters to you. He, unlike us, is not bounded by the linear existence we have. All things past, present, and future are continually before the Lord. (D&C 130:7)

As an aside, if you want an interesting study, take a look at what Lord does in 3 Nephi. He has this agenda that He was assigned by the Father. Christ discharges the agenda. As you read the chapters of the Lord's ministry set out in 3 Nephi it is structured, orderly, and builds throughout. Then when He announces, "Now I have finished with what the Father has told me to deliver to you" and He begins to talk, what unfolds, is non-chronological. It's topical, but it's past, present, and future. His thoughts are not like our thoughts, they're nonlinear. And sometimes it's not easy to receive what comes from Him. It requires reflection and contemplation to parse His greatest revelations. You should understand that Nephi's forty year effort at reflecting on what he had seen and heard is not merely optional, but it is mandatory. God's revelations have depth and layers beyond the human mind because they originate from the Highest Source.

Returning to our subject tonight, in verse 13 we read: "At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God." So it is for all of us. You want to know the truth of the proposition? You ask God, and don't be fearful. If you ask, He'll answer. But you better be prepared for the answer. Because the battle that is already upon us, is going to require valiance. Cowardly, effeminate, hen-like behavior, can never, ever obtain the promises of God. Christ asked, "What went ye forth to see? A reed shaken in the wind?" Is that what you want?

Because that isn't who the Lord sends. Oaks,, not reeds, respond to His call. I don't think John the Baptist cried on demand. And Zion isn't a bank.

Continuing in verses 14-15: "So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally. After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction."

We have Orson Hyde's account of this thick darkness and I want to read it to you. This is Orson Hyde writing about Joseph's experience: "He therefore, retired to a secret place in a grove but a short distance from his father's house, and knelt down and began to call upon the Lord. At first he was severely tempted by the powers of darkness which endeavored to overcome him. The adversary benighted his mind with doubts, and brought to his soul all kinds of improper pictures and tried to hinder him in his efforts, and the accomplishment of his goal. However the overflowing mercy of God came to buoy him up, and gave new impulse and momentum to his dwindling strength." If salvation consists in obtaining knowledge, and it does, then you can't afford to clutter your mind with the kinds of things which can readily summon up improper images, improper thoughts, improper ambitions. In fact, it doesn't matter what you want. There's only one thing that matters. And that is the Lord's will for you, and with you. And that will is always the same: to bring about your happiness, ultimately, to bring about your joy. He tells you that his burden is light (Matt. 11: 30) because it does not matter how it may have seemed in the dire circumstances of 1838 in the life of Joseph Smith, *this* statement of faith by Joseph, *this* testimony of truth was worth the price that Joseph was called upon to pay in order to obtain it.

The things of God are infinitely preferable to anything that can be offered to you here in this world. You may indeed be able to buy anything in this world for money. But don't let that ever be the case with your heart or with your soul. Zion will not have an economy, because they have all things in common.

So Joseph, in verse 16 tells you that it is some marvelous power from the unseen world. Let me take you back to this statement: "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power..." (TPJS p. 217) Well, apply that quote in the context of what Joseph is experiencing there. And realize this is not something you will only experience after you depart this world. It, in fact, does happen here. Being blinded here is part of being captured by the captivity of the adversary of your soul. Those who have not paid the price in laboring will be deceived even while they, quoting authorities and scripture, march militantly to hell proclaiming against God's messengers.

Awake and arise! Shake off the scales that blind you. Scales which can both be likened to dark contact lenses keeping light from entering your eyes, on the one hand; but also like the scales used to weigh and judge a matter wrongly, on the other hand. You have to judge a matter aright. If the judgment that you judge is not just, then the scales of your eyes are darkness indeed. Take care, therefore, as you judge a matter so you don't wind up saying that which is of God is really of the devil.

Joseph called upon God to escape this being from the unseen world and he saw, as he tells it in verses 16 and 17: "...a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages..." We will get into this more in Idaho Falls. He saw two "personages." Note the word he uses. Joseph knows what he's talking about. He was in the presence of these Beings. He will later describe them as a doctrinal exposition which the Church accepted as doctrine. And which was for a season in your Scriptures. That's why you need to bring your *Lectures on Faith* to Idaho Falls. Continuing, "One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*"

I've mentioned this on a number of occasions and I want to mention it again here. When God calls a person by name, it's not your full legal name, such as Joseph Smith Junior. I don't know what Joseph was called at that moment in his life by his closest friends. I don't know if it was "Joey." I don't know if it was "Junior." I don't know what the name was that he went by. Whatever his most intimate companion called him that was what the Lord called him. If his most intimate friend would call him "Joey" then it was "Joey." God doesn't call you by whatever your driver's license says.

So he called him by name. Do you know how comforting it is to have God call you by a familiar name? Instead of recoiling in horror He is drawing you in. Instead of stiff-arming you like, as the Wizard did in *Os*: "I am the Great and Powerful," God wants you comfortable in His presence. So much so, that when you enter into His presence, it is a matter of course, that God invariably forgives your sins. Isaiah in the temple saw God high and lifted up. And his first reaction was, "Woe is me! I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell among a people of unclean lips." It required one of the Seraphim, one of the "fiery ones," to improvise an ordinance in which he took a coal off the altar with tongs to touché Isaiah's lips to purify them. Afterward the Lord inquires, "Who shall I send?" To which the now purified Isaiah responds: "Here am I, send me." (See Isa. 6: 1-7) It was the same man who had been cowering and proclaiming "Woe is me" who was then proclaiming, "Here am I, send me." What accounts for the difference? It is found in the compassion, the forgiveness, the integrity of the Lord. "I know thou art a God of truth and canst not lie." (Ether 3:12) When He testifies to you that your sins are forgiven, only a fool will thereafter charge you with sin. But the world is stocked with fools.

Well, here now we have in Joseph's history this peculiar scene, where a young lad is put at ease by the Almighty, calling him by an intimate name putting him in the position where he's been drawn into intimacy with the Almighty Himself. God then pauses. He lets the lad collect himself. The Father and the Son are not quick to speak. In that respect, they remind me a lot of Enoch, "slow of speech." (Moses 6:31) They do not interrupt. Laws control these things. You must inquire to unlock the law and permit the answer. Until you inquire, They will wait. And so They waited for the young Joseph Smith to compose himself and inquire.

Joseph's account continues in verse 18: "My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light..." We don't know how long this took. We don't know how long it took for the lad to get himself composed. To God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, it didn't matter. God is in no hurry. And he's in no hurry to fix you. He will wait on whatever it is you need to be allowed to dispose of for you to come along. And he will wait. At length Joseph recomposed himself and posed the question: "Which should I join?" Verse 19 retells: "I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." This response is a mixture of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Paul all woven together. Joseph's account uses words of Scripture to compose a brief commentary sweeping from the Old Testament to the New Testament in the language of prophets we all recognize, condemning the entirety of the Christian world.

Remember Joseph composed this in 1838. He put into words of Scripture the concepts that flowed into his mind from the Lord eighteen years earlier. Sometimes the Lord leaves it to you to put words to it. Sometimes the Lord gives you the words. In section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the words were given. I don't know which verse 19 is, whether these are the exact words given Joseph or if this was instead a concept Joseph was left the challenge to put into words. Either way it is light, it is truth, and it is true because it reflects the intention of God in the communication given to Joseph Smith.

What do you suppose it means, "having a form of godliness but denying the power?" How do you deny the power of godliness? How do you obtain the power of godliness? What does it mean to have possession of the power of godliness?

Let's go back to that section 76 again because it has some very nice material in it. I want to go to the very end. We are going to run into the same notion in the First Vision and in section 76. Remember section 76 is a transcript given to Joseph which was dictated, transcribed, read back, approved and then the dictation continued until we reach the end. Look beginning at verse 113: "This is the end of the vision which 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 showed unto us, which surpass 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 man 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 Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him; To whom he grants this 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." Notice when this is to occur: "while in the flesh."

Is this related to not denying the power of godliness? To have the ability to "bear his presence in the world of glory." As we get father along in our discussion about the topic of Zion, it becomes critical that you be able to bear His presence while you are in the flesh. For those unable to bear His presence will be destroyed at His coming. Therefore, whatever this power of godliness is, I think we all must obtain it if we hope to stand in Zion.

Continuing in Joseph Smith History verse 20: "He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time." That is always the case. Those the Lord ministers to invariably know more than they say. There are reasons for that. There are laws involved in that. And section 76 suggests man is not even capable of making some things known. It's really hard to convey into this linear world things that don't relate well here.

Turn back to Mormon, in the Book of Mormon, beginning at Mormon 9:2. These words really sound ominous. This was written by Mormon late in his life. He has lived what we would rate as an NC-17 life if it were depicted in film. Between the rape, followed by the cannibalism of those captured women, the scenes of murder, mayhem, and torture continually before his eyes, his life was distressing. Remember this is the man who abridged the Book Mormon. That's the life that he was subjected to. So look at these words beginning at verse 2: "Behold, will ye believe in the day of your visitation—behold, when the Lord shall come, yea, even that great day when the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, yea, in that great day when ye shall be brought to stand before the Lamb of God—then will ye say that there is no God? Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell. For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you."

Now I want you to read those verses carefully and ask yourself: Exactly what is it, that God is doing? You will discover the only thing that God is doing is being. He simply exists. This terrible ordeal being described is you. God is. He is simply revealing Himself to you. And this is your reaction. And why is this *your* reaction? Because you don't have the power of godliness. Why don't you have that? Because you need to repent. And what is it that you must repent of? The absence of knowledge about God. You don't know enough yet to be saved. The plan of salvation is the plan of education, the plan of knowledge about God and the principles of godliness. And the basis upon which, all of you, can live together, and be of one heart and one mind. It doesn't matter that some of you have strange political beliefs. It doesn't matter that some of you would like to see every gun in the universe recalled and melted down. And others of you, would like every child issued their own concealed carry permit and to be armed in kindergarten. None of that stuff separates you from being able to love one another and be one. Because much of what you think matters doesn't matter one whit to the Lord because when you're anxiously engaged in the right cause you will all be surprised how much of our deepest concerns, are merely trivial. The things of the heart are what matters. The things upon which we are capable of becoming one, in love toward one another, are infinitely greater than the political, social and economic issues that divide us.

That's why in this fallen, dark well it is necessary to keep you distracted by this Telestial kingdom in which you presently reside. You are fixated by all the crap that goes on down here. You're worried about the Kardashians. It doesn't matter. [I suppose a certain level it's possible that the Red Sox don't even matter. But we're eight and a half games ahead in the American League East right now and I'm telling you it's looking good.] But I digress.

In any event mark that page number 484 in your Book of Mormon. Go back and re-read that and ask yourself, what is God doing, other than merely being? The only thing He does is "be" and all the rest of this painful discourse is how you react. You are running around hysterically, doing a 'pee-pee dance,' because you're in agony, your presence is unacceptable, you're unclean, you're unworthy, that's what He came to fix. And when He fixes it, part of the fix consists of telling you: "Set it aside. Set it aside, be my child, accept love." And then in turn you love others even when they don't love you. Because what "fixes" is God's love.

Joseph Smith said, and this goes hand-in-hand with Mormon 9:2-5, "A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone." (TPJS, p. 357) Inflict that upon yourself. The quickest way to achieve that is to act in this life like the coward who is unwilling to be valiant in the testimony of Christ. Be unwilling to stand up when opposed by those who tell you it ought not to be so. Valiance is the only way by which you secure the blessings of God.

When Uriah was killed, he was killed with a message sent by King David delivered by the hand of Uriah himself to Joab. King David knew of the integrity of Uriah's heart that Uriah could be trusted with the order condemning him to die. And Uriah, faithful to his King, carried the message to Joab. There are accounts, not the one we have in our King James Old Testament version, but there are accounts that suggested that when Joab opened the message and read it, he read it to Uriah. Uriah knew he was sent to his death. And in those accounts the men who died with Uriah died with him willingly. It's one of the few places in Scripture where the word "valiant" appears. (2 Sam. 11: 16-17) Those men went "where the valiant men were." In turn the unworthy King

forfeited something in his cowardice. Don't be cowards. Stand and be valiant no matter what it is. If you do not then in the day of judgment you will find yourself wanting. Then too in this life you will find you lack the power of godliness, unless you obey the law upon which all blessings are predicated and you make sacrifices. You obey *Him*. And to obey *Him*, is to find yourself oddly incongruent with everything in the external world in which you find yourself.

Well, why are "they all corrupt?" You know there is a line in Luke (I like to quote him when he fits). I gave a talk one time titled "On the Road to Emmaus." It's drawn out from the book of Luke. I think Luke was the other character that was walking. He names Cleopas but he doesn't name himself. Well it is in Luke we find a quote I love. This should be carved on the wall of the Utah Bar office and again on the wall of the lobby. We should require lawyers to put on their business cards. It is Luke 11: 52: "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

False teachers prevent others from obtaining salvation, period. Happily, they will be accountable for that. You've "taken away the key of knowledge"... "you enter not in yourselves"... "them that were entering in ye hindered." This is the work of the deceived. Being deceived they believe themselves our adversary's messengers and proclaim a message that prevents others from entering into God's presence.

Well there is another verse in D&C 121. This would be the one written in the year following the Joseph Smith testimony we are reviewing tonight. Joseph was sentenced to die on November 1 of 1838. The general who was supposed to carry out the execution rebelled and wouldn't do that. Joseph ultimately wound up being kept in prison in Liberty Jail. While he was in Liberty Jail he wrote a letter. We've taken out three excerpts from the letter and we canonized them. Section 121 is one of those three sections. I want you to look at verse 45 and ask yourself whether this has something to do with "the power of godliness."

D&C 121: 45-46: "Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever." God governs without compulsory means. He moves all things by His power allowing anything which exists to choose. (D&C 93: 30-31) His way is by inviting and enticing (Moro. 7:13). You break yourself against the laws that have been ordained. (D&C 130: 20-21) You condemn yourself by the things that you bring upon yourself. God just is. And He gives you opportunity. He opens opportunity to allow you to enter in if you are willing to enter in. (Rev. 3: 20) Whether you are willing to enter in or not, is predicated upon your own conduct, your own desires. The best way to determine what your desires are is based upon what it is you do.

We are so situated that we have the inability to do two things at once. No matter who you are, you are only doing one thing at a time. Your entire life you are either focusing on one thing, or on something else. Whatever thing it is upon which you dwell that's what you've chosen. Hence the saying we read a little bit ago: "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly then shall the confidence wax strong in the presence of God." Is the power of godliness related to that? Is the power of godliness related to the presence of God? Well, the Book of Mormon continually declares that to be the case. And anyone who suggests otherwise is flatly contradicting the message of the Book of Mormon. That book is all about the ascent back to the presence of God. Testimony after testimony, experience after experience, that's what the Book of Mormon stands for. *That, the ascent to God*, is the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You encounter it almost immediately in the first chapter when Lehi rises up. And you encounter it in Nephi. And you encounter it in Jacob. And you encounter it in Enos and in Alma and in Mosiah. You just continually get the same message.

Joseph Smith said: "I advise all to go on to perfection and search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of godliness." (*TPJS* p. 364)

Turn to Doctrine and Covenants section 8. Oliver wanted to translate in April 1829. He had arrived to become the scribe to Joseph shortly before this, and he tried to translate. It didn't work out so well. The Lord told Oliver in verse 2: "I will tell you in your mind and your heart by the Holy Ghost" and so on. He talks about a gift Oliver has, "the gift of Aaron." (Verse 6) That's the rod, he was able to use a divining rod. We're kind of embarrassed about that now and we don't really talk about that much anymore, because we think gifts like that are kind of wacky. Yet here it is in Scripture.

Some of you have gifts that you find a little odd. And yet, you all have gifts. And not everyone has the same gift. And if it gives you access to information from a divine source, like Oliver you ought to trust it. It doesn't matter that in the way that you do it and the way that somebody else does it you are differently situated. No one had ever thought about a seer stone until Joseph Smith

encountered it only later to find it ratified in the book of Mosiah in Book of Mormon. (Mosiah 8: 13) Well, in any event .I'm interested in verses 10 and 11 in the revelation given in April of 1829 where it says: "Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not." So okay, you've got to be careful. Don't you be asking for something that you ought not to ask for! For goodness sake! That is prohibited! Well, this is followed immediately by the statement: "Ask that you may know the mysteries of God." That is a commandment. And anyone that tells you, that you ought not to be searching deeper and deeper into the mysteries of God, well I think we just read about them in Luke, didn't we? You don't enter in yourself and you don't suffer those who *are* entering in to be permitted to go. Because you do not understand the power of godliness! You deny the power of godliness! I declare to you in the words of Scripture "ask that *you* may know the mysteries of God!" That's a commandment, given to us by revelation, enshrined in the Scriptures you folks claim to believe in. Stop denying the power of godliness. And stop falling for the sophists and lawyers who would deceive you by suggesting that you should not inquire into the mysteries of God. *They* are anti-Christ. *They* are opposed to the doctrine of salvation. *They* deny the power of godliness. And I am not, and you should not be.

Well, we've now gotten 20 verses into the Joseph Smith History and we've learned a bunch of stuff. He's told that there are some things he can't write. I want to ask yourself at this point: How do you know if Joseph is telling the truth? How do you know if what you are seeing here is a true testimony or not? How are you to fix that? How are you to know that? Doctrine and Covenants section 63 has a reminder of the stakes involved in preaching falsely. Look at verses 60-62: "Behold, I am Alpha and Omega, even Jesus Christ. 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." This is taking the Lord's name in vain.

How do you know someone speaks with authority? How do you know that Joseph is writing a testimony that is authoritative? How do we know if anyone who opens their mouth and they speak that God has approved the message that they are delivering? Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 5. This is March of 1829. Oliver Cowdrey wouldn't arrive until April 5<sup>th</sup> the month following this. Take a look first at verse 3: "And I have caused you that you should enter into a covenant with me, that you should not show them except to those persons to whom I commanded you; and you have no power over them except I grant it unto you." At this moment in 1829, Joseph Smith is perhaps the only man alive who had a covenant with the Lord. "You have entered into a covenant with me." We are all the beneficiaries of covenants that existed from the beginning, given to "the fathers" which will become an important topic this year. But in terms of someone whom the Lord has struck a bargain with and made a covenant at the moment we are looking at in 1829, that person was Joseph Smith. Our Lord is a Man of covenants. Our Lord enters into covenants on a regular basis. To know Him is to covenant with Him. And Joseph when section 5 was revealed had one.

Looking at verse 4: "And you have a gift to translate the plates; and this is the first gift that I bestowed upon you; and I have commanded that you should pretend to no other gift until my purpose is fulfilled in this;" I want you to mark that. I want you to notice that Joseph is being told by God; "Don't pretend to any other gift than this translation." Why would God do that?

Go back to verse 20 of the Joseph Smith History which happened in 1820. We already know Joseph had been tutored by the Lord with "many other things did he say unto me at this time which I cannot write." Joseph already knew a great deal. He had already seen things beyond the mortal eye. He had already been endowed with that certain understanding that reckons from the other side of the veil. As a consequence of which, Joseph knew a great deal more than what he was saying. But he had an assignment. The assignment consisted of the obligation to translate the Book of Mormon. Therefore Joseph was authorized at that moment only to accomplish that work. If Joseph stepped beyond the boundary of the assignment entrusted to him at the moment he was doing this work he would be entertaining a pretence. This is because the errand given to him at the moment of the revelation was confined to the Book of Mormon. Did he know more? Absolutely. Did he have more at his disposal that he could've entertained people with? Without any question. But he was asked to do a work. And in the fidelity of his heart he confined himself to that work until it was first accomplished. To do more than that, would've been a pretense.

These are just asides on our way to the answer to the question about how to tell whether Joseph is telling you the truth. The answer is given beginning in verse 5: "Verily I say unto you, that woe shall come unto the inhabitants of the earth if they will not hearken unto my words;" This is Christ owning the words. It's not Joseph nor Joseph's words, but Christ's. Then we have verses 6-7: "For hereafter you shall be ordained and go forth and deliver my words unto the children of men. Behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe you, my servant Joseph, if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you."

God owns the words. You wouldn't believe the rest of it if you won't believe what's authorized to be spoken. Joseph confined himself to delivering what Christ wanted delivered. And it was up to them to choose. And if they recognize the Master's voice (John 10: 27) then they received the message from Him. The revelation expands this in verses 8-9: "Oh, this unbelieving and

stiffnecked generation—mine anger is kindled against them. Behold, verily I say unto you, I have reserved those things which I have entrusted unto you, my servant Joseph, for a wise purpose in me, and it shall be made known unto future generations; But this generation shall have my word through you;" When we fail to heed a message coming from Christ, and fail to recognize His voice, then the Lord's anger is riled. His disappointment is palpable. We should know better.

This theme of Christ's words coming through Joseph for our day is echoed in a letter from Liberty Jail, found in D&C 122: 2: "While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand." That marks those who please God today: They still look at Joseph's revelations as containing Christ's voice. This is the Lord's word to Joseph Smith about those who are wise, who are noble, who are virtuous. They are the ones who are going to seek counsel and authority and blessings under the hand of Joseph. That is as true at this moment as it was then.

How do we today receive blessings "under the hand of Joseph?" Well if you look at the use of the word "hand" almost invariably it is associated with words found in Scripture given or composed by the prophet. The book of Abraham was written under the hand of Abraham. (See headnote to Book of Abraham.) The Book of Mormon, under the hand of Mormon. (See title page of the Book of Mormon.) The hand of Joseph is still the hand we ought to be looking at if we want to know what God's word was for our generation. You have no clue how thoroughly we have supplanted the words given at the hand of Joseph Smith, and what it is you entertain yourselves with each Sabbath day. We contradict what we've received under the hand of Joseph continually, but not with impunity. We will have to account for that eventually.

Going to D&C 5: verse 14: "And to none else will I grant this power, to receive this same testimony among this generation, in this the beginning of the rising up and the coming forth of my church out of the wilderness—clear as the moon, and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." This description will show up another time in the dedicatory prayer to the Kirtland Temple in section 109. It is a description of the Lord's Church. The Lord's Church is "clear as the moon, fair as the sun." The words "clear the moon" means they meet the description that is given in Doctrine and Covenants section 76 describing those who have the glory of the moon as their inheritance. "Fair as the sun" is described in Doctrine and Covenants section 76, and describes those who will inherit the celestial glory. That is how He describes His Church. And they will be the only ones who will be able to stand at his coming.

The minister for those in the terrestrial glory is the Son, meaning the Son of God. (D&C 76: 77) Who intends to make many sons of God. And in the celestial glory the fullness of the Father dwells. (D&C 76: 92) And so the Church which He owns, which He calls "mine," that He intends to bring out of the wilderness of darkness and confusion and into the light by which they can understand things of God is necessarily composed of those who have sufficient knowledge to be "clear as the moon, fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." When we get to Grand Junction and we're talking about the condition of Zion and we're going to be looking at how very, very perilous it is to encounter this kind of glory when you are unprepared to be there.

Let's go to Luke 9: 25-26: "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." You see if Joseph is speaking the words of the Son, and if you are ashamed to own the words that come to us by the hand of Joseph, your shame is not toward Joseph but your shame is towards Him who taught Joseph the words to speak. Of those who are ashamed to acknowledge these are the Lord's words shall the Son of Man be ashamed.

Well Joseph's credentials was his possession of Christ's words. Did he come with authority? Did he speak Christ's words? Had Christ entrusted him with a ministry and a message? The answer to that is, yes. He came with authority. It's all vain, all vanity, all nonsense if he doesn't have a message from God. But if he does then his credential is His message. And how do you know that? Well, didn't we stumble across that just a few minutes ago, James 1:5? Everything that was and is going on in the restoration comes back to James 1:5. Why don't you ask God who giveth to all men liberally? Would like you to know a great deal more than you presently do. He doesn't upbraid, He doesn't scold you, nor does He say the mysteries are off-limits. He says instead come and learn of me. He says, I command you to ask and inquire into the mysteries of God. He says, salvation itself is dependent upon knowledge. "And this is life eternal that you may *know* Christ." (John 17: 3) How can you serve the Master you don't know? (Mosiah 5: 13)

Well, let's skip ahead to verses 25-26 in the Joseph Smith History: "So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth?" That will always be the case if you

know Christ, because those who do not know Him disbelieve that *you* know Him. There are laws ordained before the foundation of the world which require that they must serve their father. And you must serve yours. There is no other choice. There are only two teams, only two churches, only two ways. And it doesn't matter, if the particular whore you choose to follow is comely, tidy, well mannered, and wearing a white wedding dress. There are only two churches. Only one of which is Christ's.

Joseph Smith History verse 26: "I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned—that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but to continue as I was until further directed." Isn't that interesting? Here you have Joseph who had been given instruction, and he's simply assuming that he ought to continue on his way until he get some further direction. This will go on for years, mind you, for years.

In the Joseph Smith translation of Matthew, chapter 3 (we won't look at that) but he talks about what happened in the incident at the temple when Christ was 12 years old, then what happens when He begins His ministry. It was "many years" that pass while the Lord waits for "the hour of His ministry to draw nigh." Similarly Joseph was waiting until he finds out what else he ought to do.

Look at verse 27: "I continued to pursue my common vocations in life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three..." Oh look at that, twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, which is another one of the corners of the earth. This is the autumnal equinox when everything is in balance, the light and the dark. That moment that will soon be upon us, today being September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Looking in verse 28, about halfway down: "I was left to all kinds of temptations; and, mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to anyone who recollects my youth, and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament." [As an aside, Christ has a cheery temperament. Joseph has a cheery temperament. Be of good cheer.]

Remember this testimony Joseph Smith wrote in 1838 following the trial earlier that year in April at which the allegations of adultery were leveled against him by Oliver Cowdrey. The minutes of the High Council said they dealt with "the girl business" or Oliver's allegations about the girl business. Joseph was exonerated. We entertain a lot of false notions about Joseph Smith and the practice of plural marriage. Hales has completed and is now out with a three volume set. In his books he gathers together every single one of the existing source materials involving Fanny Alger. In the account dealing with Fanny Alger and the incident in the barn, which some people have blown up into Emma Smith catching Joseph Smith in the very act of intercourse with Fanny Alger, he tracks down. When all the source material is gathered what you learn is that Emma Smith witnessed "the transaction." The "transaction" consisted of Levi Hancock performing a wedding ceremony in the barn, with Joseph Smith telling Levi the words to use and Levi performing the ceremony. Emma was at the door listening, or witnessing "the transaction" in the barn. This is the "transaction" which has become subsequently embellished into all sorts of libido-driven license for those who would like a less virtuous prophet than the one we actually had. We want more weaknesses in him to allow us to enjoy greater weaknesses.

As Joseph put it: "No one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature." It wasn't in Joseph's nature. Those who claim otherwise, are looking for a license Joseph didn't think he could grant to himself.

Going to verse 29: "In the above mentioned night of 21 September, I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies..." After Joseph continued his way and waited for the Lord, he got to the point in which he had some apprehension about his standing before God, because it had been a long time since his last visit. Notice it is Joseph who drove the events that happened on the autumnal equinox by making an inquiry about his sins. He asked for forgiveness and wanted to know of his state and standing before God, saying at the end of verse 29: "I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one."

If Joseph Smith could go get a divine manifestation respecting his standing before God, so can you. If Joseph Smith could go out and inquire about what Church to join so can you. Moroni 10:4-5 tells you: "by the power of the Holy Ghost you may know the truth of all things." The truth of *all* things. There is nothing off limits. There's nothing about which you are going to be upbraided and told, "don't ask. Don't inquire. I won't tell." Now you may ask for something you are unprepared to hear an answer for because there is some preparation yet left. But if you ask then you set in motion on the other side permission to fix what's wrong with you.



Have you read the 10th Parable (*The Missing Virtue*)? If you've read the 10th Parable you know there is a time lag in which a missing virtue gets supplied as a consequence of real world experience. The answer gets set in motion, as a consequence of the laws of God, upon which all blessings are predicated. This verse in Joseph's testimony shows how mandatory it is that you must *ask*! And by the way, the answer to the question you ask from God will always be "yes." However, if you are not ready for the "yes" then you will go through a period of renovation and repair. How long you need to be renovated and repaired, depends upon just how much of the toxic nonsense of this Telectial Kingdom you've drunk in and how much of it you continue to drink in as the Lord works to answer your inquiry. Everything you take in which opposes the ability of God to speak to you will hinder Him answering you. So as soon as you will lay down that nonsense and in faith become believing, so soon will God be able to plug the leaks, repair the hinge and fix the broken window. He really does have a house of order, or better put He will only enter a temple that is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Cor. 3: 17) It's not built by human hands. It was built by God in the womb of your mother. And you were endowed with it when you took your first breath. That, and you are wearing it now, is His temple. The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple. (Mal. 3: 1) But it must not be defiled. Clean yourselves up. If you want to know what your state and standing is, because you are uncertain, then ask God. Expect Him to answer.

Look at the next verse of Joseph's account (verse 30): "While I was thus in the act of calling upon God..." While he was *in the act* of calling upon God! If you are in the right way with the right faith looking for the right answers, you don't even get to finish the sentence. God knows what you have need of "before ye ask Him." (Matt. 6: 8) That's from the Sermon on the Mount. Christ tells you that. That horrible aching, the longing, the hollowness, the emptiness within you is what Christ is intended to fill. That is His purpose in coming to His temple.

So while he was in the act of calling upon God he discovered a light appearing in his room, "which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor." [As an interesting aside, I want to ask the question, why? Why did Moroni stand in the air with his feet not touching the ground? It's an interesting topic that we are not going to talk about here. It's off subject and it won't get us Zion anyway but there is "stuff" here.]

Oh, and he had on a loose robe. Verse 31 records, "He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom." Notice this was not ceremonial garb. As a consequence of this, I can tell you it's okay to be buried without temple regalia because you're not going to be wearing that stuff in the resurrection anyway. If you inherit the glory which the angels of God including Moroni (who is certainly exalted), wear, it will not be merely ceremonial.

You can read about the description of what Christ wears in the Scriptures as well. Ceremonial garb is just that: ceremonial garb. It is designed to teach you about the creation, to endow you with certain knowledge about the process of being exalted. But it is not the attire that you will see on the streets of heaven. I actually think attire in heaven looks Egyptian, but that's not particularly important for our purposes.

This angel who came to Joseph was wearing only a robe. It was not ceremonial. He didn't have shoes on his feet, nor a bonnet, nor any of a variety of things that we would associate with ceremonial dress. You can read a description of Christ's attire in 3 Nephi 11:8. And the description there is very much like the description that we have here, Christ and Moroni wearing the same kind of things. And just for the fun of it, let's go back to Exodus.

Looking at the description of ceremonial attire for the Tabernacle of Moses in Exodus 28, beginning at verse 4: "And these *are* the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen." As in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*: "...and yellow and green and purple and orange and white..." I'm sorry, I shouldn't do that. But you can read the description of the attire, running through chapter 28. The Lord dresses you in plenty of ceremonial attire designed to convey symbols with meaning. But they are not an end, they are merely symbols. Six days of creation symbolized by six articles of clothing in the present temple rites. Each one of which can be associated with one of the days of creation. Therefore as you enter through the veil, it is as if the entirety of creation is redeemed in your person. You represent salvation for the entirety of creation. Because in you, should you be able to be rescued, creation itself continues. These are symbols. They communicate to the mind ideas. Ideas which are eternal. They are not ends in themselves.

Well keep that in mind, because you are here in this estate to be trained. You are here to learn something. You here to learn about the power of godliness. And by "here" I don't mean this room, although that is certainly true. I'm talking about this lifetime in which you find yourself. This place, this terrible fallen world, this glorious opportunity in which sacrifice is actually possible. You don't avoid it, and you don't necessarily seek it out. But when it comes upon you, you face it down bravely. You stand where God places you. And you don't let any *man* move you from where it is that God would have you be. Because therein lies salvation. You are obeying a law ordained before the foundation of the world. You cannot take a hold on such blessings, unless you obey the law upon which it is predicated. There will always be in absolute numbers only a few who will find that straight and narrow path. There will be an overflowing abundance of those who will fight against it. That is because they serve *their* master. You don't have time to worry about them. You serve yours. And that Master needs to be Christ.

Well, we are now just about getting to tonight's topic. Once again, Joseph is called by name and this is verse 33. He was afraid but the fear soon left him. The reason he was afraid was because he was seeking forgiveness of his sins. In response to this concern a perfectly white, bright lit individual appeared, who represented the cleanliness of heaven itself. Joseph, in contrast was worried about his own cleanliness. He was inquiring to know about his sins and a visibly cleansed being stands before him, therefore he was afraid. And why was he afraid? Because, once again, you see the remarkable contrast between yourself and heaven. You and I know what lies in our heart. I know what failings I've had, and I know an angelic being can see through me. Therefore, I need something that will remove from me my fear. Joseph explains: "He called me by name." It is the same thing as before. Moroni dispels the fear by letting Joseph know we have a brotherhood, we have a relationship. We see the results: "fear soon left me." "He called me by name."

This is what we want to talk about. The angel told Joseph about the accoutrements that he was to receive. But in the first meeting Moroni gives Joseph something more important and entirely intangible. It is what is most important. It is knowledge. Moroni delivered a message. But his message was not like what we find in the King James version of the Bible. Read Joseph Smith-History 1: 37: *"For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."*

The words "root" and "branch" are genealogical words. Notice also "they that come" and ask yourself: who are they? Why are "they" going to "burn them" at "their coming?" These are important matters.

Joseph continues: "And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: *Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.* He also quoted the next verse differently: *And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."*

We will probably get to this part around Spanish Fork in the coming year. Everything about this is telling you something that is remarkably different from where we now find ourselves. The day is coming that will burn them. When?

And we have Moroni's warning about "they that come." Who? Neither "root" nor "branch" will be left after the coming burning. That's genealogical. Then there is mention of Elijah and the priesthood. We will talk about that in another day. "Children get planted in their hearts" because the children are living. But what is planted are "promises made to the fathers." Who? What promises? When were they made? All these are important to consider. Then Moroni speaks of "children's hearts turned to their fathers" and we have another matter to consider. There is so much in that that we need to pick apart. We need to understand. And we're going to go there. Because understanding this is understanding the foundation of Zion.

The foundation of Zion consists largely in reconnecting the children as a consequence of the promises that were made to the fathers, back again to the fathers. This is so there might be a welding link that connects the children who are on the earth with the fathers who are in the heavens. Not a connection to the dead who are in the Spirit world. They who are dead are in desperate need of your ministration to save them. For in connecting yourself to them is to connect yourself essentially to the damned, the dead, the disembodied. The fathers who are in heaven are the ones to whom you need to form the link. And I've written a paper on that which I assume some of you have read. Just send a note to the blog and I'll email it to you. It's "*The Mission of Elijah Reconsidered.*" But see, the whole purpose behind these promises and prophecy delivered to Joseph by Moroni was to fix this problem. Because if it were not so, the whole world would be utterly wasted, utterly wasted at His (and "their") coming.

Then Joseph reports: "In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled."

Let's go back to that 11th chapter of Isaiah because, man have we made a mess of that. Okay, this is "about to be fulfilled:" Isaiah reads: "AND there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." The Rod is the servant who is a descendent of Jesse, an individual who is both of Judah and of Ephraim, unto whom is rightfully belonging the priesthood. Keep your finger there in Chapter 11 of Isaiah and turn back to Doctrine and Covenants 113 and you'll see where these words are explained.

D&C 113: 1-4: "WHO is the Stem of Jesse spoken of in the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses of the 11th chapter of Isaiah? Verily thus saith the Lord: It is Christ. What is the rod spoken of in the first verse of the 11th chapter of Isaiah, that should come of the Stem of Jesse? Behold, thus saith the Lord: It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse, a descendant of Judah, as well as of Ephraim, or of the house of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power."

Look, until you succeed, you have failed. I don't care who comes along, claiming whatever they want to claim. Until the work is done no one can take credit for it, period. There is all kinds of nonsense that circulates about who has the keys. It's that old game: "Button, button who's got the button?" Look, someone's going to do the work. When the work is done then you'll know. Until the work is done no one can be identified with the role, period. It is arrogance, it is pretentiousness it is foolishness for anyone to step forward and say; "I, I am that man!" Do the work, finish the course, fulfill the covenant. When you do that you can take the name. Until you do the work, it's just noise.

So there is going to come forth "a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;" Notice that! Oh, thank God! Someone will finally fear the Lord, more than they fear man! I look forward to that moment. Hope to live to see it!

Continuing in verse 3: "And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth," Notice that in this context the "rod" is not merely a person but it is also the word of God.

Continuing: "and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." This is, of course, the Millennial day.

According to Moroni these things are shortly to come to pass. "And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

We began with that theme. You see it is knowledge that typifies the Millennium. Imagine people who are full of knowledge of the Lord. That's what you have to lay hold on. That is what you must become.

Continuing: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left,"

Well, this shall shortly come to pass. Not then, not in Joseph's time, not that day, but by and by. This is why we need to review the restoration this year. We cannot go forward until first we remember what has already been given.

When a branch is spoken of, we should look at John 15:1-6. There Christ speaks of Himself as the "true vine" to which we must connect if we are going to bear fruit. We are not going to do that because our time is far spent. But Christ talks about a servant. About Christ being the true vine. None of us can bear fruit unless we are connected to the true vine. Once again, that is a genealogical term. That is a family of God term. That is a son of God term. And He intends to make many sons of God (1 John 3: 2), to bring many sons unto glory (Heb. 2: 10).

Joseph received, in this first interview with the angel Moroni, an announcement about the first indications of the restoration of God's intent, to restore a holy family. God is telling us what *He* wants. He, God, wants to have upon the earth again His family. This is your dispensation, this is your time. You came down here with the intent of living and finding the things that will bring you back. This is your opportunity. Don't let some other group claim that it doesn't belong to you. These

Scriptures are only going to be fulfilled when enough people awake and arise to realize that it is devolving upon you the obligation to find, to heed, to seek, to search, to pray, to obey and to form what is necessary in order to fulfill the promises and the covenants that were made to the fathers.

Throughout the coming year were going to try and lay that out. 2 Nephi 3, we could spend a day talking about chapter 3. We don't have that time. And tonight's time is far spent. But what I want to do is just look at some specific words for a moment. Because I'm telling you the muddle that has been made of the Book of Mormon by the nonsense that we believe about its words is worse than a Gordian knot. And how you sort that out at this point is a challenge. But you ought to rise by making it the subject of prayer and getting revelation. Because there is a story being told here, there is a covenant being described here. And there are things in play here that until you awake and arise and then realize what the duties are that are devolving upon you, you don't have any chance of figuring out exactly what a mess we have made of the restoration of the Gospel.

Looking at 2 Ne. 3: 23-24: "Wherefore, because of this covenant..." [The covenant being described here, is a covenant made by God, with Joseph of Egypt.] "...because of this covenant thou" [Joseph, the son of Lehi] "thou art blessed; for thy seed" [Joseph, Lehi's son] "shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book." [That is the descendents of Joseph, Lehi's son.] "And there shall rise up one mighty among them,"

Ask yourself if the word "among" is genealogical or merely associational. It doesn't say one "from" them, which would be genealogical. It says "among" them. Someone's going to arise who's going to do: "much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren."

In all that goes on in chapter 3 of 2 Nephi dealing with the covenant it is framed about the Joseph of Egypt individual. The next chapter, by the way don't let the punctuation of the chapters fool you. This is all one discourse. This is the continuation of the statement. 2 Ne. 4: 2 explains: "For behold, he" [that is not Lehi, but Joseph of Egypt] "he truly prophesied concerning all his seed." Now realize that includes some of you.

Look our time is spent but our agenda is not. There was another prophecy that's made by Moroni which is repeated in Acts. That prophecy has this real complicated structure, because the past, present, and future time and how it all fits together. We'll pick it up there in Idaho Falls on the 28th.

About this time 40 years ago today, I was at a post-baptismal party at the Mortenson's house and it would be breaking up probably another 10 minutes from now, in which Jim asked me to give the opening prayer. Jim, being the man of the house, and Monty being the faithful wife and the descendent of the Bunkers, deferred to her husband in making that call. At the time I was rather giddy because I had never been baptized before. My mom wished me to be a Baptist. She was worried that I was going to hell because I never joined any church. Then I got baptized a Mormon and removed all doubt, for her anyway.

And I was a little too jocular in my native cherry temperament, being what it is. Therefore Jim asked someone else who is a little more Mormon and reverent to give the damn prayer. And so someone else gave the prayer. And I felt a little chided, and I thought, 'man these Mormons are tight.'

Anyway, as the evening ensued there was a little more of my jocular and a little less of a reverent atmosphere. Some folks took offense. There was some jarring, there was some contention; and literally the Spirit fled from the meeting we were having. All these wonderful people and all the stuff that they had put themselves to because I had been baptized was turning out to be a rather tragic evening.

So I interrupted and I insisted on the floor and made people listen. I went around person by person and I talked to each one of them. I talked to them by the power of the Spirit, with the gift of prophecy. And I touched the hearts of everyone who was in that room. I didn't understand it at all that night. But when you get a little further into the testimony of Joseph Smith, you find that on the occasion when Joseph and Oliver were baptized they were immediately given the gift of prophecy. I could no more have given you the name for what happened. All I comprehended that evening was that I, by an influence outside and greater than me, was able to calm the disunity and reunite the hearts of the people who were with me. I can tell you now I recognize what that was. But I was a few hours old initiate into this restoration process.

It's been 40 years. This is going to be a year in which I put on display my gratitude for the opportunity afforded to me to be baptized for the remission of sins. And it will allow me to testify about those things which I know to be true. And to speak

about the work remaining undone devolving upon *you* to accomplish. This restoration merely got its toe in the door in the day of Joseph Smith. And hardly even that. The prophecies and the promises and the time and the opportunity are upon us. The question is, will this generation be just as careless, just as indifferent, as the one when the last, real prophet's voice was heard among us? When Joseph Smith could tell you, 'I know He lives because I've seen Him.' When Joseph Smith could say, 'God commanded me that I should bear record of Him because I have seen Him.' It has been too long, too long, between that moment and today. And it's time now we stop running away from the conflict. It's time for us to be valiant once again. Do not be fearful. Cowardice and fear are the opposite of faith.

If Joseph Smith in the ruins of 1838, can write the testimony that we find in the history of Joseph Smith as an act of audacious courage and faith and confidence in the work of God that he was pursuing, despite the ruin that he saw the church existed in at that moment; if Joseph could do that, why can't you have faith?

I don't care what a tattered ruin that you see around you today. Zion can come. We're still a few sessions away from encountering important parts of that religion Joseph was attempting to restore which are really most interesting. But I'm telling you that if you stay with this over the course of the next year you are going to realize just how much of the restoration is left undone.

There is nothing more delightful, there is nothing more delicious, there is nothing more exciting than the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We deliberately started this without an opening prayer. We are not going to have an opening prayer on any of these talks until Sundays. There will be a few of these on Sunday. One of these is going to be on Sunday in Logan. Another one's going to be on Sunday in Centerville, October 6. For those that are on Sunday, we will have an opening and closing prayer. For those that are not on the Sabbath, I'm simply going to talk.

But I will tell you that I know what I'm talking about. If you will ask of God and listen to the Spirit you will be able to determine whether I speak His words. I don't think it matters if I could reveal to you all things. If you won't believe the things I *can* tell you, you certainly won't believe things I'm not telling you.

But I wouldn't blame you if you don't believe me. I really wouldn't. It is so hard to be believing. This world is so acidic and this environment is so toxic. It's very hard to believe. I think that's one of the reasons why Christ's account said it is a greater righteousness to believe than it is to know and to say.

I bear testimony to you that Jesus Christ lives, He matters. I don't. He can save you. I can't. I can report on the glory of this Lord of ours but only He can dispense it. Of that I bear testimony intending to be held to account for the testimony I bear.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

# Faith

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Lecture 2: Idaho Falls, Idaho

It was 40 years ago today, at almost this exact moment, when I went back out into the Atlantic Ocean off the Sea Point Beach in Kittery, Maine, and I baptized a fellow named Ronald Allan Mahle. Ron had taken the missionary discussions at the same time I had, and was more reserved than I was. It required my baptism before he considered being baptized himself. Between the time I was baptized (18 days earlier), and this date, the 28<sup>th</sup>, George Hoyer had ordained me to the Aaronic Priesthood. When Ron asked if I could perform the baptism, I was able to do that. We are here in part, because this represents the 40th anniversary of my own baptism and conversion to Mormonism. Therefore, I'm going to take note of events along the way each time we get together. Ron Mahle has since left the church. He's remained a good friend. In fact I spoke with him a couple days ago. He was calling to make sure I was okay with all that has been going on. He's involved in some interesting circles, and they know that he's a friend of mine, so they were keeping him up to speed on some things. He was calling me to express his feelings.

There is this one thing about the process of converting: you do in fact make lifelong friends in the process. And it doesn't matter what comes and goes, those friendships are enduring. Ron and I learned together that when the missionaries invite *you* to dinner that you probably ought to turn them down. The missionaries invited us to dinner to eat something they called perpetual chili. They were determined to at last get rid of the dregs of the perpetual chili. I swear there were some waffles in it on that occasion. But we went over and ate, and true enough, it was rather like the stories you hear of the missionaries in Mexico when they are getting down there and acclimating to the food.

I was going through my head trying to remember the members in the Portsmouth, New Hampshire ward at the time. I remembered this couple who had a house they were building. It was constantly under construction, getting adjustments made here and there. A bank had closed and was being torn down, and the bank had sold all of the doors. They were salvaging whatever could be saved before the building went down, and so these ward members went in and bought these enormous solid hardwood doors to install in their own home. This was Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. She was teaching Sunday school classes when I converted. She is now on the faculty at Harvard. She's been down to BYU and presented down there, and she is author of the book, *"Well Behaved Women Don't Make History."* The name of the book was turned into a slogan. It's now on coffee mugs and T-shirts. The title was taken from an earlier article she wrote about funerals in the Puritan era, and the behavior of women. There were some interesting people in that first ward. I wanted to talk about the purpose behind all of this material. It is to try and discuss, not *what* great things the Lord has done, but *how* great things the Lord has done. This is the terminology that you find in the Book of Mormon. Because *what* doesn't matter anywhere near as much as *how*. *What* is essentially an exercise in voyeurism. *How* is an exercise in what you need to do and how you come about linking to, and participating in, what ultimately is the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And so we're going to be covering how great things are done. A friend reminded me of something this week. I coined a term, he suggested the idea.

It's important that you don't think that before you wind up in the presence of the Lord *you* have the responsibility of making yourself absolutely spic and span. In terms of connecting with the Lord, it is essentially a "come as you are party." You are never going to be able to do the heavy lifting required to be clean in his presence. He does that, you don't. He extends the invitation, you accept it. It's a come as you are party. There are two parables that the Lord told, and I want to put them together to help illustrate the point. One is in Matthew chapter 22. It's a parable about a wedding feast. The Lord in that parable talks about how the folks who were invited wouldn't show up. Because the folks who were invited wouldn't show up, in invitation was extended to essentially whoever was out on the streets. The folks who were out on the streets were brought in. Let's begin at verse 8 of chapter 22, "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy." He is telling a story, largely about a condition that persists whenever you find a functioning religious organization. Institutions have a way of having their own cares. Joseph Smith was a disastrous businessman. He created financial debacle after financial debacle. The notorious one was the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-banking Association. *Anti*, because they couldn't get the bank charter. If you file for bankruptcy in the state of Utah, one of the things that one of the local bankruptcy judges has done at the discharge hearings, in order to help people feel better about themselves, is to remind people that at the time of his death Joseph Smith had a pending petition in bankruptcy. That is supposed to salve the conscience of those who find themselves in that extremity.

The fact is Joseph was not a particularly good businessman because he didn't care for business. He wound up giving away his inventory to needy folks, rather than trying to profit off the needs of the Saints. There was some exasperation about that in his family, among his peers, and among LDS historians. Well, we fixed that. We have managing the church, and attending to the financial interests of the kingdom (as we call it now), those that are more than qualified financially. I suspect a profligate like Joseph Smith would be unsuitable for church management today.

In any event, the parable starts with the Lord trying to get people to come to the wedding, telling the servants that it's ready, but the ones that I've asked are not worthy. "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways,..." [It's always the servants, always angels who do this work. They do the gathering.] "...and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 22:8-13. So I want to put that on the table. In this part of this parable you have anyone who will come being invited, because the people who were targeted for attendance simply aren't worthy to come. So anyone gets to come. But you have among them one who doesn't have on a wedding garment. For that I want to refer you to Luke chapter 15. In Luke chapter 15, we run into the Lord talking about a robe being supplied. This about the son who found himself having been in a far-off land, filling his belly "with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" [Look at what happens in Luke 15:22 when he goes back to his father.] "But the father said to his servants, [Again it's the angels who do this.] Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:" You see, this has to be kept in mind whenever you're looking at someone who has arrived at the feast, bidden from the highway, and doesn't have on the robe. The Master is the one who wants you to wear it. The Master is one who will furnish it. Don't think the purpose of the Lord is to judge. The purpose of the Lord is to redeem, and for that purpose, he is infinitely patient and willing, if you will respond with forgiveness of your sins, as He does consistently throughout the Book Mormon.

The formal invitation (through His church) is not accepted. The members just aren't interested. Therefore He invites everyone else, even the stranger. These people are unprepared, having not anticipated they were going to a wedding. Therefore one of them was unsuited. This is a powerful lesson about the Lord's intentions when it comes to His great day of judgment. It ought to help us put into perspective how little an organized invitation (through His church) will matter in the end. It is His presence that matters, after all.

In Boise we ended at verse 40 of the Joseph Smith History. We had gone through the 11th chapter of Isaiah that Moroni referred to. But according to the Joseph Smith history, Moroni "quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ; but the day had not yet come when 'they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people,' but soon would come." [If you go back to that provision in Acts chapter 3:22, here's what it says] "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."

I find this really interesting, because Moses is saying in his prophecy that Christ is going to come, and Christ is going to be like unto Moses. It's an interesting statement for Moses to have made, trying I suppose in his day and his context, to make people look forward to the coming of the Lord. In our day, in our context, I would have a very difficult time, no matter what I had been given, with saying the Lord is going to be like unto me. I would rather say, and I'm hoping to somewhat like unto Him. Nevertheless, Moses said: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:22-3.)

This is Moses talking about the coming of Christ. Moroni also makes reference to Peter talking about Christ immediately after Him having come. So it is that Moroni talked about what Moses had said, quoting Peter, about something involving the Lord. From this structure a lot of people have concluded that the Lord is yet to come. It doesn't mean that at all. Go back and read what Moroni says: "But the day had not yet come when they who would not hear his voice *should be cut off* from among the people." (Emphasis added.)

That doesn't mean Christ is coming again as a prophet. What it does mean is that Christ's voice will be heard again. And in that final voicing by Christ, those who do not have the ears to hear it will be cut off. It is that cutting off which is future. That voice of the Lord, during the time He spoke in mortality, the time when He spoke through the Prophet Joseph Smith, as well as the time when He speaks again to give a final warning; then if His voice is not heard and is not heeded, that cutting off, and only that cutting off, remains in the future. Therefore the comment here by Moroni has reference to the future cutting off by those who would not hear the voice of the Lord, which "is in that day;" soon to come in our day and almost upon us. Then in verse 41 Moroni: "also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth verse to the last. He also said this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be. And he further stated that the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of scripture, and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here." (JS-History 1:41)

So let's go back to Joel in the second chapter and begin at the 28th verse and look at that. This is what has not yet been fulfilled, but is soon to come. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call." (Joel 2:28 – 32)

Now one of the things that we perhaps take for granted, but we have to give credit to Joseph Smith for doing, is distinguishing between all of these references to Jerusalem and these references to Zion. Until Joseph spoke, it was assumed that they were the same thing, and it turns out they are not. We know that there will be Zion on one hand, and we know that there will be Jerusalem, a gathering there, on the other hand. We know that this prophecy concerning your sons, your daughters, prophecy, dreams, visions, all of this being poured out. This is something that is yet to happen. But it is soon to come to pass. We have a great deal to look forward to according to the angel Moroni. The angel Moroni, instructed Joseph Smith on the night he first appeared to him, promised these things were going to come to pass. That has not happened yet. Going back to Joseph Smith History verse 41, when he referred to Joel, he said that "the fullness of the Gentiles was soon to come in." The "fullness of the Gentiles" is something different than "the times of the Gentiles." The times of the Gentiles have been with us. The fullness of the Gentiles is when we turn a leaf and their opportunity comes to an end. Notice that in addition to verse 41, there were many other passages of scripture and many other explanations that the angel offered that he doesn't mention.

How often, when an angel comes to instruct, does the angel simply open the scriptures! Look at what happened with the Lord on the day of His resurrection before He appeared to the twelve. He walked in the afternoon on the road to Emmaus with Cleopas, and I believe Luke. He spent the afternoon opening to them the scriptures. Angels instruct using the scriptures. The Lord, on the day of His resurrection, spent the afternoon talking about the scriptures. Joseph Smith, when he was trying to figure out which church he should join, labored over the scriptures. And we think we needn't perform that same labor, or become familiar with that same canon of scripture. I'm telling you, the more you have inside you in familiarity with the words of scripture, the more able you are to comprehend the doings of God in your own life, and in the lives of all those around you, and in the time you live. So don't let it be lost on you that what the angel Moroni spent the night doing with Joseph was discussing scripture. And don't let it be lost on you that he returned again to deliver another a message expounding the scriptures.

All prophecy is essentially focused on two events. (You can always find an exception to this because there are all kinds of intermediate events that get covered.) Essentially the burden of prophecy focuses on only two events. The first one is the looking forward to the coming of the Lord in the flesh in His mortal ministry. And the second one is the looking forward to the coming of the Lord in glory to judge the world. Those are the two primary events that are the burden of prophecy, the burden of scripture, and you are living on the cusp of the fulfillment of the second of those two events. Therefore, you would be well served to learn as much as you can about those two events. I want to turn back to Jeremiah chapter 31, because in Jeremiah, he's talking about the second of those events. Beginning in Jeremiah chapter 31, verse 31: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:"

As a reminder, the Lord's talking about something that He did and they (Israel) broke, and how He was faithful to it as a husband unto them. Just as a reminder, as we talk about the coming covenant, if you break the next one when it's restored, if you break that one, you cannot stand in the day that He comes. In the day that He comes to judge the world, there will be a judgment which is either passed or failed. If failed, then they who come will burn them up by the brightness of their glory. So He is not just giving you these gratuitous, interlineations and thoughts in the middle of the prophecy by Jeremiah. He's trying to clue you into the fact that this stuff is taken very seriously by Him, and therefore, ought to be taken very seriously by us. "But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me ..." (Jeremiah 31:31 – 34)

This is not, they shall all know *about* Me. This is they shall all *know* Me. And it will no longer be necessary for anyone to say know the Lord, because you shall know Him. It's not knowledge concerning Him, it's Him. And those that know Him shall be: "from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." That's who He is. That is what He does. He doesn't want to remember your sin. He would rather prefer it if *you* don't remember your sin. Because if you don't remember your sin and you go on in a positive way, having laid down the burden that He so willingly will accept from you, and remove from you that burden of guilt, then you can go on and become healthy again. You needn't be troubled about all of those things that have bogged you down. He wants to remove that. He wants to carry them. "I



will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever." (Jeremiah 31:35-36.)

If you look up in the morning sky, right now you can see Orion on the Eastern horizon. That's been true, twice a year, since the beginning. It's been true that all of the ordinances ordained by God in the heavens have remained true from the day that He set them there until today. They are so well-established, they are so regular, they are so permanent, and they are so far beyond the ability of man to touch, alter, or destroy, that the only way to have an apostasy from those ordinances, from our perspective, is for you to forget what knowledge is there written in the heavens. But the Lord wrote it there. It remains there. Knowledge about it is still part of what is to be restored.

Well, the definition of salvation or life eternal given in John 17:3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." This is the knowledge of the Lord that he's talking about here. This is the day that Jeremiah prophesies. No one needs to say know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least until the greatest. This is what the Gospel was intended to restore, offer, promise, suggest to each one of us.

The ordinances in the heavens are referred to in Genesis 1:14: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so." [He sets this up in order to communicate things. If you go back to the book of Abraham 4:14:] "And the Gods organized the lights in the expanse of the heaven, and caused them to divide the day from the night; and organized them to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years; And organized them to be for lights in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and it was so. And the Gods organized the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; with the lesser light they set the stars also; And the Gods set them in the expanse of the heavens, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to cause to divide the light from the darkness. And the Gods watched those things which they had ordered until they obeyed. And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that it was night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that it was day; and it was the fourth time."

This is not a bunch of gratuitous language. This is describing something that took place with absolutely deliberate intent. Everything that is written in scripture and all of the ordinances that were ordained upon the earth and in the heavens were reckoned from the position of the earth. It's not that the ancients were ignorant of what is going on in the heavens. Instead they viewed the heavens as being a testimony given to us on the earth. It is geocentric, that is, viewed only from the surface of the earth that allows you to see this testimony which has been written. From the surface of the earth, the sun occupies a space - even though the sun is over 100 times larger than the earth - in the firmament that is exactly the same as the space in the firmament that is occupied by the moon, although the moon is 1/6 the size of the earth. From the surface of the earth they are identical in size. So much so, that when you put them on the ecliptic as they are located, one can block out the other entirely in an eclipse. All of these things were ordained by God to testify in the heavens and about Him and about His work. Those things are bearing testimony, and they are telling you something. And who knows if we will ever get to restoring that part of the Gospel. But they are designed to be understood.

Well, going ahead. We won't get to this for some time, if at all. Go to Doctrine and Covenants 121:26. These are the neglected verses, because we don't pay attention to this stuff anymore. "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;" [Not the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit has been revealed. It's the knowledge that is coming that has not yet been revealed.] "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." (D&C 121:27-32) In this dispensation there is an agenda. That agenda is to be completed. It is to be completed before the coming of the Lord. And it includes a restoration of things that we have hardly yet thought about.

Well Jeremiah knew what he was talking about when he referred to the ordinances. We've long since forgotten that the only way you apostatize from that stuff is through forgetfulness, because the testimony remains. It is in front of your eyes right

and day. Everything begins with faith. You don't skip to knowledge. You begin with faith and you progress. In the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* on page 348 it says: "When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation."

The principles of the gospel are not supposed to be comprehended in one bite. You progress. The ladder that he's talking about climbing is in fact the ladder that is ordered, and the one Jacob referred to. Jacob's ladder is something that we refer to, and it's an ordered process. But whenever you begin that climb you begin at the bottom. And so you find yourselves here. Notwithstanding finding yourselves here, there are absolutely, invariably seven rungs on Jacob's ladder. We find ourselves at present at the bottom of it. Belief leads to faith. Faith has to surrender ultimately to knowledge. It was ultimately the purpose of the Prophet Joseph Smith to try and expound upon the principle of faith in a set of scriptures that he put forth. The scriptures were canonized. We are going to spend our time on this evening.

I was reading the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. You can find that in the Joseph Smith papers. They have a photostatic copy of the actual 1835 edition, and you can read it in the type. It's an exact reproduction. It's a photograph of that edition. I loath to waste time, and I'm captured each Sunday in a three-hour block. So I spent a lot of time reading scriptures during church each Sunday. I made it through sacrament meetings with the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants for a period of weeks in order to get through that. I was absolutely thunderstruck. Because if you've never read the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, it is as audacious a scriptural document as anyone has ever seen. It is like a thunderbolt out of the blue. It is an amazing text. It begins - the first 70 some pages - with *The Lectures on Faith*. Then the revelations are organized, not in the ways that they are presently organized in our Doctrine and Covenants, they are organized topically and thematically. When you pick up the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and you look at that document, to me it was abundantly clear that there is something new taking place on the earth. The Prophet Joseph Smith was what he said he was. And in fact, if anything, he understated who and what he was. The Prophet Joseph Smith was an agent, sent by God, to restore lost knowledge for whoever is willing to receive it. The form that it takes in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants is a religious classic. It is a greater document than the New Testament. It is an amazing piece of work.

Before its publication, Joseph Smith, Assistant President of the Church, Oliver Cowdery, First Counselor in the First Presidency, Sidney Rigdon, and Second Counselor in the First Presidency, Frederick G. Williams, jointly signed a preface written by Joseph Smith. In his journals, leading up to the publication of *The Lectures on Faith*, Joseph Smith recorded that he spent days editing the Lectures that had been given before their publication as scripture.

Since they've been removed from the scriptures, there are a lot of people who are trying to vindicate the decision that was made to remove them from scripture. One of the arguments that is made in furtherance of removing them from scripture was that it was primarily a product of Sidney Rigdon's pen. It was primarily of product of Sidney Rigdon's pen. They've done word typing and computer analysis, and they've come up with probability of authorship. It doesn't matter if Sidney Rigdon had a hand in the document, because Joseph Smith edited it. And Joseph Smith corrected it. And Joseph Smith vouched for it. In the preface to *The Lectures on Faith* in the 1835 edition, (which you can read in the Joseph Smith Papers, Volume 2 of the *Revelations and Translations* beginning on page 311 of that volume), you can read the preface (on page 313). And I'm reading you this over Joseph Smith's name. "We deem it to be unnecessary to entertain you with lengthy preface to the following volume, but merely to say that it contains in short the leading items of the religion which we have professed to believe. The first part of the book will be found to contain a series of lectures as delivered before a theological class in this place. And in consequence of their embracing the important doctrines of salvation, we have arranged them into the following work. We do not present this little volume with any other expectation than that. We are to be called the answer to every principle advanced." [This is Joseph Smith saying, this is a document that I intend to vouch for. In his official history, January 1835 he says: "During the month of January, I was engaged in the school of the elders and in preparing the lectures on theology for publication in the book of Doctrine and Covenants."]

You find that in the *History of the Church* Volume 2 beginning at page 180. He defended every principle that was advanced. It was brought before a Council of the Church. And I'm reading from the Joseph Smith papers. This is on page 307 of Volume 2 of the *Revelations and Translations*. "On 17 August 1835, a general assembly of the church met for the purpose of examining a book of Commandments and Covenants that had been compiled and written by the publications committee. (Joseph Smith headed the publications committee.) This committee having finished the said book according to the instructions given them, (the minutes read) it was deemed necessary to call the General

Assembly of the Church to see if the book be approved or not by the authorities of the Church. That it may, if approved, become a law of the church, and a rule of faith and practice of the same." Though the assembly was convened by the Presidency of the Church, several of them were absent at the time of the vote. So the responsibility of presenting the book to the conference

fell to Oliver Cowdery, a member of both the presidency and the four man publication committee and Assistant President of the Church at the moment that this took place. Sidney Rigdon, the other presidency member and committee member, stood and explained the matter by which they intended to obtain the voice of the assembly for or against said book. Voting on the book proceeded by quorums and groups with the leader of each group bearing witness of the truth of the volume before his group voted. And then they proceeded to vote. And they voted by quorums from the least to the greatest. Then after all the quorums of the church had accepted the Doctrine and Covenants, the first 70 some pages of which were *The Lectures on Faith*, the General Assembly voted, including everyone who was present. Children, women, everyone voted. They all sustained this as the Doctrine of the Church.

In 1921 *The Lectures on Faith* were dropped from the scriptures by a committee comprised of George F. Richards, Anthony W. Ivins, Melvin J. Ballard, James E. Talmage, John A. Widstoe, and Joseph Fielding Smith. That committee dropped *The Lectures on Faith* from the scriptures because, "Certain lessons entitled *The Lectures on Faith* which were bound with Doctrine and Covenants in some of its former issues, are not included in this edition. Those lessons were prepared for use in the School of Elders. But they were never presented or accepted by the Church as other than theological lessons or lectures."

That's a lie. The Joseph Smith Papers, if you will read them today, tell you that statement is not at all the truth. Part of what I hope to get to tonight, and if not tonight then in Logan, are the reasons why. Joseph Smith called this "doctrine" - important doctrine. "Leading items of the religion." And that he would answer to every principle that was advanced in the document. Now to his credit, Joseph Fielding Smith, who was on that committee said in 1966: "I suppose that the rising generation knows little about the Lectures. In my own judgment these Lectures are of great value and should be studied. I consider them to be of extreme value in the study of the gospel of Jesus Christ." And in a talk given by Elder Bruce R. McConkie at Brigham Young University, (the son-in-law to the one of the committee members, whose words I just read), in January 24, 1972, Brother McConkie said: "In my judgment it is the most comprehensive, intelligent, inspired utterance that now exists in the English language that exists in one place defining, interpreting, expounding, announcing, and testifying of what kind of being God is. It was written by the power of the Holy Ghost, by the Spirit of Inspiration. It is in effect, eternal scripture. It is true."

And yet it's not in our scriptures. The School the Prophets was organized based upon a commandment. Doctrine and Covenants 88:127, "And again, the order of the house prepared for the presidency of the school of the prophets, established for their instruction in all things that are expedient for them, even for all the officers of the church, or in other words, those who are called to the ministry in the church, beginning at the high priests, even down to the deacons..."

This is referring to the School the Prophets. This was the forum established by revelation, in which *The Lectures on Faith* were developed. And after having been delivered there, edited by Joseph, prepared for publication, it became scripture. It was approved in a subsequent revelation. If you turn a few pages to D&C 97:3-6, "Behold, I say unto you, concerning the school in Zion, I, the Lord, am well pleased that there should be a school in Zion, and also with my servant Parley P. Pratt, for he abideth in me. And inasmuch as he continueth to abide in me he shall continue to preside over the school in the land of Zion until I shall give unto him other commandments. And I will bless him with a multiplicity of blessings, in expounding all scriptures and mysteries to the edification of the school, and of the church in Zion. And to the residue of the school, I, the Lord, am willing to show mercy; nevertheless, there are those that must needs be chastened, and their works shall be made known."

The school, the school, the school! They wanted one established. And the purpose of that was to bring the Lectures in. The purpose of the Lectures was to teach people so that you would understand what the doctrines are. The doctrine was *The Lectures on Faith*. The covenants were the balance of the book.

By the way, if you get out the 1835 edition, you will find that the typeface for *The Lectures on Faith* was actually larger type than the subsequent commandments which are in the revelations that we have left over in the Doctrine and Covenants. They were first; they were vouched for by Joseph. They were the "leading items." He considered them so important that they came first in the in the book, the first 74 pages of the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

So having now explained why, I want to turn attention to them. And hoping that you brought your own copy of *The Lectures on Faith*, I want to turn to *The Lectures on Faith*. The edition you will find in the Joseph Smith Papers is not plagued with a bunch of footnotes. If you buy a copy from Deseret Book, you're going to find footnotes that explain a bunch of stuff that in essence contradict the content of *The Lectures on Faith*. And they explain why they know more than Joseph did, and they are fixing his doctrinal errors.

The First Lecture on Faith is essentially asserting the primacy of faith as an operative principle of power that exists with God, and with all of us. Okay, you've left home and you've come here. While you're here your home exists only as a matter of faith to you. You believe it exists. You intend to drive back there to it and to your family, and your dog, and to that infernal parrot that

now can mimic the low battery signal on the fire alarm, she's there too. And so it's a matter of faith, that despite the fact that I am here and out of her presence, my bird is waiting for me when I get home. You act as if these things exist, that you no longer see. In the development of a child, what you find in really young children is that they don't have the capacity to entertain the fact that it still exists. When it's gone, it's gone forever. And it takes a while before the child has confidence that what is removed from their sight continues to exist outside of the presence of their actual observation. It's one of those childhood development things.

What got us beyond that? Everything that exists exists in faith and faith only. I'm using a compilation of *The Lectures on Faith* published from the Brigham Young University archive. I just printed it out. Let's read verse 10 of Lecture 1. "...it is faith, and faith only, which is the moving cause of all action in them;" Verse 12: "And as faith is the moving cause of all action in temporal concerns, so it is in spiritual; for the Saviour has said, and that truly, that 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'" Verse 14: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Verse 15: "...all things in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, exist by reason of faith as it existed in HIM." [Him being God.] Verse 17: "Who cannot see, that if God framed the worlds by faith, that it is by faith that he exercises power over them, and that faith is the principle of power? And if the principle of power, it must be so in man as well as in the Deity? This is the testimony of all the sacred writers, and the lesson which they have been endeavouring to teach to man."

Everything that you are doing, the education that you got, the employment that you have, the plans that you undertake, the things that you design to do, are all a product of your faith. You are a being filled with, animated by, and continually upholding everything in your life by your faith! And yet you don't have the faith to see it. You are a creature of faith. All of you are. And you always have been, and you always will be. Do not be doubtful but be believing. You are here by reason of God's faith. And you have faith to do the things that you do continually. Every movement you undertake, every plan you make, is based upon the faith that you have.

Well, we don't have time to pause on the first one, because I'm hoping to get far enough along in this process. But I'd like you to value *The Lectures on Faith*. I'd like you to study *The Lectures on Faith*. I'd like you to take a lot more time with them. Let's skip to the second lecture. This is the second verse. "We here observe that God is the only supreme governor and independent being in whom all fullness and perfection dwell; who is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient; without beginning of days or end of life; and that in him every good gift and every good principle dwell; and that he is the Father of lights; in him the principle of faith dwells independently, and he is the object in whom the faith of all other rational and accountable beings center for life and salvation."

Did you get that? It's not me, it's not your bishop, it's not Hugh Nibley, it's not your stake president, it's not the Catholic priest down the street, the Pope in Rome, the President of the Church in Salt Lake. It's no man! The principle of faith must be grounded **in God**, the supreme governor. If your faith is grounded in anyone or anything else, you cannot have the faith necessary to attain to salvation. All of these lectures are concerned with your salvation. Look at verse 12. It's a discussion of what went on at the beginning, God talking to man in the Garden of Eden. "From the foregoing we learn man's situation at his first creation, the knowledge with which he was endowed, and the high and exalted station in which he was placed—lord or governor of all things on earth, and at the same time enjoying communion and intercourse with his Maker, without a vail to separate between."

That's where man began. And that's why knowledge of God existed in the first place. In the beginning, God talked to man. And if you think well that was then, what about now? We will get to now. Verse 18, about halfway down: "God conversed with him face to face. In his presence he was permitted to stand, and from his own mouth he was permitted to receive instruction. He heard his voice, walked before him and gazed upon his glory, while intelligence burst upon his understanding, and enabled him to give names to the vast assemblage of his Maker's works."

This was man's original condition. A condition, to which, the gospel is designed to return man. And in fact, at the Second Coming, all who remain will be in that condition once again. The earth is going to be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory and it's going to do so because God will come in dwell here again. And man will be able to converse with him. Look at verse 19. "...though man did transgress, his transgression did not deprive him of the previous knowledge with which he was endowed" [This is really interesting, because in verse 21 Joseph Smith says:] "We next proceed to present the account of the direct revelation which man received after he was cast out of Eden, and further copy from the new translation..."

*The Lectures on Faith* throughout use only what we call the Inspired Version of the scriptures. The only Bible references that they permit into *The Lectures on Faith* are from the Inspired Version of the Bible. Even though the Inspired Version of the Bible was never made public during Joseph Smith's lifetime, he still uses it in order to get *The Lectures on Faith* right. This tells

you something of the priority. He did not give that for general release, general consumption, but it was so important that *The Lectures on Faith* be done correctly, that they are what get quoted here. In fact, this verse, verse 23 is so important that it's been incorporated into the temple endowment itself. "And after many days, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him, I know not, save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying, This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth; wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest, in the name of the Son. And thou shalt repent, and call upon God, in the name of the Son for evermore."

It's so important that it appears in the temple. So important it appears in *The Lectures on Faith*. So important that it was put into *The Lectures on Faith* even though the Inspired Version was not made generally available. And *The Lectures on Faith* are so important that they have been deleted from your scriptures because in 1921, a committee said, 'Nah, don't worry about that. Pay no attention to man behind the curtain.' Really?!? Verse 25: "...though our first parents were driven out of the garden of Eden, and were even separated from the presence of God by a vail, they still retained a knowledge of his existence..." [And then he goes through what happened with Cain, and Cain's gross transgression. But look at verse 30,] "...God continued, after man's transgression, to manifest Himself to him and to his posterity; and, notwithstanding they were separated from his immediate presence that they could not see his face, they continued to hear his voice." [And look at verse 32,] "...God condescended to talk with Cain after his great transgression in slaying his brother..." And you don't think God will talk to you? And you think God is so quiet that He's not speaking to you? At one point God says My works never cease and my words never cease. (Moses 1: 4) The silence that is caused to reign in the heavens is the angels (D&C 38:12) , but not God. The angels withdraw - God does not. And if God would talk to Cain after his transgression in slaying his brother, He will talk with you. You ought to ask yourself why the chronology in the Second Lecture is given, because the chronology is given there. We don't have time to go through it, but the chronology matters, and the life-spans matter. And maybe by the time we get to Provo or the Spanish Fork area we'll revisit that.

Okay, verse 55 of the Second Lecture, "...the extent of their knowledge respecting his character and glory will depend upon their diligence and faithfulness in seeking after him..." [And so the extent of any man's knowledge concerning the character in glory of God depends upon the diligence of the faithfulness of the individual until] "... like Enoch, the brother of Jared, and Moses, they shall obtain faith in God, and power with him to behold him face to face." [Verse 56:] "We have now clearly set forth how it is, and how it was, that God became an object of faith for rational beings; and also, upon what foundation the testimony was based which excited the inquiry and diligent search of the ancient saints to seek after and obtain a knowledge of the glory of God; and we have seen that it was human testimony, and human testimony only, that excited this inquiry, in the first instance, in their minds. It was the credence they gave to the testimony of their fathers, this testimony having aroused their minds to inquire after the knowledge of God; the inquiry frequently terminated, indeed always terminated when rightly pursued, in the most glorious discoveries and eternal certainty."

And what is "the most glorious discovery?" It is the person of God. And what is the "eternal certainty" that you want? It is your own salvation. Because no man can give that to you, but God can. But it is testimony and it is testimony alone upon which that faith can be grounded. Therefore, let me testify to you that when I became a Mormon, I assumed you people were like Joseph Smith. I assumed that you people went out and prayed in groves and God visited with you. I assumed that you are awakened in the course of the night and Moroni, or Peter, or James, or whomever...whoever was vagrant in the halls of heaven...would be sent down to occupy the night in teaching you Mormons. Because this was a regular event. And so was my expectation that it was possible. And I thought it possible because Joseph did it, and because there were missionaries saying "I know" that this stuff is true. I didn't have the lexicon of Mormonese before me that allowed me to say, "I know" equals I really, really, really, believe this stuff. In fact, it was confusing to me when I got a testimony, and I said God actually answered my prayer and damn it, I'm going to get baptized. Because I did not think that I would be a particularly *good* Mormon. And maybe I ought to explain why I wouldn't be a very good Mormon. Shortly before my baptism Ron Mahle and I were on one of our regular "enlisted in the Air Force events," when we, in his maroon Ford Gran Torino were caught on the radar gun doing 120 miles an hour inside the Portsmouth, New Hampshire city limits and were pulled over by the police. Back in those days, DUI did not mean that you were immediately ushered off to jail. But it meant you had the potential for that someday. So Ron, who had blown the breathalyzer, was removed from the driver's seat and I was put into it. He didn't ask me for my breathing test, and so I drove him back to the base. In time, Ron's day of reckoning finally came months later. The arrest warrant was issued and Ron was carted off to jail. On the day that I got the call that I needed to go down to jail and bail him out, we had new Elders transferred into the area, and they needed a ride. Since I was at the time a "golden contact" those calling thought it a good idea to have me drive the missionaries around. Ron being locked up, and me having access to his Torino, I went and picked up the Elders. They were going to ultimately missionary me into the baptismal font, but during that first meeting with the new Elders I had for them yet another golden contact I wanted them to meet. And so they went with me to where Ron was locked up, and they met him at his release from the jail. For them it was an interesting exposure to what passed for "golden contacts" in New Hampshire at that time.

In any event, back in those days, I thought all you people had these things. Then there was the patriarchal blessing that I got which said, and this is a quote, "that you will again be in the presence of your Father in Heaven while in the second estate." That's in my patriarchal blessing. And I thought, well of course it belongs there. That's what we do, isn't it? We're Mormons. I mean we are on God's team, God likes us. He's paying really close attention to us. And I thought we were related to God in an intimate way because - well, the heavens were opened.

Therefore, it was not shocking to me when I encountered an angel. And I have encountered many of them. All of them leave a vivid and permanent impression. I can tell you that it's been nearly 40 years since the first time I met with an angel. I can still close my eyes and see the scene this minute. This stuff happens. My experiences matter only because I can testify that it happens. The content is nothing but voyeurism for you. You need to have a connection with heaven. The scriptures are the authorized accounts given to us that testify of these things. *The Lectures on Faith* are trying to set it forth in a comprehensive way, so that we can all get it. But the Gospel is supposed to be a living, breathing, miraculous thing in your life. Whether I'm saved or not doesn't matter. What matters is whether you are saved. The way you are saved is by coming to know "eternal certainty," the last words of verse 56. And "eternal certainty" is about your salvation, so you are not dependent upon someone else for your knowledge of God. So that you can say in your own right, I know.

Well, this brings us then to the Third Lecture on Faith. Now we are starting to get into some really important stuff. Verse 2 of Lecture 3: "Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation." Faith in **God**, not in man, not in men, not in an institution, not in some magic talisman, faith in God. To the extent that anyone is trying to displace your faith in God, and attract attention to themselves, myself included, that is a perversion and it will not save you. It is a distraction, it is evil, and it is wrong. It is damnable. Anyone who tries to attract your worship, myself included, ought to be sent to hell. It's why I continually remind you, talking about me is a waste of time. Talking about the things that I'm saying, talking about the content of the scriptures, talking about the doctrines that will save you, that is very important. But you can leave me out of that. You don't ever need to mention my name again in your life. But pay attention to the doctrine that we are talking about. Pay attention to the message that comes to us through scripture. You will never be saved because you relied upon some other guy to elevate you. The only way that will happen is when you connect with God. You have to exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. There are three things: First, the idea that he actually exists. (You can get that from someone else.) Second, a *correct* idea of His character, perfections and attributes. Any error in that prevents you from having faith. Therefore, in order to get that right, it's going to require something of you in the way of study and effort if you are going to have - look at the word, they italicized it - a *correct* idea of His character perfections and attributes. That's what you need to study, to know what it is you're going to have faith in. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will. You must know this. And you cannot cover the gap by lying to yourself. You can't lie to yourself pretending that you are on God's course, and then have actual knowledge that the course of life that you are pursuing is according to His will. Nor can you depend entirely upon what other people are telling you. You're supposed to be asking and getting answers from God. Your own answers from God are going to tell you what you need to do. And the sacrifices that He will require of you are unique to you, because the contribution that you can make for the salvation of yourself and others is unique to you. There are things that you and only you can do. And if you will sign up with God, He will have you do them. You may find yourself doing things you prefer not doing. It doesn't matter. If you have faith in Him and you do what He asks, you'll know that the course you are pursuing is according to His will. And doing things He asks of you, according to His will, invariably produce faith. And they produce faith into salvation. Because it always grows. Light either grows or dims, it never stays static. Therefore, when you set out on this course, you never turn back. If you turn back, you lose everything that you've gained up to that point. Let's continue on with verse 5: "Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

You need to know these three things. 1. God exists. 2. You need to study until you have a correct understanding of his character perfections and attributes. 3. You have to live your life so that you actually know that the course you are leading conforms to what He would have. Turn to verse 23: "But it is also necessary that men should have an idea that he is no respecter of persons, for with the idea of all the other excellencies in his character, and this one wanting, men could not exercise faith in him; because if he were a respecter of persons, they could not tell what their privileges were, nor how far they were authorized to exercise faith in him, or whether they were authorized to do it at all, but all must be confusion; but no sooner are the minds of men made acquainted with the truth on this point, that he is no respecter of persons, than they see that they have authority by faith to lay hold on eternal life, the richest boon of heaven, because God is no respecter of persons, and that every man in every nation has an equal privilege." That's you. God has done nothing for Joseph Smith that He will not do for you. I understand all the doctrinal arguments. I can make them all. I *have* made them all. And I've made them to the Lord. I've argued with Him on every point of doctrine, I've quoted to Him every scripture that any of you have advanced, and many more besides.

The Lord has always borne testimony back, consistently. This stuff is true. You're hedging up the way of your own salvation, and of the salvation of others when you say no one has the privilege in our day yet, to lay hold on salvation. You're hedging up the way, you are damning yourself, and you are damning those who will listen to you when you say, people in our time are not yet authorized to exercise faith in God unto salvation because you *are* authorized. I have done so. I have spoken with Him as a man speaks to another. He speaks in plain humility, reasoning as one man with another. He will reason with you.

The first night I got a testimony, I was in the middle of an argument with God. I thought I was arguing with myself until I got down to the final question in my mind, which was, "How do I even know there is a God?" To which the response came, "Who do you think you've been talking to the last two hours?" I didn't realize that still small voice, which will talk with any and all of you, was God. When you exercise the required faith to permit Him to step out from behind the veil, like the brother of Jared, He will do that too. He's no respecter of persons. You should not question what your privileges are. Nor how far you are authorized to exercise faith in Him, or whether you're authorized to do it at all. Don't have doubts about your privileges. And then verse 24 we read it twice: "He is love...he is love." He *is* love.

In my copy it reads, beginning on page 40, "The following excerpt is not part of *The Lectures on Faith*." Therefore, we'll pass over that without comment.

Now we get to the Fifth Lecture, which is what I was hoping get to in this discussion. This is where we run into some problems. This is where by 1921 we have a problem with the nature of God advanced by the Christian world. At one time in the temple endowment there was a player whose role was to be the Christian minister who would, in his effort to convert Adam and Eve, says, "Do you believe in a God who sits on the top of a topless throne? Who center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere? Do you believe in this great being, who is surrounded by a myriad of beings who have been saved, not for any act of theirs, but by his good pleasure?" And Adam responds, "I do not. I cannot comprehend such a being." The minister says, "That is the beauty of it!" Then he goes on to describe the devil. I attended the temple so often before they made the changes in 1990 that I have the temple ceremony memorized. I still recite all the missing parts.

In any event, the Christian naysayers point to Mormons and say, oh you believe in an anthropomorphic God. We Mormons have anthropomorphized God. Instead of deimorphizing man, Which is instead that we are made in His image (as the scriptures inform us) the Christians claim that we have turned God into our image. It's one of those doctrinal points.

Well, the church's leaders in 1921 were not content merely with the Personages given to us by Joseph Smith in the First Vision, and elaborated upon in the Fifth Lecture, their enthusiasm has anthropomorphized and has created a being out of the Holy Spirit. We are going to deconstruct that. Then we are going to look at the scriptures that the committee in 1921 got high-centered on to reject the description of God in the Lectures.

Remember in Lecture 3 verse 4. In order for you to exercise faith you must have a correct idea of God's character, perfections and attributes. You got to have that. If you don't have that then you are missing something that prevents you from having the right kind of faith. So the Fifth Lecture, verse 1: "We shall, in this lecture, speak of the Godhead—we mean the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." [Verse 2:] "There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing, and supreme, power over all things, by whom all things were created and made, that are created and made, whether visible or invisible, whether in heaven, on earth, or in the earth, under the earth, or throughout the immensity of space. They are the Father and the Son—the Father being a personage of spirit, glory, and power, possessing all perfection and fullness, the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, made or fashioned like unto man, which bears record and these three are one or another words these three constitute the great matchless government by whom all things are created and these three constitute the Godhead and are one." [And then if you go down to the bottom of that verse:] "And he being the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and having overcome, received a fullness of the glory of the Father, possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit, that bears record of the Father and the Son, and these three are one; or, in other words, these three constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme, power over all things; by whom all things were created and made that were created and made, and these three constitute the Godhead, and are one; the Father and the Son possessing the same mind, the same wisdom, glory, power, and fullness—filling all in all; the Son being filled with the fullness of the mind, glory, and power; or, in other words, the spirit, glory, and power, of the Father, possessing all knowledge and glory, and the same kingdom, sitting at the right hand of power, in the express image and likeness of the Father, mediator for man, being filled with the fullness of the mind of the Father; or, in other words, the Spirit of the Father, which Spirit is shed forth upon all who believe on his name and keep his commandments; and all those who keep his commandments shall grow up from grace to grace, and become heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; possessing the same mind, being transformed into the same image or likeness, even the express image of him who fills all in all; being filled with the fullness of his glory, and become one in him, even as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one."

Well, the committee in 1921 concluded that this lecture was wrong about God the Father because he says he was a personage of spirit, glory and power. And the Son was a personage of tabernacle. They believe that the personage of the Father is a personage of tabernacle as well. That was the first mistake they thought that Joseph Smith, who vouched for the doctrine in these lectures, who stood in the presence of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, had made. At least in the estimation of this committee – who had not stood in God's presence. Because Joseph erred in doctrine they believed. And they thought they had “keys” that allowed them to change anything, including doctrine. Their “keys” were wholly derived from Joseph, and yet somehow made them superior to Joseph. If you think about that for just a moment you see the foolishness of such a proposition. They concluded that Joseph Smith was wrong about his description of the Holy Spirit. And that the Holy Spirit is not merely one of the Godhead comprised by the mind of the Father and the Son, but was an individual, a personage in its own right. I suppose the Christians are right in one sense. Having an anthropomorphic God in the Father and Son, our committee wanted to do the same with the Holy Spirit.

It is clear there is a disagreement between Joseph Smith and this committee. Therefore, either Joseph Smith had an incorrect idea of God's character, perfections and attributes, or alternatively George F. Richards, Anthony W. Ivins, Melvin J. Ballard, James E. Talmage, John A. Widstoe, and Joseph Fielding Smith had an incorrect idea of God's character, and perfections and attributes because they disagree on this Lecture. The one saying these ideas are so vile and so error ridden that it must be taken out of the scriptures, and the other saying this is a true statement of our doctrine, and therefore, needs to be in our scriptures.

Consequently and correspondingly, either Joseph Smith did not, indeed could not, have faith. Or alternatively George F. Richards, Anthony W. Ivins, Melvin J. Ballard, James E. Talmage, John A. Widstoe, and Joseph Fielding Smith did not, indeed could not, have faith. One or the other is true because they disagree on the definition of God. And you must have a correct idea of His character, perfection and attributes in order to exercise faith in Him. And so now we find ourselves having to choose. It's a healthy thing. You ought to have to choose. You ought to have your salvation at peril on how you choose. You ought to have to decide between whether you believe a man who stood in the presence of God, and bore testimony of what he saw, and what he felt, and what he heard, and others who constitute a committee that disagree with him. You should have to choose. And your eternal peril should hang in the balance as you make that choice. That is a perfect conundrum, in my view. Grow up. Accept the burden. Find out. Learn about God. Or be damned by your carelessness, by your indifference, by your refusal to go forward. It ought to be so. And it ought to be put to you plainly. And you ought to have to choose. And you ought to have to choose every time you hear someone get up and offer something to you and conclude in the name of Jesus Christ. Because they are either offering you something from Him that will save you, or they are offering something that they hope will damn you, because they're signing you up on the wrong team. It ought to be so. Everlastingly, it ought to be so.

Notice that in the definition of the Father and Son *both*, according to Joseph Smith, *both* are **personages**. But the Father is a personage who is described as consisting of spirit, glory and power. The Son on the other hand is described as a personage of tabernacle. What is the difference between a personage of spirit, glory and power, and a personage of tabernacle? What's the difference between the two? What is a tabernacle? If you were looking at the Tabernacle in the days of Moses, it was something that got set up temporarily and got taken down. And Christ is a personage of tabernacle. He came as you have come, to temporarily occupy a body. When Christ was resurrected, the body could enter into the upper level of a locked room without tearing a hole in the ceiling in order to access the room where the apostles were meeting. He could come and He could go from inside a locked upper room where cowering disciples feared for their own safety in the aftermath of the martyrdom of their Lord. He may have been a personage who could say, "Handle me and see." They may have been able to actually make contact with Him. But that tabernacle was no longer confined by the laws governing mortal tabernacles. Read the description of what He did when He appeared to the Nephites. It's not like *your* tabernacle. You hope to inherit a better one.

Well let's take a few scriptures. We ought to pay attention to them on this point as well. Doctrine and Covenants 131:7-8: “There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter.” [Therefore, if the Father, according to verse 2 of Lecture 5, is a personage of spirit, that does not mean He is not also made of material matter. Spirit is matter, more refined, pure, and can only be defined by purer eyes.] “We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we will see that it is all matter.”

The Father is a personage of spirit, glory and power, made of something more refined and pure, but is absolutely comprised of something that is matter. Though in the equation of things, energy and matter, glory and power are things about which, when you get far enough down the road, you find out that there some equivalencies in all of that. The Son on the other hand, was made to be tabernacled here. The biggest problem, if you turn back to D&C 130: 22 is this: “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.”



What exactly is it that dwells inside of you, and is a personage of spirit? What exactly is it that you hope to become, if not another member of the Godhead? What exactly is it that Joseph Smith is saying in this Lecture on Faith about the mind of God? Understand, he had in front of him, because he was in the process of actually doing it during this timeframe, the Inspired Version of the scriptures.

Look up Moses 6:61. "Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter;" [That's another name for the Holy Ghost. He gets to dwell in you, the record of heaven] "the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things..." [This is the definition of the Holy Ghost. And by the way, this definition of the Holy Ghost will read exactly like what we are encountering on *The Lectures on Faith*.]

Joseph Smith said in one of his talks in Nauvoo: "I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and He is within me, and comprehends more than all the world: and I will associate myself with Him. (TPJS p. 350) Joseph Smith was talking about this, the record of heaven, the peaceable things: "...that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment."

The fact of the matter is that when Joseph vouched for this lecture being true, he knew what he was talking about. I don't care what is said by those who argue otherwise. You'll never prove off of a page, something superior to the knowledge that was obtained by Joseph Smith standing in the presence of God. It's impossible to convey. It's impossible to convey adequately, all of the information obtained in the presence of God, using the vocabulary and the methodologies we have here. We stumble on so many things because we simply haven't adequate information to make it known.

In the translation of Genesis and Moses 6:61, Joseph Smith understood what he was talking about. And the Father is in fact, a personage of spirit, glory and power. The Son became the Son as a result of descending into the tabernacle that He occupied, and the Father and the Son are one. So also, you can be one with them if you obtain the same mind with Him. That is the intent they have, to share that mind with you.

You need to have a correct idea of God's character, perfections and attributes. Therefore, since these Lectures were designed to try to give you an acquaintance with what those were, I would commend them to you. Go to Mosiah 3:5: "For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases." [Did you notice the description there, like *The Lectures on Faith*, refers to the Lord Omnipotent, coming down to occupy a tabernacle? And the tabernacle is made of clay.] Look at Alma 7: 8: "Behold, I do not say that he will come among us at the time of his dwelling in his mortal tabernacle; for behold, the Spirit hath not said unto me that this should be the case. Now as to this thing I do not know; but this much I do know, that the Lord God hath power to do all things which are according to his word." [Again he's talking about coming and dwelling in a mortal tabernacle. That is what *The Lectures on Faith* are talking about as well.] Look at Doctrine and Covenants 93: 4: "The Father because he gave me of his fulness, and the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men." [Christ came into the world to take upon himself a mortal tabernacle made of clay. And that's what that Lecture is referring to.] Look at that same section, verse 35: "The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple."

That is a coming day. In order to get out of here, the tabernacle is going to be destroyed. We are all going to lose this tabernacle we temporarily occupy. But the tabernacle that is referred to in this description, in *The Lectures on Faith*, Joseph Smith understood what he was talking about. Joseph Smith understood the correct doctrine. And he's trying to give you the character, the nature, the attributes of God, because until you get that correct, you're not going to have the power to exercise faith in Him. This is why you're going to encounter some amount of resistance between what it is you need to believe, and what it is everybody in your generation believes. It doesn't matter. The responsibility is placed upon you to understand what is true, and what is false. You have to choose. You have to sort it out. You have to come to the correct conclusion. It is only by exercising faith in the correct conclusion that you manage to align yourself with that narrow window through which the heavens are opened, where Jacob's ladder is found.

Well, now we get to the Sixth Lecture. I want to remind you that in Lecture 5, that second paragraph or second verse says that all of us can possess the same mind, and the third paragraph or verse says that we all can become one. It is impossible for me to become one with you, and you to become one with me, unless you obtain the mind of God and I obtain the mind of God. Then we find that all the differences that separate us melt away. Because we're one, not with each other, we're one with God. And that intelligence, that light which animates us that is inside of us, leads us to the position where we become of one mind.

The Sixth Lecture verse 1: "Having treated in the preceding lectures of the ideas, of the character, perfections, and attributes of God, we next proceed to treat of the knowledge which persons must have, that the course of life which they pursue is according to the will of God, in order that they may be enabled to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation."

The course in life that you pursue has to be according to the will of God. I remember shortly after being baptized, and the news of that getting back to my parents. My father was very broad-minded, but my mom was a Baptist with all that implies. She was sincerely convinced that this was a horrible mistake. My father joined with her in letting me know of their disapproval at my becoming a Latter-day Saint by telling me among other things, that he would not want 10% of everything he'd worked for in life to go to the Mormon Church. As a consequence of which, I could expect to receive nothing as an inheritance from him. I had a lot of friends that I grew up with, and although Mormons are in Idaho, and there was in fact, an infestation in Mountain Home where I grew up. The Mormons in Mountain Home were so tentative about their position that they didn't even have a baptismal font in the Mountain Home chapel. Now they've since expanded into a Stake Center, and I'm told that there is now an actual font in the Mountain Home Stake Center. But when I was a kid, there wasn't one, and for good reason; because conversions were just unheard of.

My future father-in-law, my wife's dad, was a missionary in Mountain Home, Idaho when I was a kid growing up. And he undoubtedly was one of the many guys that tracked into our house and got verbally abused by my mom and sent off the porch. They lived just around the side of the block. That's where the missionary house was back then. But as I counted the cost of becoming a Mormon, in effect, I was giving up all I ever knew, all the friends I ever had, my own family, I counted the cost, and I became a Latter-day Saint in any event. What is really strange about the Lord's way of reckoning these things is that I've recently had to count the cost again. And then all those friends that I had now are plagued with yet another dilemma. Yet the Lord always accounts those trades for his purposes, because He's trying to save the individual. He's trying to save each one of us as individuals. I don't care what the cost is. Knowledge of God is worth whatever price you pay, no matter when, no matter what, no matter how often. If He takes away your family, and gives you a new family, and then He takes that family away again, it is a small price to pay. God will ask of you, whatever he will ask of you. The only thing I can say is that no price you pay while tabernacled here is so great that you should withhold it from the altar. Give what He asks. Because it is only by giving what he asks of you, that you can have faith in him unto life and salvation. You have to know, this is verse 2 of Lecture 6, you have to have: "An actual knowledge to any person, that the course of life which he pursues is according to the will of God, is essentially necessary to enable him to have that confidence in God without which no person can obtain eternal life."

You simply can't do it. Because the place you find God will always be, as to this world, lonely. You are necessarily going to become a stranger and a sojourner here. But you take up residency somewhere else. And you're not left without comfort. It's just that that comfort consists in something that is more refined and more pure. And you are left here, muddling through with people who will not understand you, and who will think you are eccentric. They will misjudge your motives. They will misjudge your heart. They will misjudge your ambition. They will misjudge everything there is about you. Christ said, "Rejoice and be exceedingly happy. For so persecuted they the prophets before you."

It really helps if you are a trial attorney. Everything I say in court is opposed. Everything I write has an opposition. Every proposition I advance there is someone saying, "No, no, no! He's wrong, he's wrong, he's wrong!" I live in that world, and I frankly don't care what people want to offer as an argument against anything I advance. The only thing that is necessary for me to do is to declare in plainness, the things I believe and the things I know to be true. And then the burden shifts to you. You judge the matter. You decide it. And if you decide it right, (and forget about me) if you decide the matter right, you will be saved. And if you decide the matter wrong, you will be damned. It's the matter and not me.

In verse 3 it says: "Having the assurance that they were pursuing a course which was agreeable to the will of God, they were enabled to take, not only the spoiling of their goods, and the wasting of their substance, joyfully, but also to suffer death in its most horrid forms; knowing (not merely believing) that when this earthly house of their tabernacle was dissolved, they had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." [That's why Joseph could say as he did, that he left with a conscience void of offense against God or any man...going as a sheep to the slaughter. But he was okay with it. He was okay with it. Verse 4:] "Such was, and always will be, the situation of the saints of God, that unless they have an actual knowledge that the course they are pursuing is according to the will of God they will grow weary in their minds, and faint;" That's the problem with many of us. We grow weary in our minds and faint because we don't know that the course we are pursuing is according to God. Don't grow weary. Stay on that course. I have the absolute conviction that the much of the stuff that we plague ourselves with, and think is such a heavy burden of sin is because our minds are occupied with the wrong stuff. Study the things of God and fill yourself with light and see how quickly it is that all the rest of that stuff will simply dissolve away and evaporate. President Boyd Packer said that you can fix behavior a lot more quickly by studying doctrine than you can by studying behavior.

You know, it's really that first parable where the busy young man who was on his way winds up braiding rope. (Referring to *Ten Parables*.) He was doing that for years on end - braiding rope, occupying his hands. Then he's tying the net with the Master. And during the course of that apprenticeship, he came to know who the Master was. When finally the Master asks him whether he knows who He is, he did. Then the Master then asks of him, "What do you want of me?" The response comes, "Well, there was a time when I would've asked a lot. But now, I'm just content." It's enough. It's enough and to spare. Having an actual knowledge that the course that you are pursuing is according to the will of God, is enough and to spare. Towards the bottom of verse 4: "nothing short of an actual knowledge of their being the favorites of heaven, and of their having embraced that order of things which God has established for the redemption of man, will enable them to exercise that confidence in him, necessary for them to overcome the world, and obtain that crown of glory which is laid up for them that fear God."

We ought to fear God more than we fear man. We ought to fear God more than the loss of anything that is down here. We ought to fear God more than we fear the approval or disapproval, the criticism, the ostracism. We ought to love God and fear Him, because it's our relationship to Him, and Him alone that matters. This requires more than mere belief or supposition that you are doing the will of God, but actual knowledge. We should realize that when these sufferings are ended, we will enter into eternal rest and be a partaker of the glory of God. It does require more than mere belief or supposition. But it's obtained in accordance with this set of principles. It is purchased by the same price, paid by each of us in turn on the same conditions. And no one gets it on any other condition. Your life may be uniquely situated. You may be inside an environment, a group of friends, a family, a neighborhood, an association that is completely unique to you, and has nothing in common with anyone else in this room. Inside of that, whatever sacrifices are required will be exactly the same as it was for Moses, who gave up everything, and gave up everything again. It will be the same as for Abraham, who gave if everything, and then gave up everything again. It will be the same. And you will be called upon to make a sacrifice, because you know God requires obedience to Him, and sacrifice to Him, and not to some man; certainly not to me, but neither to a pope, nor a president, not to a priest, but to Him. You're not trying to get to know me. If you are, you are damn fool. You're supposed to be getting to know the Lord. You're not supposed to be getting to know some local presiding authority.

So paragraph 6: "For unless a person does know that he is walking according to the will of God, it would be offering an insult to the dignity of the Creator were he to say that he would be a partaker of his glory when he should be done with the things of this life. But when he has this knowledge, and most assuredly knows that he is doing the will of God, his confidence can be equally strong that he will be a partaker of the glory of God." [Verse 7:] "Let us here observe, that a religion..." [Not an institution, not an organization, not a club, not a fraternity, a religion...] "...that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain." [I will tell you what is vain, verse 8:] "It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they, in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him."

The authenticity of God's message is not proven by the means of delivery. Even if what seems to you to be an angel comes there are false angels who can and will mislead you. The only way to distinguish between what is, and what is not of God, is through the medium of sacrifice, because when you do this, the vessel is clean—you are clean. And when the vessel is clean before God, then even pretenders coming as an angel of light cannot mislead you. What such false spirits offer is darkness, and you will be able to tell it, because they have not the power to mislead. Everyone can be misled unless the course in life that they pursue is according to God's will. All gifts can be compromised. Look at Mormon 9:27: "O then despise not, and wonder not, but hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him. Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God." You don't acquire favor with God in order to consume what He gives you on your lusts; to satisfy your ambition, to become someone great in the eyes of everyone else. It doesn't happen that way. If you try to turn it in that way, you'll be in the same kind of unfortunate end that we see happening time and time again by the ambitious, and the unscrupulous, the knavish, and the foolish. Be wise in the days of your probation. Strip yourselves of all uncleanness. Check your thoughts. Focus them on something that is light and true and pure. In the end none of us have anything to be proud of. In the end, the only thing

that matters is if God will vouch for us in the day of judgment. If He will, and if He does, then it is a gift. I honestly believe, and I'm not saying this for rhetorical purposes, I honestly believe, I have lived my life, I know the mistakes I've made.

In the book *The Second Comforter*, the little vignettes taken out of my life illustrate how to make a mistake, how to do something wrong, how to fail. And what follows in the chapter, is a description of how to do it right. I have learned all that I have learned, as a consequence of my own failings, my own errors. I genuinely believe that almost every person in this room, I say almost because I know there is a Marine here, almost every person in this room has lived a life that has been better, more pure, more decent, more honorable, and more noble than my own. I am unworthy of anything other than your pity. But I can bear testimony of someone who *is* pure, who is true, and who can save you. My belief is that everyone of you, with a couple of exceptions, every one of you have lived lives so much more worthy of the Lord's recognition than my own. For the life of me, I can't understand why you don't have the faith and confidence to realize that He loves you. And you are more lovable than am I. He probably finds it a lot easier to love you than me.

I feel like I'm the idiot writing graffiti on the walls of heaven, as those who dwell there really wish I would just leave, and who wonder what *he's* doing here. They likely think of the Lord's willingness to forgive the sinners, but think in my case the Lord must be kidding. I think if *you* were to arrive there, there would be a lot more propriety to you rather than I. Have faith. Be believing. Trust in Him.

Let's go to Moses 1:8: "And it came to pass that Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created ..." [To me this is very interesting. He's describing a view that is very often in scripture, referred to as being caught up into an exceedingly high mountain. This is a view up and looking down.]

Let's move to verse 18: "And again Moses said..." [now he's talking because Satan has come during this interlude period as an angel of light, tempting him.] "And again Moses said: I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him: for his glory has been upon me, wherefore I can judge between him and thee. Depart hence, Satan." The defect that Moses perceived in what Lucifer was saying, tempting him, did not consist merely in his presence. This is an angel. Go to Section 76 and read the description. An angel, in a position of authority in the presence of God, was cast down. That being is not someone who, to look upon, would appear to you to be a vile creature. Instead he appears to be someone, who to look upon, is a being of light. A being of glory. He pretends to be an angel of light. The reason Moses could discern between them had nothing to do with the countenance of his appearance. It had to do with the content. It had to do with the Spirit. It had to do with what he radiated. And what Moses was able to discern was that this was not the source of something which he, Moses, chose to take in. As a consequence, he could judge between him and say, I disprefer you.

Look at the Joseph Smith History relating to the thick darkness. I talked about this last time. The Orson Hyde account of that talks about the thick darkness gathered around him. It consisted of the adversary benighting his mind with doubts, and brought to his soul all sorts of improper pictures. The reason it is possible to do that, and more easily so with many of us, is because we have ingested all kinds of improper images which then can be summoned back up.

Look at 2 Nephi 9: 9. This is one of the early sermons given by Jacob. "And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents, who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness." It is not the physical appearance, nor the transformation that takes place. It is the content. This is why you need to know that the course that you are pursuing is in accordance with the will of God. Because once you have made the required sacrifice, you acquire the required knowledge.

Look at Alma 30. This is an explanation given at the bad end of Koriath. The judgments were upon him. And he was writing his final confession. Alma 30: 53: "But behold, the devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me: Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God. And he said unto me: There is no God; yea, and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind; and I taught them, even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true; and for this cause I withstood the truth, even until I have brought this great curse upon me." You see he was convinced by the devil that appeared to him in a form of an angel. It's not always that the adversary comes to you with murderous intent. Sometimes he comes to appeal to your vanity, to your pride. And pride is such a sinkhole that he can get most people there. You could have acclaim, you could have wealth. No, you acquire what you need to acquire, as a consequence of sacrificing for God. And in that process you will endure criticism, rejection, opposition, the world's hatred. You may even be cast out. But, you obtain what you obtain from God, by sacrifice.

In Lecture 6 verse 12: "But those who have not made this sacrifice to God do not know that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight; for whatever may be their belief or their opinion, it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind; and where doubt and uncertainty are there faith is not, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time; so that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence; and where unshaken confidence is not their faith is weak; and where faith is weak the persons will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations, and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them." [Well, he will darken your mind, and after having darkened your mind, lead them in a position in which they are simply unable to have faith, at least in the right things, in order to understand the things of God. Look at verse 10:] "Those, then, who make the sacrifice, will have the testimony that their course is pleasing in the sight of God; and those who have this testimony will have faith to lay hold on eternal life, and will be enabled, through faith, to endure unto the end, and receive the crown that is laid up for them that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." This phrase, "them that love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ" is not just talking about the Second Coming, but is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, whenever He should come, to whomever He should choose to come, when He chooses to do that. It is supposed to be an ongoing event. When you hear He has appeared again, to anyone, you should determine if that is true. If true you should "love the appearing" even if it is to someone who is not in a position of rank, authority or dignity.

I understand that we got off on rather a ragged foot at the beginning of the restoration of the Gospel. How fully we got off on that ragged foot is not well enough appreciated by Latter-day Saints, who choose to see a sort of uniform continuity of progression, from that moment until today, in a rather uninterrupted course of forward momentum. When in fact, Joseph Smith had to fight against terrible opposition inside of the church to get the doctrine he was trying to establish established. Ezekiel chapter 14 was a topic that he raised early. And he raised it again at the time of the Relief Society organization in Nauvoo. Go read Ezekiel chapter 14. Go look at what Joseph Smith was concerned about. He's talking to people who accepted him as a Prophet. And yet they were more interested in getting from him what they wanted, instead of receiving from him what the Lord wanted to give.

Look at verse nine of this sixth Lecture. About halfway through there is a sentence that begins, "And in the last days before the Lord comes." [So this is before the Second Coming of the Lord. But it's in the last days.] "And in the last days, before the Lord comes, he is to gather together his saints who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice." [Not a covenant *to* sacrifice. You can go make a covenant *to* sacrifice every day the temple is open. Making a covenant *to* sacrifice is not at all the same thing as making a covenant *by* sacrifice. It's only through actually sacrificing that it is possible for the Lord to make a covenant with you.] Proverbs 50: 3-5: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." That gathering will be made, not by man, or men or institutions. That gathering will be made by the angels of heaven who hold the keys of responsibility for that. That's in D&C 77: 11. "Q. What are we to understand by sealing the one hundred and forty-four thousand, out of all the tribes of Israel—twelve thousand out of every tribe? A. We are to understand that those who are sealed are high priests, ordained unto the holy order of God, to administer the everlasting gospel; for they are they who are ordained out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, by the angels to whom is given power over the nations of the earth, to bring as many as will come to the church of the Firstborn."

Let me read one more thing and comment. This is the last half of paragraph 10: "But those who do not make the sacrifice cannot enjoy this faith, because men are dependent upon this sacrifice in order to obtain this faith: therefore, they cannot lay hold upon eternal life, because the revelations of God do not guarantee unto them the authority so to do, and without this guarantee faith could not exist." It is a cause and effect. These things are inextricably linked together. If you make the sacrifice, you can enjoy the faith. But all of us, every one of us, were and are, dependent upon making the sacrifice. If we don't do that we are simply unable to lay hold upon eternal life. And the revelations of God don't guarantee you eternal life on any other condition.

The good news is that we have *The Lectures on Faith* and they make these things clear. The good thing is that every one of you I suppose has been baptized. The good thing is, I suppose that every one of you believes in the Prophet Joseph Smith, the restoration of the Gospel, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, therefore, you have an enormous leg up. The only question is will you allow it to become a living breathing faith? Will you allow it to lay hold upon you? Will you allow it to become alive, animated, a fire again burning upon the earth today? The closest thing there is to life itself, that isn't life, is a fire. On the cover of the book, "*Passing the Heavenly Gift*," there is a candle, and it's smoldering. If you read Hebrew, and you pay attention to the smoke coming off of that, you'll find something hidden there. There are a lot of things hidden in the covers of my books, except for the ones that are just plain. Those were done to make them as cheap as possible. But the smoldering candle, how many of you have ever had a candle that was still a smoldering spark, and you wanted it to reignite, but you didn't have a match. What did you do? You blew on it. You blew the breath of life upon it. To reignite the flame, all it takes is the breath of the Spirit speaking to you. That's all it takes, and the breath of the Spirit is contingent upon what it says to you. It is

dependent on the faith that you have in God, to hear what it is that he's saying. But he is surely saying things to you. He doesn't just talk to me.

Ron and I were talking last week. He knows a fellow who is the head of some 'ex-Mormon, we- got-a-chip-on-our-shoulder' group. And apparently in one of the many newspaper articles there was something about me saying, Jesus spoke to me. Man, if that doesn't sound weird enough in a newspaper. So Ron wanted to clarify. And rather than answer him - and Ron's probably going to read this - with some elaborate explanation, I said, "Ron! Dude, why did you become a Mormon? Why does anybody become Mormon?" Because God speaks to you! The only reason anyone becomes a Mormon is because God speaks to them. The missionaries come out, they say a bunch of stuff, they put on their sales hat, they do their schmoose thing. They interrupt you as you bring your groceries out of the parking lot of the store. They harass you endlessly. They pamphleteer you. In my day it was it was a flannel board story.

When they finally convince you to pray and ask God, no one becomes a Mormon unless they get an answer from God. That's why Ron converted, and asked me to baptize him 40 years ago today. That's why Ron subsequently went on a mission for the LDS Church. That's why Ron subsequently got married in the temple; even though he is now a disaffected Latter-day Saint. That's why Ron and I, even today, share a brotherhood, share of friendship, share a conviction that God once spoke to both of us. He still talks with me on occasion. No matter how much I may prefer to be somewhere else, doing something else, I oftentimes find myself often doing what I have been asked to do.

I don't know if it's important that anyone from Idaho Falls comes here. I don't know if it's important if anybody from Idaho Falls hears one word. But I do know that a testimony needs to be spoken on this ground, in this place. I know that everyone will be accountable for that. Not just those who happen to stumble upon this. I know that the Lord knows a great deal more than do I, and that very often I only figure out later what He has had in mind all along. God is moving systematically. He is taking the measure of the Latter-day Saints. His hand is about to move again in the affairs of men. We have a window. This is *your* dispensation. *You* are accountable. Those prophecies spoken to Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni in his room aren't going to fulfill themselves. There has to be someone who has faith. There has to be someone who rises up. And when he set His hand and He invites you to join in, He wants *you* to know *Him*. When He sets that in motion, then you need to respond. Not to me, not to any man. You need to respond to Him. This is His work. He and only He will organize it. He and only He will roll it forth. But as one of the verses that we read tonight recited, there has to be a people prepared. And that requires that faith return to the earth again. And if what has happened with *The Lectures on Faith* in 1921, prevented people from acquiring faith, because they misapprehend the character and nature and attributes of God from that date until today, then it's time for you to shake that off. Rise up and lay hold upon faith again. Joseph saw the Father and the Son, he testified about them, and he described them. I've seen the Father and I've seen the Son, and they both have spoken with me. The only reason I mentioned that is to give you confidence that it can happen. It should happen to *you*. You should be talking to them. They can tell you what you need to know. Do not be at all surprised if the subject about which you need to converse with the Lord consists almost entirely of a discussion about the scriptures. Do not be surprised if an angel comes to minister to you and the topic upon which the angel would like to converse involves the scriptures. Do not be surprised if the Lord authorizes someone to deliver a message and the message consists of expounding the scriptures. On the road to Emmaus, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, what Christ did was open up to them how all things testified of Him. What all things testified of what is currently underway. Make no mistake about it, it is getting underway. I don't care where you look. I don't care what society you look at. I don't care what economy you observe, what culture you observe. The earth and all of the people on her are waxing old like a garment. And do you know what they do with garments that are old? They are burned.

The way to preserve yourself consists in having faith in God. And the conditions upon which faith in God are obtained are exactly the same for you as they were for Moses, and Abraham, and all of those who have ever had faith. Joseph Smith is the latest, great example of that.

Well, it would be incomplete, and I would be remiss if I didn't close in the name of Jesus Christ. I intend always to be accountable to Christ for the words that I deliver. I don't set the agenda. I don't choose the topic. I do what I'm *asked* to do. I say what I've been told to say. I hope you understand how little I matter and how much your relationship to Christ and the Father *do* matter. I hope you understand that *His* words should be clear and distinct when you hear them spoken. And you should be able to judge and you should be able to judge the matter correctly. I testify of Him because I have seen Him. I have faith in Him because I know that every word He has spoken has been vindicated in His Gospel. And the only reason we are unable to lay hold upon those blessings is because we simply do not have the faith required to do so.

Hence, at the beginning of this process this year it is necessary to spend a night in Idaho Falls on the subject of faith, using *The Lectures on Faith*, which I regard as binding Scripture. These were vouched for by the Prophet Joseph Smith. These are every bit as, if not more important than the revelations that follow in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. We can't spend all

the time necessary, and you can't endure those chairs another five minutes, but pick up *The Lectures on Faith*. They don't take long to read. Forget all those footnotes that have been interlineated by folks after 1921. Forget all the articles that are there in order to prop up a different definition of what the Holy Ghost is. Forget about all the drivel. In fact, go photocopy the edition that you find in the Joseph Smith Papers, *Revelations and Transcriptions*, volume 2 in 1835 and read it there. It is an astonishingly, wonderful, light filled document. As Bruce R. McConkie said, "It is scripture, it is true"

Thank you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

# Repentance

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Lecture 3 Logan, Utah

40 years ago yesterday would have been a Friday. That was the day that my friend Ron Mahle asked me to baptize him. The next day was a Saturday, 40 years ago. Today it's a Sunday. I was in the Air Force at the time. I had been in one squadron, and then was reassigned to a different squadron. While I was in the first one, I had a number of buddies I had associated with. These were friends, compadres, one of whom was a fellow named Jimmy Givens. I think Jimmy was from Chicago.

Jimmy was a black airman, and I was a white airman. As it turns out I still am (white that is, but not an airman). Jimmy and I hung out together a great deal, but then I lost contact with him for a period of months. He and I had been Baptist before my conversion. We had even attended a local Portsmouth, New Hampshire Baptist church together on occasion.

As part of our earlier routine, he and I would go over to the base bowling alley. Because they only sold beer in pitchers, we always bought a pitcher of beer and a pizza to share. That was our thing when we were hungry.

I hadn't seen him for a number of months, and then ran into him. And he said, "Hey let's go over to the bowling alley." And I responded, "Okay, sure." But when we got there I hadn't been thinking that the normal ritual was a pitcher of beer and a pizza. So as it came time to order we ordered the pizza just as we always did. Then to my surprise Jimmy ordered a Pepsi. And I thought, 'well that's good; that relieves me of the responsibility to deal with the pitcher of beer.' So I ordered a Pepsi also. Then Jimmy said, "I don't drink alcohol anymore." And I said, "Oh damn that's funny, I don't either anymore." I said, "For me it's a religious thing." He said, "No kidding! For me it's a religious thing too." And I said, "That's great! What's the religion?" He replied, "I'm a Muslim." I said, "Holy crap, I'm a Mormon!" He said, "You are a blue-eyed devil!" And I said, "No kidding! You were not valiant in the preexistence and you can't hold priesthood!" Both of us had a good laugh about those quirks in these new faiths we had adopted. So there we were, buddies still, in spite of the gulf of religion which then separated us, and it just didn't matter. I don't think he's Jimmy anymore. He's probably Aziz Mohammed something or other. But Jimmy and I remain buddies despite the newly adopted enormous religion gulf that intervened to separate us at that point.

When I became a Latter-day Saint, one of the things that typified, in those days, the Latter-day Saint, was the libraries every member had in their homes. In Exeter, which is another town in the Portsmouth, New Hampshire ward boundaries, there was an elderly woman named Sister Long. She ran, what was back then (we don't have them anymore), The Seventies Bookstore. These were a chain of bookstores where you could purchase LDS materials. Sister Long was the proprietor of the bookstore, which consisted of her covered back porch where her inventory of LDS books was displayed. Since she was an avid reader, Sister Long read her inventory. So whenever you bought from her, you were actually buying a book she had already read, but fortunately had not marked up.

It was my understanding back then that if you were going to be a Latter-day Saint, you needed to acquaint yourself with all kinds of doctrinal and historical information about the faith. As a consequence of that, I began by reading everything I could get my hands on. In those days LeGrand Richards was still alive. The missionary discussions were largely based upon *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*. LeGrand Richards had been the Presiding Bishop of the Church, and was then called into the Quorum of the Twelve. His book, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* was one of the first things I read to better acquaint myself with the doctrine the missionaries had been teaching. I also read all of those early biographies about Wilford Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor. *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, which I bought from Sister Long, got entirely used up. I recently had to buy a new one because the one I bought from Sister Long just fell apart. Now I still have it, but if you aren't careful when you open it, it just falls to pieces in your hands. Mormons were by definition in those days, studious, careful, well read, well considered, doctrinally prepared folks who would defend the faith. Therefore, if you were going to run with them, you needed to have a religious education of your own. As a consequence of that, I began at that early stage to acquire a library, because you were not a legitimate believing Latter-day Saint without one back then.

Remember, at the time Marion G. Romney was in the First Presidency, Bruce R McConkie was in the Twelve, Mark E. Peterson was the doctrinal go-to guy in those days, also one of the Twelve. I mean what you got at the time from those church leaders was doctrine, an exposition of doctrine.

Now as we all know Bruce R. McConkie has taken a number of broadsides of late by the church distancing itself from him. When the recent book *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* came out, the behind the scenes criticism leveled at him by other general authorities is documented. Elder Mark E. Peterson noted some approximately 1700 errors found



in the first edition of *Mormon Doctrine* that needed to be corrected. As a result of all that has come to public attention of late, Bruce R. McConkie's reputation has suffered somewhat. But in those days he was still considered a sound doctrinal authority. He and his father-in-law (Joseph Fielding Smith) wanted to stabilize the doctrine of the church, and they made an effort to do that. The result included the five volumes, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, which I bought and read. It consisted of Joseph Fielding Smith's answers, as compiled by his son-in-law. Similarly, they produced the three volumes of *Doctrines of Salvation*, which I also read. There was also the *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*. That work was not a Joseph Fielding Smith product edited by Bruce R. McConkie but was instead Bruce R. McConkie's writing. McConkie also wrote *Mormon Doctrine*, which I studied. He had begun publishing his *Mortal Messiah* series. In those days, doctrine really counted. Therefore, I studied doctrine because it was so important a matter in our church then.

Well, last night in Idaho Falls, we talked about faith. Tonight we're going to be talking about repentance. But I want to follow up on something that I did not do last night when we were looking at *The Lectures on Faith*. I can give you the citations if you want to look it up. It is in the second volume of the *Revelations and Translations*, and you can read it beginning on page 565 of that volume. It is a reproduction of 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The reason I cite the 1835 edition is because it was that edition that got canonized by the vote of the church. It is that edition that, in the preface, Joseph Smith vouched for all the items of doctrine that were contained within *The Lectures on Faith*. In the 1844 edition that would be published later, they would not go through the exercise of re-sustaining *The Lectures on Faith* because they had already been canonized. They simply added to, and elaborated on, the revelations received between then and 1844.

Beginning on page 565 and running through page 567 of the Joseph Smith Papers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume of *Revelations and Translations* there is an account of how *The Lectures on Faith* were canonized on 17 August 1835 when the Doctrine and Covenants was approved by the church as scripture. The account begins with President Cowdery, who was Co-President of the Church at that point.

"President Cowdery arose and introduced the 'book of doctrine and covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints,' in behalf of the committee: he was followed by President Rigdon, who explained the manner by which they intended to obtain the voice of the assembly for or against said book: the other two committee, named above, were absent. According to said arrangement W.W. Phelps bore record that the book presented to the assembly, was true. President John Whitmer, also arose, and testified that it was true. Elder John Smith, taking the lead of the high council in Kirtland, bore record that the revelations in the said book were true... Elder Levi Jackman, taking the lead of the high council of the church in

Missouri bore testimony that the revelations in the said book were true, and that the said High Council in Missouri, bore testimony that the revelations in said book were true, and the said high council of Missouri accepted and acknowledged them as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. President W.W. Phelps then read the written testimony of 12 as follows. 'The testimony of the witnesses of the book of the Lord's commandments, which he gave to his church through Joseph Smith, jr. who was appointed by the voice of the church for this purpose: we therefore feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of the earth, and upon the islands of the sea, that the Lord has borne record to our souls, through the Holy Ghost, shed forth upon us, that these commandments were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for all men, and are verily true... Elder Leonard Rich bore record of the truth of the book, and the Council of the Seventy accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by unanimous vote. Bishop Newell K. Whitney bore record of the truth of the book, and with his counselors, accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by unanimous vote. Acting Bishop, John Correll bore record of the truth of the book ... Acting President, John Gould, gave his testimony in favor of the book, and the travelling Elders, accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. Ira Ames, acting as President of the Priests, gave his testimony in favor of the book, and with the Priests, accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. Erastus Babbitt, acting President of the Teachers, gave his testimony in favor of the book, and they accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. William Burgess, acting President of the Deacons, bore record of the truth of the book, and they accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. The venerable President Thomas Gates, then bore record of the truth of the book, and with his five silver-headed assistants, and the whole congregation, accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith by a unanimous vote. The several authorities, and the general assembly, by a unanimous vote, accepted the labors of the committee."

So I point that out. If you get a copy of the 1835 edition, you will read all that in the book. It's appended in the printed edition in the back as the very final thing - the testimony of these people. When *The Lectures on Faith* were removed from the scriptures in 1921 by the committee headed by George Richards, including Anthony Ivins, Melvin J. Ballard, James E. Talmage,

John A. Widstoe and Joseph Fielding Smith, in addition to not having a vote to remove it from our scriptures (leaving it in the position, in my view, of still being scripture and canonized), they are in essence rejecting not merely the vote that was taken in August 1835 accepting it as canonized scripture for our instruction, but they are rejecting the testimony of all those who were present and bore testimony, whose names I've just read to you as well. So I agree with what Bruce R. McConkie said at BYU on 4 January 1972. *The Lectures on Faith* are eternal scripture. It was written by the power of the Holy Ghost, by the spirit of inspiration, it is scripture, it is true.

This is the reason I turned to *The Lectures on Faith*, commending them to you yesterday. We will look at them a little bit again tonight. In the 1835 compilation of the Doctrine and Covenants, there are sections that are still in our Doctrine and Covenants, but they are numbered differently. I will give you the cross-reference to today's Doctrine and Covenants. But for the purpose of preparing my remarks for tonight, I used the old 1835 edition.

Joseph's doctrines, teachings, revelations, and counsel were supposed to be kept and hearkened to by the church. In the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants section 14 [today Section 43] it says, "Ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church through him who I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand." [Making it clear that when we get something from Joseph, we as a church were directed by the Lord, to respect what it was that came through him.] In section 32: 2 [today Section 5] it says: "I have entrusted unto you, my servant Joseph, for a wise purpose in me; and it shall be made known unto future generations, but this generation shall have my word through you." [Don't read the word "generation" in that context narrowly, because the word "generation" sometimes has varying meanings and the safe meaning in that context, of that statement to Joseph, includes all those who live after the day that Joseph came and bore testimony. Therefore, it would include you.]

In section 46:1-3 [today Section 21] it says: "Behold there shall be a record kept among you, and in it **thou** [meaning Joseph] shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...Wherefore, meaning the church, **thou** [the church, you folks] shall give heed unto all **his** [singular personal pronoun, meaning Joseph's] words, and commandments, which **he** [singular personal pronoun] shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me: for his word ye shall receive, as if from my own mouth, in all patience and faith; for by doing these things, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you" (emphasis added) [The "gates of hell" will not prevail provided we give heed to Joseph's words. Not mine. Not another man's. The bastion that is established by the Lord that is the rock upon which the winds and rains can beat without causing any harm to the foundation, is the rock of revelation given to us in this generation through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Everything else turns to sand.] "For thus saith the Lord God, **him**" [a singular personal pronoun, referring to the individual man, the Prophet Joseph Smith. Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah, indeed!] "have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good: and **his** diligence I know, and **his** prayers I have heard; yea, **his** weeping for Zion I have seen, and I will cause that **he** shall mourn for her no longer, for **his** days of rejoicing are come unto the remission of **his** sins, and the manifestation of my blessing upon **his** works" (emphasis added). [It doesn't promise Joseph, Zion. It doesn't promise him anything of the sort. It promises him rejoicing because his sins are remitted. His sins, of course, are not ours. At this point in 1835, you will remember that by 1832 the church was already under condemnation, but Joseph was not. His sins are remitted, and that will cause Joseph to rejoice.] "...they shall believe on **his** words, which are given **him** through me, by the Comforter, which manifesteth that Jesus that was crucified by sinful men for the sins of the world;" (emphasis added).

So as I read the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, sections 14, 32, 46 of that volume, it becomes abundantly apparent that, to the extent that the church was a true and living church at that moment, it was a true and living church because God owned the words that came through Joseph and God was then speaking through him. God vouched for the words that came through Joseph, and God cautioned them, and us, about ignoring the words that come through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Section 51: 2 (today Section 28): "No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church, excepting **my servant Joseph Smith, jr.** for **he** received with them as Moses; and thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto **him**." (Emphasis added.)

Section 84: 1-4 (today Section 90) Again this is the 1835 edition. This is a revelation given in March 1833 in which Joseph Smith was called by the Lord with the words: "My son... Verily I say unto **you**" [Again a personal individual pronoun, identifying an individual by the name of Joseph Smith.] "the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from **you**, while **thou** art in the world, neither in the world to come: nevertheless, through **you** shall the oracles be given to another; yea, even unto the church. And all they who receive the oracles of God, let them beware how they hold them, lest they are accounted as a light thing, and they are brought under condemnation thereby, and stumble and fall." What is the definition of "oracles" to be given by Joseph to the church? Is the definition of "oracles" the transient, changing with every whim program, shifting from day-to-day and person-to-

person future alterations made by men? Is it something which allows doctrine vouched for by Joseph to be discarded? Or are the oracles instead the doctrines, the commandments, the revelations, the words contained in what Joseph Smith handed to us in the Book Mormon, *the Lectures on Faith* and the revelations given through him? Be careful about how you interpret the scriptures. Be careful about how flexible you think an unchanging God can be made into a changeable Being who has given His power unto men. (2 Ne. 28: 5.) Be careful about believing that the God who is the same today, yesterday, and forever is now so whimsical that on one day one thing can be asked of you, and on another day something altogether different can be asked of you. And to the extent that you detect the varying shifting sand beneath your feet, ask yourself why that is so. And ask yourself, where might I go to find the rock upon which to establish my feet, so that the winds and the rains might not mow me down. Because God vouched for Joseph Smith, and God vouched for those things committed to you, through him. When I heard the testimony given by D. Todd Christofferson to BYU Idaho, bearing testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith a week ago, I rejoiced. Would to God we all took that more seriously. I wish we could recognize that if there is a Prophet whose words we need to heed it begins with the primacy of Joseph Smith. All other things, all the revelations, all your attitudes, all your notions - everything ought to be measured against what we received through him. God vouched for his words. I vouch for his words. I know he was a prophet of God. The extent to which my knowledge of Joseph runs allows me to say, I know that man has stood in the presence of God. And I know that God has, and does, vouch for him today.

So, let us regard what Joseph vouched for as the important doctrine of salvation, which is what he called *The Lectures on Faith*, as if it were a law unto the church. God's word through Joseph. Words and commandments from God to us, given by the Comforter, to which we must be obedient, so we may avoid condemnation, stumbling, and falling. All those things are in fact, the things which the Lord said about Joseph in revelation that we still find in our scriptures.

We got through the Sixth Lecture on Faith but we didn't touch the Seventh. I want to touch on it briefly tonight. Any treatment of that volume of scripture is always invariably brief. We can't harvest everything that's there. The Seventh Lecture on Faith, second paragraph: "As we have seen in our former lectures that faith was the principle of action and of power in all intelligent beings, both in heaven and on earth..." [It both motivates you to act and it produces power when you act. In that same second paragraph it says: ] "... no world has yet been framed that was not framed by faith..." [God operates on a principle of faith. As I pointed out last night, all of us do too. It's just inevitable.]

In paragraph 4: "...it is by reason of this power (faith) that all the hosts of heaven perform their works of wonder, majesty, and glory. Angels move from place to place by virtue of this power..." [And then in paragraph 5 it says:] "...the whole visible creation as it now exists is the effect of faith." [Turn to paragraph 9:] "...what is the difference between a saved man and one who is not saved? We answer: from what we have before seen of the heavenly worlds, they must be persons who can work by faith and who are able, by faith, to be ministering spirits to them who shall be heirs of salvation; and they must have faith to enable them to act in the presence of the Lord, otherwise they cannot be saved."

They have to act. They have to be enabled, as a consequence of their faith, to be able to act in the presence of the Lord. Otherwise, they cannot be saved. Remember when we started this in Boise we were looking at what was said to Joseph in the First Vision about the power of godliness. They have a form but they do not have the power. They lack something because they teach for commandments the doctrines of men. What does it mean to have faith sufficient to enable you to act in the presence of the Lord, otherwise they cannot be saved? Well, Doctrine and Covenants section 93:1: "VERILY, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;" Every soul who "forsaketh his sins." You are not going to get past your sins until God forgives you. But you need to awaken to the fact that you possess them and turn from them. Because turning from them is repentance, it's turning to face Him. You can still have a load that needs to be dropped because we are all heavy laden with sin. But forsaking your sins means that you would prefer Him over everything else that there is. So turn and face him. "...cometh unto him..." [Well, the only way you can leave that load behind, is to get down in prayer, seeking Him, and asking Him to free you from the load; to allow you, as Alma recounts in his 36th chapter of the book of Alma, the terrible agony that he felt, and calling upon God to be redeemed. Then when God answered, the pain and distress that he had, was equal to the joy and the exhilaration he felt on the other side of being cleansed.] "...calleth upon my name..." [You have to do that.] "...and obeyeth my voice..." [That would include not merely the things that were given to us by Joseph Smith that you may be neglecting, but obeying His voice in what He tells you here and now. The agenda for you is different than the agenda for me. Your needs are different than mine. Your responsibilities are different than mine. You have your own family, you have your own ward, you have your own neighbors and you have your own issues. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters – you are part of a community somewhere. And inside of that, all of you need to listen to the voice of God because he loves everyone. He loves that eccentric aunt that you just dread having come around. You can't for the life of you, understand why she thinks cloves should be poked into a turkey on Thanksgiving. You wonder if maybe there should be a procedure that more easily confines her to someplace where they administer psychotropic drugs. God loves her as much as He loves you. God loves all of us. Your agenda,

and the people you can affect, and the relief that you can administer, and the needs that are in front of your eyes day by day, are uniquely yours. And the relief that you can grant to those around you, that's yours. It was given to you by God as a gift. Don't harden your heart.]

I was reading about the problems that the early saints experienced in that 1856 - 1858 timeframe. I was reading from the diaries, not the official history, not from the stuff that is made public; these are the private diaries and journals. I was reading from that material in sacrament meeting earlier today. We went home and we attended our church meetings this morning, and I literally cried as I read what they were called upon to go through. I am disinclined to be critical and non-appreciative of the fact that those who went before us suffered as they did in order to preserve and make possible for us today the programs and the scriptures. They would not allow the restoration, through Joseph, to lapse into silence and neglect. It doesn't matter to me that they made mistakes. We make mistakes too, every one of us. If you've lived a perfect life you wouldn't be here. The fact is we all are broken, and we are all in need of repair. There was valiance among the early saints and I am appreciative of all the struggles and hard lessons they were taught. I have learned so much from studying them. Those who believe I dismiss them are utterly wrong. Trying to understand God's hand sometimes requires us to look troubling events squarely and to realize how failure is not only part of our past, but it is an important part of it. We can and will fail too, and their struggles will be in vain, if we are so arrogant as to not deal with these events truthfully.

"...come to him..." [Because the only repairman that exists in the universe inside of this matrix, is Christ whose assignment it is to repair and redeem and heal us.] "...obey his voice..." [No matter how much it may disagree with the flow of all that goes on around you. People thought I was a madman, teaching gospel doctrine when we got to the King Benjamin talk about not allowing beggars to go by and neglecting them. (Mosiah 4: 16) I got push back every four years when we got through that material because I was and am saying you don't judge the beggars. You really don't have any right to do that. And then you have Paul's statement about being careful to entertain strangers because angels sometimes come among you unawares. (Heb. 13: 2.)]

Let's assume for arguments sake, that John the Beloved lingers still (see D&C 7: 3-4). And let's assume for argument sake, that John would like to know your heart. How might he best do that? I would suggest coming to you as a beggar, smelling foul and in obvious need, asking you for relief is the perfect way to find out if that same spirit animates you as animated King Benjamin, when King Benjamin said not to suffer the beggar to put up their petition to you in vain. Because are we not all beggars? And of course, that is not merely a rhetorical question. Are we not all beggars? Well, it's self-evident, isn't it?

"...obeyeth my voice and keep my commandments..." [*My commandments*, given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, entrusted to you, should be respected by you. They were given by the voice of the Spirit to you, asking you to help those around you. The relief that people need sometimes can only come from one source, and that is you. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, you can relieve the burdens of those around you. Why do you think God cares about the widows and the orphans and the poor and the infirm?]

Who at Bountiful appreciated His coming the most? Was it those who were called to preside, who names were given to us because they were recorded in the record? Or was the nameless group He had brought to Him to be healed? All of those in need of healing were brought forward and healed. (3 Ne. 17: 9.) We read the record and say, I've got name here. I've got Timothy. I've got a name here. I've got a Nephi. I have a name here, and this must be someone big and great and important. (3 Ne. 19: 4.) But unto whom did the Lord minister more? And who was it in Bountiful who appreciated more what the Lord had come to do?

Be like your Master. Do what you can for those around you who are infirm. They are here in abundance; the brokenhearted, the families who are in need. If you want to be saved, help the Lord save others. Not by preaching and clamoring and demanding they view the world like you do, but by giving them a helping and charitable hand. Your most powerful sermon can be in the effort you make, and the time you take to let people know you care about them. If you would like to repent of your sins, take a look around at those in need and do what you can for them. That is the first step. When your heart is like His, then you open up so that He can enter in. And when your heart is unlike Him, well, there's no room for His love of others until He breaks break it; which He will do.

You do these things, and "you shall see my face and know that I am." That is "know," not merely believe, but know. This is still that same paragraph 9 in *The Lectures on Faith*, seventh lecture about the third of the way down. [By the way, in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine Covenants, section 76 is about 8 verses. In our current edition it is 119 verses. So if you were going to memorize a verse in those days, well, you are like Gettysburg-address-worthy. It is formidable.] Okay, so about a third of the way down, it poses the question: "...where shall we find a saved being? For if we can find a saved being, we may ascertain without much difficulty what all others must be in order to be saved. We think that it will not be a matter of dispute, that two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved; for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the salvation of every creature which will be saved; and if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be, or else not

be saved. We ask, then, where is the prototype? Or, where is the saved being? We conclude, as to the answer of this question, there will be no dispute among those who believe the Bible, that it is Christ: all will agree in this, that he is the prototype or standard of salvation; or, in other words, that he is a saved being." [Skipping down a couple of lines:] "...if he were anything different from what he is, he would not be saved; for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else..."

So, according to *The Lectures on Faith*, if you would be saved, you have to be exactly, precisely what Christ is, and nothing else. You have been told all your life that is impossible. Well, it is impossible in one sense, and it is a mandatory requirement in another sense. It is impossible because, as it turns out, we all err. We always have. That is what the atonement was designed to fix. He picks that burden up and He carries it for us.

However, the fact that He will carry that burden for us does not relieve us, from the moment it is taken away, from then going forward to do good. You *can* be Christ-like. You can administer relief to those around you. You can, as He said, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit those who are in prison. (Matt.25: 34-40.) Some of the most profound, deepest, spiritual experiences I have had recounted to me by people I know, came from those who go out to the State Penitentiary in Bluffdale, Utah and hold family home evening with prison inmates. That ministration, that service, elevates the servant. Their heart gets moved with compassion. Your heart needs to be like Christ's heart; moved with compassion for others.

And the way you do that is imitative at first. Then it is informed by the experience later, when you have acted consistent with His laws. What begins as imitation, and merely that, finds room within to have genuine compassion for the needs of others. Christ is the prototype, but you *can* be like Him. There are godly people walking around, many of them are elderly. Many of them have long since forgotten their own needs and they spend their lives in service of others. You can find that within the church with many Relief Society Presidents. You can find that within the church with people who fill legitimate needs with home teaching. You do not have to go find another church in which to serve. You don't have to find new neighbors, and you do not have to have a new family. That eccentric group of people, that tribe into which you were born - you belong there as an example of Christ's love and compassion.

The reason Christ says in the Sermon on the Mount they are going to speak all manner of evil against you falsely for His name's sake (Matt. 5: 11-12), is not because of anything you have done. It is because down here no one believes. No one believes the genuine thing exists. Everyone's heart has been disappointed by what men prove through their unworthiness. Everyone says the man I thought was going to be so great has turned out to be just be another broken ship-wreck. Their skepticism of you has been earned in this environment by everyone they have ever met. Therefore, you have got to be different. And you have got to expect their broken hopes are going to be taken out on you. Until at last, and it may require your life to do it, you need to show as Christ did, that faith can yet exist here. Let it exist here in you. Let it live and breathe in you. You needn't look for another life, another opportunity somewhere else far away. It is right here, it is in your lap, it is in your family, it is in your home, it is in your community, it is among all those egotistical, hardheaded, stubborn Gentiles that include us, lauding one another and talking about what great things we are. Serve them. Submit to their rule. Do it in a way that will touch their hearts and be the real thing. Be the real thing, and finally at last there will be those who are worthy to lead. You need to be like Christ. It is precise, it is exact.

So let's turn to a few scriptures and interrupt this for a moment, because we want to repent after all. We want to change what we are. Let's go to the Doctrine and Covenants section 84: 33. Now I'm simply going to allow you to entertain your present views on some things for tonight. But we're going to have to deconstruct a bunch of junk later and we will do that in Utah County, November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Beginning at verse 33 of Section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants: "For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God." ["Sons" and "seed;" it is necessary that you become that in order that you become "the church and kingdom, the elect of God." It is a family belonging to God. This is about a return to the earth of a Heavenly Family. As we saw in the statements made to Joseph Smith, the hearts have to be turned to the fathers.]

Verse 35: "And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;" Now many of you read verse 35 and you think it means if you fetch this priesthood by ordination, *ipso facto*, you have fetched Jesus. Praise Jesus! [And by way, Joel Olsteen is coming to the E Center. You are not going to want to miss that. It's a mega church. It's a mega church in transit. It is going to come to the E Center. SUNDAY, SUNDAY, SUNDAY. I'm sorry. I get worked up when the evangelicals show up on the horizon. He had some nice things to say about Mormons though. So Joel Olsteen has kind of crept into the positive column for me, as of late.]

I want to suggest that verse 35 can also be read exactly as D&C 93: 1 is read. That is to say, if you are going to receive this priesthood you're going to get it from Him. That is you enter into His presence, you receive Him, if you have it. And when you have it, as a consequence of having it, you receive Him.

Verse 36: "For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;" I want to suggest that throughout scripture, almost invariably, the word "servants" is referring to angelic ministrants. So angels minister, that would be Aaronic. Then Christ ministers, that would be sons of Moses. Verse 37: "And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;"

It is the purpose of the Son to bear record of the Father. It is the purpose of the Son to bring others to the Father so that there might be many sons of God. Verse 38: "And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him."

You cannot go where the Father is without entering into, and receiving an inheritance. You know one of the things that we tend to think is that if you get something, this is based upon statements made in 132, but if you get something here, and you get it by covenant, that you are automatically entitled to take it into the next world. What if the covenant you are required to receive in order to obtain that inheritance in the next world does not reckon merely from something handled by ordinance, but instead the ordinance is pointing you to something higher and more holy? What if the thing that secures for you the inheritance in the next life is not the ordinance, but what the ordinance testifies of. That is, embracing the Lord through the veil. Then having conversed with Him, entering into His presence. Then having entered into His presence, being ministered to and taught. What if it means all that?

Doctrine and Covenants 84: 39-42: "And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood. Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come. And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye have received, which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice out of the heavens; and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you." You know that verse 42, the oath and covenant of the priesthood - you ought to take a look at the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 14: 29, talking about the priesthood given after the Order of the Son of God. It says 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.

And so we have in section 76 a testimony given, and justification for the translation Joseph rendered of Genesis chapter 14 dealing with the priesthood and qualifying it as coming from the voice of God.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants 93: 36: "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one." What if, instead of repentance being related to your misdeeds, which are so plentiful and persistent, and will continue; instead it is related to the acquisition of light of truth - that is intelligence? What if repentance requires you to take whatever it is you have that is a foolish error, a vain tradition, or a false notion and replace it with truth?

My suspicion is, that whatever it is that is troubling you, will trouble you considerably less if you begin to fill yourself with light and truth. Until at last you arrive at a point you look back upon your sins and you say. "I have no more disposition for that. Now I know enough not to do that anymore because I prefer the light. I prefer God's intelligence and glory over that which I used to trade, or substitute for it." You see repentance may have a whole lot more to do with your own feeble education in the things of God than it has to do with the time you spend wasted, looking at some vile picture or other. We have these Victorian sexual mores that everyone in Wall Street tacks against. Like when you're in a sailboat and there's a head wind you "tack" against it. By using this cultural background they get instant attention by showing something sexually suggestive to sell you beer, or fast food, shoes, ships, sealing wax and cabbages.

Quite frankly, I find most of the marketing exploitation of sex to be boring, not titillating. Some of the more graphic use of sex is somewhat medical, but it's not enticing. From a certain perspective, if you will acquire enough light and truth, you're not going to be contaminated by exposure to the things that are degrading.

The Book of Mormon was abridged by a man who lived in an environment filled with sex and violence. He was untouched by it. He was a man of righteousness. Why is it that he could preserve himself in such an abhorrent environment? Because he was filled with light and truth. He educated himself, and had learned the things that are true. When you minister to someone who is suffering, their sins ought not to shock you. They should cause compassion to well up in you. People struggle with some very

difficult, very challenging things. You need to try and overcome that by the light within you. The glory of God is intelligence. Be intelligent.

At one point Christ talking to Abraham said He was more intelligent than them all. (Abr. 3: 19.) One will be more intelligent than another. These two things exist, that if there be two beings, one will be more intelligent than the other. I am more intelligent than them all! That's what Christ said. And Joseph Smith talking about the Holy Ghost says, "I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and He is within me, and comprehends more than all the world: and I will associate myself with Him." (TPJS p. 350.)

The fact of the matter is that you *can* fill yourself with the mind of God. If you fill yourself with the mind of God, you are going to find yourself in a position where you, like the scriptures recite, have no more disposition to do evil, but only to do good continually. (Mos. 5: 2.) That kind of repentance is as a consequence of the things of you know. That repentance comes as a consequence of the light and truth within you. That repentance doesn't require you to spend time saying, 'I'm not, I'm not, I'm not going to watch porn on the Internet anymore.' The temptation just disappears.

There was a big announcement from Google on April 17, 2013 about the fiber internet upgrade coming to Provo, Utah. They are bringing the Internet upgrade to Provo, Utah to really speed up the access of the Internet. That was based on a lot of statistical studies about consumption of on-line pornography in Utah County. (See *Utah is No. 1 –for online pornography consumption*, Salt Lake Tribune study Mar 2, 2009.) So it is a great target audience. And we say well, shame on them. Why are they watching so much of that in Provo? Well, it is because there is a bigger population attending Brigham Young University than attending Utah State University here in Logan. So numerically there are more of them down south.

But the problem is not that God has built within you the desires, appetites and passions which He does not intend to have you filled. He intends for you to eat. He intends for you to sleep. He intends for you to reproduce. He intends for all of the appetites and passions put within you to be intelligently organized and gratified in a sacred manner, in which the purposes of God are advanced; so that you may find within yourself holiness in everything that you do. Love and understanding in everything you do. Repentance is the process of figuring out exactly how and why God made all the things available to you that he made available to you. Each of the things provided to us is to be used with prudence and with skill, including what we eat. (See, e.g., Section 89: 7-11.)

Well turn to section 132: 19, about halfway down. It is talking about conditions you need to fill and covenants you need to have. "Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection ..." [Which is, by the way, one of the proofs that this is a revelation given by God to Joseph Smith, and it's one of the things that vouches for this being God, not man writing this stuff. If it were Joseph, he would be worried about coming forth in the first resurrection. But since God is giving a commandment here through Joseph intended to survive into the end of the Millennium, God is anticipating, He foresees that there will be generations that arise even after the Millennium and after the first resurrection has been sounded. Therefore this revelation anticipates those who live following the first resurrection; or in other words those who live during the Millennium.] Continuing, these "shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths-" [Well these are not just words. These are descriptions of various levels of activity that take place in the afterlife. The "throne" is not the same as a "kingdom," nor the "kingdom" the same as a "principality." A "power" is not same as a "dominion." These are describing different things, different levels. Until finally you arrive up to the state of the seraphim which dwell in fire. These are the flaming ones. Doctrine and Covenants 109: 79 has something to say about that: "And also this church, to put upon it thy name. And help us by the power of thy Spirit, that we may mingle our voices with those bright, shining seraphs around thy throne." You see, "around the throne" is a place of everlasting, eternal burnings. Therefore the seraphs who gather there have to be "the flaming ones." They have mounted up to that point.]

There was a verse I alluded to in Boise in Isaiah chapter 6. This is an incident I alluded to, I even gave the scripture but I didn't talk about it. Isaiah 6: 1: "IN the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." [The Lord sitting upon the throne would be this condition of glory.] Verse 2: "Above it stood the seraphims:" [The seraphim are ones who are flaming, the ones who dwell in this everlasting burnings.] "each one had six wings;" [This is metaphor. These folks have climbed through six stages of the ladder, Jacob's ladder, to arrive where they were.] Verse 3: "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." And then Isaiah said: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:" [Now we usually read that he took the tongs, and with the tongs he touched the lips, but it doesn't say that. He took the tongs to get it off the altar and brought it in his hand. Being one

of the flaming ones, he is able to bear this kind of heat because of his glory.] Verse 7: "And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

This is an incident in which one of the Seraphs improvised an ordinance, by using the coals upon the prayer altar. This would be the golden altar before the Holy of Holies, upon which incense was burning with the ascending smoke, which is a symbol of the prayers that ascend to heaven. These prayers are the worthy speech uttered by all the faithful in faith which ascends to heaven. The altar with these coals symbolized these things. The flame, the coals, and the incense put upon it builds a column of smoke that upward where the ceiling spreads out the cloud, rather like the Tree of Life which it symbolized. The column of smoke like the trunk, the spreading cloud like the branches and leaves atop the column. All of this was located in the temple of Solomon. Isaiah's vision takes place in this location, where an ordinance is performed by one of the flaming ones who dwells in burning glory. The ordinance removes the uncleanness from Isaiah's lips.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants section 128. You ought to be looking into all this stuff. If you look at all the stuff, you don't have time to waste on that crap that besets you. This is a lot more interesting than the junk that you fill your skulls with. Go here, do this stuff. Doctrine and Covenants 128:21: "And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!" [The voice of God has been present throughout it all, mind you, at many occasions.] "And the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael,..." [Micha-EL, Gabri-EL, Rapha-EL, who are among the EL, or in the plural form they are the Eloheim.] "...and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring their dispensation..." [Is declaring a dispensation the same thing as conferring it? Can they declare it and still possess it? If they declared it, and they declare it unto me, do I possess it? Or do they retain it?] "...their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!"

I would suggest that in order to obtain any key, in order to obtain any right, in order to obtain any honor, in order to obtain any priesthood you have to perform, because it is merely inert until you perform. I don't care what key it is that you think you possess, until you act in conformity with the law upon which it is predicated, it is not yet yours. When you do perform, you lay hold of the blessing at the hand of God. That is when it belongs to you and is eternally yours to claim. This is why Joseph did not surrender, having opened this dispensation, the keys of this dispensation, because he did what he did. By doing what he did, he laid hold upon it. Therefore go do something for God. Go open the way. Go preach, teach, exhort, and expound, as is the responsibility of every member, brothers and sisters!

Did you know that "member" is an office in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? That office is conferred upon you whether you are male or female. Every one of you has a responsibility to preach, teach, exhort, and expound. You are burdened also with the law that I am no longer burdened by, and so I needn't give heed to some things that you still do, but I honor you. I respect you. I loved every minute of my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I did not lose that because of my own volition. Some things get asked of you and they require you to lay even the things you love most on the altar. You have to choose. Each of you must choose for yourself the things that you prefer. But if you do not give primacy to the voice of God speaking to you, and if all you do is what some man tells you to do, you will never lay hold upon any key, any blessing, any right, any priesthood. Until you listen to God and do what God tells you to do, you will never lay hold upon anything that gives you the ability to declare your own rights, keys, honor, majesty, glory, and power of your own priesthood.

Notice however, that once again you have this statement in 21 about a variety of things. Not merely one. It is not merely unitary. The purpose of the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith was to begin a process of walking backwards, to that point when it was all unitary, as it was in the beginning. It has been fractured and fragmented. It has been spread apart through generations. Now we need to walk our way back to the beginning, back to the point in which it was unified as it was at the start.

We had a bunch of enthusiasm when the missionary success in Kirtland took place and we brought on board this enormous aneurysm of converts. It's like a skinny snake swallowing a huge pig. There's this gosh awful lump there. That was the Kirtland experience with the conversion of the Campbellites, Sidney Rigdon and Parley Pratt. They came on board and they distorted what happened thereafter in the restoration. Long before meeting Mormon missionaries their goal was to have a New Testament church. That is what they demanded from Joseph Smith after they began to follow him, despite Joseph's encouragement to look for something else. And that is what they got through Joseph Smith. This is one of the reasons Ezekiel 14 was a subject or topic or lessons he taught early and he taught again late when talking to the Saints. He warned them about how they get through the Prophet, what they want and deserve. It's not necessarily what God wants. For example, you can see in section 107 two tracks, and they are very evident. One track is trying to figure out church government, and you get that revealed in Section 107.



But the other track talks about the very beginning. It talks about Adam-ondi-Ahman. It talks about a dispensation at the beginning, where all of this started. You can see that the church, the converts, the people who wanted a church government got what they were asking for. You can see God pleading for another topic, another subject, and another return to something much more ancient.

We are going to spend some time this year trying to get us there. Tonight we are just trying to figure out how it is we move from wherever we are back to a state of being repentant. That requires you to exercise your effort to learn and obtain glory from God, which is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth. (D&C 93: 36, see also verse 28.) Not darkness, dimness, error, missteps, or incomplete and inadequate information. You are going to have to face the truth, and you're going to have to face it with some amount of courage. We all labor with a good deal of tradition that has been inflicted on our minds and on our hearts. Things that we may love, but if they don't conform to the glory of God, intelligence or light and truth, may have to be discarded too. Because what God wants to do is bring you back into a state of reconciliation with Him. This comes only from bravely facing light and truth, the glory of God, or the power of godliness, if you will. The very thing that Christ said was missing as an ingredient in the Christian world at the time that He talked to Joseph in the First Vision.

Finishing up with Lecture 7, paragraph 9: "...salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possesses and in nothing else; and no being can possess it but himself or one like him." [Glory, intelligence or the light and truth, thrones, kingdom, principalities, powers, heights and depths, these words get used in the Doctrine and Covenants Section 132. We have read those. The glory of God is intelligence, section 93: 36. Dispensations, rights, keys, honors, majesty, glory, priesthood. We have looked at that. All of these words are related to the underlying notion of priesthood. And all of them are related to the oath and covenant of the priesthood that we looked at in section 84. We will discuss that in Utah County.]

In paragraph 10 Joseph translates, or Joseph refers to, a statement in the New Testament by the Savior, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." That will change in the Sermon in Bountiful and Christ will say in 3 Nephi, "Be ye therefore perfect even as I, or your Father in heaven is perfect." By the time he preached in Bountiful, He had finished the climb up the ladder. I want to remind you of a statement that we read in Boise made by Joseph, found in *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* on page 348: "When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel--you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But *it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them.*" (Emphasis added.) Well isn't that interesting? So now you have to pass through the veil to learn some things. It's not all to be comprehended in this world.

Lecture 7 paragraph 10: "If any should ask, why all these sayings? The answer is to be found from what is before quoted from John's epistle, that when he (the Lord) shall appear, the saints will be like him; and if they are not holy, as he is holy, and perfect, as he is perfect, they cannot be like him; for no being can enjoy his glory without possessing his perfections and holiness, no more than they could reign in his kingdom without his power." When He appears, you need to be like Him. Lay down the burden of guilt, lay down the burden of sin, stop focusing on that stuff, and become like Him. You become like Him by doing His works. And you do His works by serving other; by ministering to the needs of others. When you do that, it is a natural by-product of that process, ordained by laws established before the foundation of the world that light and truth will grow within you. You will have compassion when you minister to the needs of others with compassion. Your heart will open too and receive within it light and truth, when your conduct reflects the same conduct as a merciful, holy and just God, whom you claim to worship. Worship Him by imitating Him. Worship Him by doing His works. Worship Him by making a living sacrifice. Set aside the junk that occupies you and go do something that is holy for someone else. However mundane and trivial it may seem to you, when you relieve the suffering of other people something changes in you. You become different. You become better. You become more like our Lord, because when you give whatever it is you give away, you get more in return. But make sure that what you give goes to relieve the suffering of others.

You are going to have a finish that path. You're going to have to rise up. If you expect to be in His presence when He returns (and He is coming in judgment), then you're going to have to be like Him. If you are not like Him, you will not be able to endure His presence. Take it seriously. Study it through. Seek to be like Him whom you worship. It is possible, but not while you are carrying a load of sins that trouble you and worry you and distract you. But that's what the Lord will remove from you. He can take all that away, but it is entirely up to you to choose, and then to do something to draw near to Him. He can't do that because that would violate your free will. *You* have to choose to be like Him. Although He may remove all the stains upon you, you have to go forward and not stain yourself again. He cannot stop you from doing that. You're free to choose. Therefore choose the better part.

The atonement isn't like Tinkerbell spreading some magic dust that will make you rise up. The atonement will erase your sins and mistakes, but *you* must rise up. You must acquire those virtues. The glory of God is intelligence. Repentance requires you to acquire that intelligence, that glory of God. You acquire it by the things that you do in His name and for His sake. Those who are here and in need, they represent Him. And when you do it to even the least of them, He will credit that as having been done for Him. No good deed will go unnoticed with Him. He even notices when the sparrows fall. (Matt. 10: 29.) So is He not going to notice when your knee bends with compassion, praying for His mercy for someone that has offended you? And when you pray for those who have offended you, do you think for one moment that doesn't change your own heart?

The reason to rejoice and be exceeding glad when they say all manner of evil against you falsely is because it affords you the opportunity for compassion. Be like our Lord who forgave those in the act of killing him, not their brutality, but their ignorance. When the day arrives that they see things aright and they realize what offense they gave out they will be shocked. They had no intention of offending their Redeemer. They were carrying out the execution of a criminal. He had compassion on them for their ignorance. You have compassion for all those around you who are ignorant. If you think you know a little more than they do, then use gentleness and meekness to persuade them. (D&C 121: 41-42.) Sometimes what you try to persuade them of is going to offend them. Couple it with your own testimony of the truth. Don't let them simply go away offended. Let them know that when you give offense, and you surely will give offense, that you did it because of your love for them, your love of God, and your faith in the things which God is doing. When you offend, do it kindly, and while bearing testimony of the truth and with the compassion that should hail from a position of greater light and truth or intelligence. (D&C 121: 43.) They don't know what they're doing. They don't understand it yet. So help them.

In verse 11 of the Seventh Lecture: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one..." This is long before Nauvoo. Joseph is declaring the possibility of unification between God and man. The potential for oneness of God and man. This is foreshadowing teachings that he will give in the King Follett discourse and it is right there in *The Lectures on Faith*. The same is true in paragraph 13. Christ wanted His disciples, all of them, including you, to be as Himself and the Father. Just as He and the Father were one, we all might be one with them.

This is marvelous language. It is in the 1835 scriptures, subsequently eliminated by the committee in 1921. It was removed without a vote of the saints, and therefore, I suggest that it belongs in your scriptures still.

Paragraph 15: "...the glory which the Father and the Son have is because they are just and holy beings; and that if they were lacking in one attribute or perfection which they have, the glory which they have never could be enjoyed by them, for it requires them to be precisely what they are in order to enjoy it..." [There is the word again – "*precisely*." Verse 16:] "These teachings of the Saviour most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation, and what he proposed unto the human family when he proposed to save them— that he proposed to make them like unto himself, and he was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings; and for any portion of the human family to be assimilated into their likeness is to be saved; and to be unlike them is to be destroyed; and on this hinge turns the door of salvation." [No human can be saved until that human is like God. And God intends to make us like Him. That is His work. (Moses 1:39) His work can go on worlds without end, until they at last become like Him. (D&C 76: 112)]

Notwithstanding the absolute requirement to be like God, look at what you can do in this world that affords you the opportunity to do just that. There are mothers here with little children. We can hear a child crying in the distance, there is a mother with him. Every infant comes into this world in profound need. There isn't a mother alive who has held a needy infant and not experienced the love of God. That child's existence is dependent upon her. Keep in mind that these opportunities exist everywhere around us all.]

Paragraph 17: "That it was a system of faith—it begins with faith, and continues by faith; and every blessing which is obtained in relation to it is the effect of faith, whether it pertains to this life or that which is to come. To this, all the revelations of God bear witness. If there were children of promise, they were the effects of faith, not even the Saviour of the world excepted." [The entry of our Savior into this estate was the effect of an act of faith.]

Continuing with paragraph 17: "And through the whole history of the scheme of life and salvation, it is a matter of faith: every man received according to his faith—according as his faith was, so were his blessings and privileges; and nothing was withheld from him when his faith was sufficient to receive it." [This is the way God is no respecter of persons. This is the way you, if you will lay down your ignorance, if you will repent and turn to God, can find yourself the inheritor of blessings and privileges that God will not withhold from anyone who understands and gathers to themselves the light in the truth that comes through obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paragraph 17: ] "By their faith they could obtain heavenly visions, the ministering

of angels, have knowledge of the spirits of just men made perfect, of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, of God the judge of all, of Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and become familiar with the third heavens, see and hear things which were not only unutterable, but were unlawful to utter (Hebrew 11-12)."

Later Joseph Smith made a comment about Paul. Paul said he knew a man who is caught up in the third heaven, but Joseph knew a man who was caught up into the seventh heaven. It is sufficient however, if you commune with those beings.

Paragraph 18: "...how were they to obtain the knowledge of God? (For there is a great difference between believing in God and knowing him—knowledge implies more than faith. And notice, that all things that pertain to life and godliness were given through the knowledge of God) the answer is given—through faith they were to obtain this knowledge; and, having power by faith to obtain the knowledge of God, they could with it obtain all other things which pertain to life and godliness." [It is knowledge that saves. Consequently, it is knowledge that you need, to repent and obtain. "Knowledge saves a man," said Joseph Smith. "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge," said Joseph Smith. Knowledge and salvation, knowledge and repentance, they are all related. But knowledge is not given so that you can take prideful advantage of the fact that you possess something. If you have it, it is given to make you a minister, a servant. Someone the Lord might be able to employ to raise others up. If you cannot elevate others, then you failed in your effort to be like Him. He came to serve. You serve too.]

Verse 20: "Because to obtain the faith by which he could enjoy the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, he had to suffer the loss of all things. This is the reason that the Former-day Saints knew more, and understood more, of heaven and of heavenly things than all others beside, because this information is the effect of faith — to be obtained by no other means. ... For where faith is, there will the knowledge of God be also, with all things which pertain thereto — revelations, visions, and dreams, as well as every necessary thing, in order that the possessors of faith may be perfected, and obtain salvation; for God must change, otherwise faith will prevail with him. And he who possesses it will, through it, obtain all necessary knowledge and wisdom, until he shall know God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom He has sent— whom to know is eternal life. Amen."

That is the purpose of the Gospel - to give you knowledge. Therefore the way to get knowledge is to repent. It is to search into, lay hold upon, and obtain for yourself knowledge that saves. Not mere theory. Not mere recitations of these symbols in the temple endowment. We are not enlightened merely because we understand some symbol in the temple represents these eight items. 'This symbol represents this, and this stands for that' is NOT what we must seek. Trivia is not light and truth. Light and truth will exalt you. Trivia can make you prideful.

In the talk I gave about the temple during the temple studies conference, I showed the difference between the effort made by Margaret Barker in expounding upon the temple (particularly between the First and Second Temple period) because she is a Methodist minister and the knowledge she brings comes at a price. She is criticized by her peers. On the other hand Latter-day Saint scholars expound with an air of pride about their temples, because we own them and our scholars are respected among us. Margaret Barker has suffered an enormous amount of criticism in a lot of circles, but she still brought forth a message that resonates with Latter-day Saints because she re-creates that history in a way that conforms exactly with the way we would expect it from having the Book of Mormon. Latter-day Saints can look down our nose at the Christians that don't own such sacred edifices, and it all becomes one mass of pride and vanity.

You have to sacrifice, and you have to serve the Lord. And you have to have Him, and Him only as the reason for what you do, what you say, how you act. He is the one who is going to judge you. There will be no peer review. There will be no panel of scholars. Nobody will say, "I think you should beef-up your bibliography a bit more because it does not pass muster, and you will not be awarded your PhD until you add more gibberish."

If knowledge saves, then it follows that repentance requires us to learn something. You must begin with the first and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation.

Get out Doctrine and Covenants 130:18-21: "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection." [Now understand, we have looked at the definition of intelligence. It is the glory of God, or in other words light and truth. So let's do that. Whatever principle of light and truth we attain to this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.] "And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." [These laws cannot be changed, cannot be altered, cannot be fought against with any success. It can be learned. It can be conformed to. It can be harvested.]

But blessings from God are obtained by diligence in what? Obedience to what? Knowledge and intelligence. Diligent at exactly what? Obedient to who? Were the Nazis both diligent and obedient? Are the jihadists both diligent and obedient? Are the drug cartels both diligent and obedient? Are the masters of the universe on Wall Street diligent and obedient?

I have a law suit currently pending where, as a team of lawyers we meet with co-counsel as a team, because there are too many parties. We avoid legally impermissible conflicts of interest by putting a team together. One of the co-counselors is located in downtown Salt Lake. Inside the building, one of the big beneficiaries of a number of federal programs involving billions and billions of taxpayer dollars has their office. In order to enter the building, both the client and I have to go to the guards at front desk, show ID, have the attorneys we are to meet with call down to the front desk and vouch for us. Then the guards give us a little ticket which permits us to pass through security to enter the building. Above all other things, those who protect the financial interests in this country are diligent and obedient.

But none of these examples are gaining intelligence, and what will rise with these in the resurrection will leave them poor and weak and miserable. They are not pursuing that which gives to them the glory of God. But you can. Virtues are meaningless apart from righteousness. You must have both otherwise you cannot even begin to repent.

Let's go to 2 Nephi 30:8-15. I want to remind you that it is knowledge that defines the millennial glory of man. "And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth. And with righteousness shall the Lord God judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. And then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Would you like to stand in that day? Would you like to survive that burning which is to come? Then the way to obtain that, and the means to preserve yourself is to obtain that knowledge which saves. Why is it possible? 2 Nephi 30:16-18: "Wherefore, the things of all nations shall be made known; yea, all things shall be made known unto the children of men. There is nothing which is secret save it shall be revealed; there is no work of darkness save it shall be made manifest in the light; and there is nothing which is sealed upon the earth save it shall be loosed. Wherefore, all things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed; and Satan shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time. And now, my beloved brethren, I make an end of my sayings."

Why is it possible for such things to be revealed in that day? Why do they have such faith? What must you do in order to qualify to be among them? Does anyone other than you have the ability to prepare you? This is your dispensation. What are you going to do with it?

The Lord can lament in the First Vision to Joseph, that all around there are those that have merely a form of godliness - insubstantial, unredeeming, incapable of saving. The Lord can lament that. You have to do something about that. The angel Moroni can say these are the things God intends to have happen. The culmination of all the prophecies are going to wrap up following the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Soon to come. Not yet, but soon. And here we are. What are you going to do about it? The prophecies cannot be fulfilled unless those who are free to choose, choose to repent and do something about. What great things lay in store, and therefore, you need to know *how* great things the Lord intends to do.

I'm thirty percent of way through an agenda tonight. I cannot tell you how relieved I am of that. Every time we get another evening done, I feel lighter by the moment. We are going to pick up again in Centerville, and our next topic is going to be trying to figure out the subject of covenants. They bear on much of what the Lord intends now to fulfill. I wish someone else were doing this. I wish none of you had ever heard my name. I wish I were an obscure trial attorney doing what I enjoy doing. I confess that in the perversity of my heart I do like trial work.

George C. Scott won an Oscar for the movie *Patton*. And there is a scene where he goes over and he kisses this soldier in this middle of this gosh awful battlefield where tanks are smoldering and dead bodies are strewn, and there's this young man who is still alive. He kisses him and he looks around he says, "God help me, I do love it so!" In the courtroom there are times when I

look around and say to myself, 'God help me, I do really enjoy trial work.' It's an intellectual endeavor, and someone is always trying to shoot me down and present the other side. I'm good with that. I actually enjoy the difficulty of that kind of wrestling. I don't enjoy this. I really don't. If I could hand this off to one of you and say, "Okay now you take it and you run with this, and I will just cheer you on from the sidelines," I would never do more than whatever I could to support you. But it apparently falls to me to accomplish. So I proceed.

Somehow, for some reason, here we are 190 years on, and we're just still bogged down with the endless, trivial, abuse of our time. The Gospel was intended to be delicious, exciting, awe-inspiring, filled with wonder, rejoicing, causing you to sing in your soul a song of redeeming love for him who has rescued you. And what do we have?

Oh, let me read you what we have. Joseph writing from Liberty Jail in a passage that belongs somewhere between Section 121 and 123 but never made its way into our scriptures. If we are going to take out by fiat, *The Lectures on Faith*, why can't we at least put this in? Anyway, here's where we are: "...the things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity-- thou must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart! None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations--too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God." (*TPJS*, page 137.)

That's Joseph's lament. What are you doing with your time? What are you doing when you are called upon to teach? What are you doing when your teacher abuses your time and everyone else's with something that is too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for those called of God? The Gospel is delicious. And we ought to return to it. The glory of God is intelligence and we are absolutely unintelligent. Dumber I might add, with our curriculum year-by-year. I don't know how we endure it. Unless like me, you bring a very good book to church with you every week.

Let me end by affirming that I have loved, loved every minute, from the moment I found the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I have loved it above all else. I have learned more in the last 90 days - information flows geometrically, light grows constantly.

Nephi pondered about the things that he had seen and heard. He constantly meditated upon that, and wrote some 40 years after the fact. The revelations that Joseph Smith received, including that one that he received in the sacred grove was not all to be comprehended in the first pass through.

The things of God are of deep import. Why did God reveal what He revealed when He revealed it? Why did He reveal it in the order in which He revealed it? What was He building upon? Why in the first revelation did He go there? Why in the next did He go to that point? If you think Joseph's mind wasn't caught up in the things that he had seen and heard, just as yours should be about the things that you've seen and heard, then you need to think again, because the things of God are of deep import, and time and care and careful and solemn and ponderous thoughts are the only way in which you, or anyone can find them out. That applies especially to you because you control you. You determine how much light and truth you will receive. And it is predicated upon a law that was ordained before the foundation of the world. Anyone of you can obey it. God is no respecter of persons, and you are authorized to exercise faith in Him unto salvation. You are authorized to exercise faith in Him, until you know Him. You are authorized to see His face and know that He is; everyone of you.

If you intend to survive His return, you are going to have to be able to bear His presence. Hence, the need to talk about this material in the agenda that we are on in these series of talks. We introduced it. We talked about faith, we talked about repentance and we are going to talk about covenants next.

I know not everybody comes to all of these. I don't expect people to. I don't even expect you to get the disks and listen to them. I'm trying to transcribe them and fill in with the things that I'm thinking about even if I do not give you the scriptures. They will be up on the Internet and available for you to read.

I am introducing things. I am trying to provoke you to study. I am trying to provoke you to look into this stuff. But I cannot babysit you, and shouldn't. I would only make you weak if I attempt to do that. You need to take this as the beginning point and go on and discover for yourself, *how* great things the Lord intends to do. One of the neglected volumes of scripture you need to spend some time with is *The Lectures on Faith*. They remain Scripture.

I told you how the Lord vouched for Joseph Smith. The Lord vouches for Joseph Smith again. If nobody will say it, I will declare to you. If you ignore Joseph words, you ignore them at your peril. If you allow any man, or men, if you allow any committee, any institution, or organization to claim that they have the right to alter, neglect, or discard the words of revelation given by God through the Prophet Joseph Smith, they will damn you if you listen to them. And they will surely be damned for doing so. No one has the right to do that.

God's work is the same yesterday, today and forever. Those who would like to throw you about by every wind of doctrine are teaching you merely the commandments of men, as if they were doctrine and they aren't! When God spoke through Joseph and we forget him, then we have no right to expect collectively, that He's going to move anything forward for us. The first order of repentance is to remember what God gave to us through Joseph. You do that, and then you find God is perfectly willing to pick it up and move it forward. You don't do that, and God will simply wait for you to get around to discharge the duty that is devolving upon you. God vouched for Joseph Smith. God spoke through him. I don't have the right to move one of his words. But I do have the right to listen to him, to follow what came through him, and to lay hold upon the blessings that were promised as a consequence of remembering him. To remember the words of Joseph is to remember your Lord. Remember Him. And do not let anyone tell you that they hold some authority that allows them to neglect, change, discard, veto, forget, or contradict what God told you through the voice of the Prophet.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



## Covenants

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Lecture 4 Centerville, Utah

40 years ago tonight, I was in Centerville Utah. Elder Brian Black, who baptized me, had a family in Centerville, Utah, who lived here as Elder Black served his mission. The opening prayer was given by a friend, Mel, who was in the military with me. He was baptized the same year I was and he and I were barracks roommates at the time.

The way that the military operates is only through giving orders. I found out the military had a provision which would allow you to ask to attend what they called a "religious retreat." General Conference seemed to qualify for such a "retreat." Therefore, having found out that they would allow you to attend a qualifying event, I applied, as did Mel. I was ordered by the United States Department of Defense to attend General Conference in October of 1973. So under orders from our government, I attended General Conference in Salt Lake City 40 years ago this evening.

Back then this day, October 6<sup>th</sup>, was a Saturday. General Conference would end on Sunday, October 7. The closing talk was given by Harold B Lee was his last talk in General Conference because he died in December of that year, on December 26<sup>th</sup>. And so the October 7<sup>th</sup> talk was his last General Conference address. He spoke about the Yom Kippur war that had commenced during General Conference that year, and gave some closing remarks about how things were in turmoil between Syria, Egypt and Israel.

In any event, I was looking through the names of those who spoke at that General Conference. Now remember I had been baptized on September 10th and we were now on October 6th, less than a month. The names were, at that time, strangers to me. Today as I look through the list of names of those who spoke in General Conference they have become very familiar to me.

Because I had orders, I was there in uniform. If you wore a uniform, there was a door in the Tabernacle reserved for active-duty service people only. As you lined up outside that door, unlike folks who lined up in other places, they actually let you in. Service people occupied two or three rows of the Tabernacle on the right-hand side, very close to the front. So I got a good look at who the Church leadership was back in those days, and I was impressed with what I saw. Harold B. Lee, H. Burke Peterson, Marion D. Hanks, James E. Faust, and Boyd Packer spoke on Friday morning and we were there. Thomas Monson, Rex Pinegar, L. Ray Christiansen, Henry D. Taylor, O. Leslie Stone, David B. Haight, and Delbert Stapley spoke in the afternoon on Friday and we were there. [Delbert Stapley had a grandson, Elder Stapley who had participated in the missionary discussions. He was one of those missionaries I used up in the process of finally being converted and joining the Church.] Church Patriarch Eldred G. Smith, a prophet, seer and revelator, spoke on Saturday afternoon in the Priesthood session. Marion G. Romney and N. Eldon Tanner and Harold B. Lee all spoke. Spencer Kimball didn't speak until Sunday afternoon. And in all candor, he didn't leave an impression. Later on Spencer Kimball was someone for whom I grew to have enormous respect. But I came and I went from General Conference having heard him talk and he never even registered. So when we rolled around finally to another General Conference and I couldn't remember who he was. Once I saw him and heard his voice, I wondered why on earth I didn't I remember him, because as well all know, his voice was so distinct.

Well tonight we are going to talk about covenants. In particular covenants that are being referred to in a verse we find in the Joseph Smith History, verse 39. Moroni changing the content of the text of Malachi, states in that verse to Joseph Smith on this fall equinox occasion, the words of Malachi in this way: "And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (JS-H: 1:39)

Therefore we learn there is some peril if we do not have our hearts turned to these fathers. The peril, as Moroni put it, is that we will be "utterly wasted at his coming" if we fail. But His coming is not limited merely to the singular "him"--being the Lord. If you go back to what Moroni said to Joseph in verse 37 it says: "*they* that come shall burn them." Therefore when He comes, they that come with Him shall burn those who are unprepared, those who are scheduled to be "utterly wasted" at His coming. And so we need to inquire into what exactly the promises were, who the fathers were that the promises were made to, and then avoid this peril of those who come to do the burning of all who are unprepared for that return. As to them, "it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Remember that in the Boise talk I said these were genealogical terms, because their family lines comes to an end at that point.

In looking at the promises made to the fathers, I want to go back to 2 Nephi, chapter 3 and begin there. I have referred to this earlier in Boise. When we're tracking back the covenants that were made, and we're talking about the promises that were



made to the fathers, and trying to identify who the fathers are, we get a real advantage in making that determination by what we have in Lehi's blessing to his son Joseph. Beginning at verse four of chapter 3 of 2 Nephi, Lehi says: "For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph." As soon as you encounter the word "covenants" an alarm should go off. Because much of what is and has happened in the history of the world, is as a consequence of covenants made by God with the fathers. One of the fathers who possessed promises and covenants with God was Joseph, who was carried away captive into Egypt.

*"Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day."* [Meaning Lehi's day. And when Lehi is talking, he's talking about events he believed Joseph of Egypt had foreseen, and in turn foresaw would happen in his own day.] *"And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off, nevertheless, to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light—yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom. For Joseph truly testified, saying: A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins. Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers."* (2 Nephi 3: 5-7) So the assignment that is given to this choice seer, descendant of Joseph, is that this person is going to bring to the world, to us, to the descendants, to the people in the last days "... knowledge concerning covenants which God had made with thy fathers."

"Thy fathers" in this statement is referring to the fathers of Joseph of Egypt. So the promises that God made to fathers *before* Joseph of Egypt would be fulfilled through "a seer" who is going to "restore the knowledge" about those promises. It may be complex wording but it's dealing with very simple events, and the identities are important.

*"And I will give unto him"* [this choice seer who descends from Joseph of Egypt] *a commandment that he shall do none other work, save the work which I shall command him."* [That is to say, he will not be the person through whose ministry Zion will come. That was not the assignment of the choice seer. Joseph Smith was not in charge of, and was not required to do the work to bring again Zion.] *"[H]e shall do none other work, save the work which I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes; for he shall do my work. And he [Joseph of Egypt's descendant seer] shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel. But a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins—"* So there is a difference here between Joseph of Egypt's descendant seer and Israel, to whom Moses would be raised up.

In verse 12 it talks about how there is going to be a restoration of *"knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord."* (2 Nephi 3: 12) And then in 15 it says, *"And his name shall be called after me [the "me" being Joseph of Egypt; therefore the name of this seer will likewise be "Joseph"]; and it shall be after the name of his father [requiring the seer's father to likewise be named Joseph]. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation."*

Then Lehi goes on to tell his son in verse 23: *"Wherefore, because of this covenant [meaning the one that was done with Joseph of Egypt], he [the son of Lehi] is blessed, for his [the son of Lehi's] seed shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book. And there shall rise up one mighty among them [I talked about that in Boise. If Joseph Smith fulfills this ancient prophecy given by Joseph of Egypt and repeated by Lehi which is recovered in part through this passage in the Book of Mormon, then Joseph Smith should give to us the ability to know something about these covenants that were made with the fathers.]"*

Well, we do not have to rely upon, merely what we have in 2 Nephi chapter 3. Nor do we require the Brass Plates, either, as it turns out. Because Joseph Smith restored the prophecy of Joseph of Egypt, and you can read it in the Joseph Smith Translation beginning in Genesis chapter 50 at verse 24. It reads slightly different than Lehi's summary. Lehi's choice of what he adds in and what he selects out, in contrast to what Joseph of Egypt actually wrote provides some interesting insight into Lehi. It is absolutely worth your time to study out all the differences. You ought to pick apart what it is that Lehi did, because it tells you much about what father Lehi choose to include and what he chose to pass over as a reflection on this prophet-father.

However, for our purposes tonight, I want to look at what was said to Joseph of Egypt in God's promises to him which we find in the Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis chapter 50 beginning at verse 24. Joseph of Egypt wrote: *"for the Lord visited me and I have obtained the promise of the Lord."* This is what Lehi will refer to in his prophecy to his son Joseph, as a covenant. This is because when the Lord delivers a promise to someone, He delivers it by way of covenant. God is bound by His word . (D&C 1: 38) Therefore when He delivers a promise, it is a covenant.

He continues: *"I have obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of my loins, [this is the covenant with Joseph of Egypt, that out of his loins] the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my loins; [talking about Joseph of Egypt, one of the sons of Israel, one of the 12 tribes] And [now we are changing topics and changing identifications] and unto thee, whom my father Jacob hath named Israel [this is broadening the framework to beyond the descendants of Joseph, this is all the 12 tribes, raised up unto all of the 12 tribes] a prophet; (not the Messiah who is called Shilo;) and this prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt in the days of thy bondage. [That is a covenant about deliverance to be had for all the tribes of Israel not merely the descendents of Joseph.]*

It is important to distinguish between what relates to Joseph and his descendants and all of Israel. If you conflate them you will begin to conclude Moses, who is a Levite, is instead a descendant of Joseph. The text does not say that. Therefore these words should be carefully parsed to distinguish between what is promised Joseph of Egypt about his descendants and what was promised to him concerning all the Tribes of Israel.

He continues: *"And it shall come to pass that they (that is all of Israel) shall be scattered again; and a branch shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country; nevertheless they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh; for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, [Now when is that? Is it when he was resurrected and he appears in 3 Nephi? Or is the latter-day, instead some other later time?] in the Spirit of power; and shall bring them out of darkness into light; out of hidden darkness, and out of captivity unto freedom. A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my [that is Joseph of Egypt's] loins. [A different topic, different person, different time frame.]"*

He continues: *"Thus saith the Lord God of my fathers [this is Joseph speaking and therefore his fathers would have include at a minimum, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His "fathers" being plural require us to go back multiple generations for identities] unto me, [So the Lord God of Joseph's fathers said unto him these things] A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy (that is Joseph's) loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy [that is Joseph of Egypt's] loins; and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy [that is Joseph of Egypt's] loins, his brethren. And his brethren. [That is, other members of Israel] And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers; and he shall do whatsoever work I shall command him."* (JST Genesis 50: 28)

Now we are beginning to have laid out in the restoration through Joseph Smith, part of what it is that we need to know, in order to avoid being utterly wasted. *"He [the seer] shall do whatsoever work I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he [the seer, who will be one of Joseph of Egypt's descendant] shall be great like unto him whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt; [the "him" who the Lord is going to raise up is Moses] for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called Moses. And by this name he shall know that he is of thy house; [that is the House of Israel, not Joseph of Egypt's loins but instead the House of Israel] for he shall be nursed by the king's daughter, and shall be called her son. And again [notice here we are changing topics again] a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy [that is Joseph's] loins, and unto him [Joseph's descendant the seer] will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins;"* [That is Joseph of Egypt's descendant the seer. And he's to give us God's word.

Joseph of Egypt he goes on in the same in verse 31: *"Wherefore the fruit of thy loins [that is Joseph's loins] shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, [a yet future event] and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord. [Joseph of Egypt's seer is to do this.]"* It is this context which must be considered to understand what Moroni told Joseph Smith in verse 39 of the Joseph Smith History. That is why we began in Boise with the 1838 version of Joseph's history and we have been following the material along since then. The explanation given to Joseph that night is a summary of all that was and is still yet to unfold in these last days.

Joseph of Egypt's prophecy continues: *"And out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, [the phrase "all my people" include all of the various branches of Israel and not merely Joseph's descendants] which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days."* That is the objective. To fix and reconnect the house of Israel, restoring them in the last days. This is the purpose still of the restoration. When it resumes it will be to cause this to happen. It must happen before the Lord's return.

Continuing, *"And that seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise I give unto you; [Joseph of Egypt] for I will remember you [Joseph of Egypt] from generation to generation; and his name [that latter-day seer] shall be called Joseph,"* It is as if the Lord Himself so loved Joseph of Egypt that He wanted his memory to be kept in remembrance through all generations. This is Father Joseph who was sold into slavery by the jealousy of his brothers to whom he prophesied for their benefit, yet despite the betrayal of his brothers he kept the faith, and ultimately preserved and blessed those who despitefully used and abused him. Joseph of Egypt lived Christ's teachings before the Lord delivered them on the Mount. Joseph was, therefore, a man after the Lord's own heart.

The prophecy continues: *"and it shall be after the name of his father; and he shall be like unto you; [that is like unto Joseph of Egypt] for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand shall bring my people unto salvation. And the Lord sware unto Joseph that he would preserve his [Joseph's] seed forever, saying, I will raise up Moses, and a rod shall be in his hand, and he shall gather together my people, and he shall lead them as a flock, and he shall smite the waters of the Red Sea with his rod.*

And he shall have judgment, and shall write the word of the Lord. And he shall not speak many words, for I will write unto him my law by the finger of mine own hand. And I will make a spokesman for him, and his name shall be called Aaron. And it shall be done unto thee in the last days also, even as I have sworn."

So the Lord swore by a covenant with Joseph concerning all these events. This is the text used by father Lehi when he gives the blessing recorded in 2 Nephi chapter 3, the patriarchal blessing to his son Joseph. The name of Joseph of Egypt and Lehi's son named Joseph no doubt commended to the mind of Lehi attention to this very material that we just read. Lehi would have named his son after Joseph because of the regard Lehi had for this ancestor of his.

If Joseph of Egypt's seer of the last days, who would be responsible for completing this assignment and fulfilling this foretold opportunity is in fact Joseph Smith, then through Joseph Smith we should be able to learn something about knowledge of covenants that were made with the fathers. Proofs of Joseph Smith's validity as a messenger from God should be found in evidence from him concerning the covenants between the fathers and God.

Joseph of Egypt said "the seer will do none other work." He will have power to bring forth God's words. He will restore knowledge of their fathers. He will restore knowledge of God's covenants. He will restore ultimately, a basis that makes the House of Israel alive again. His name will be after Joseph of Egypt. It will be the same name as his father, that is, Joseph. In every particular, Joseph Smith seems to be the one about whom this is written. Therefore, if Joseph Smith is that seer it does not seem we need to look for another.

In chapter 4 of 2 Nephi verse 2 talks about this. Nephi, interjects "he [that is Joseph of Egypt] truly prophesied concerning all his seed." Remember that "all his seed" includes not just Lehi and his tribe of Mannasseh, and through Ismael and his daughters Ephraim, both of these are descendants of Joseph. But Joseph also includes people outside the branch that wrote the Book of Mormon. Joseph's descendants went elsewhere, as well. These other portions of the tribe of Joseph, scattered wherever they were throughout the world, include many of those here among us tonight, through your bloodlines. Therefore Joseph of Egypt spoke of all these, and Lehi uses his blessing to his son Joseph to make mention of those prophecies, because they would fit his son. But the prophecies fit many others, as well. This shows to us the need to read and understand the full import of the blessings and covenants given to the fathers mentioned by Moroni to Joseph Smith.

Well this is not a prophecy about Joseph's seed alone, but it is talking about the ministry of this latter-day prophet with the foretold mission of restoring knowledge in the latter days. Through Joseph Smith, then, if he is the one to fulfill the prophecy we should be able to find through him knowledge about covenants made to the fathers, and to also identify who the fathers are. In order to know something about covenants, Joseph Smith needed to have given to us material about that. As we look further into the matter I want to refer you to section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants beginning at verse eight where the Lord told Joseph: "Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name? Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed? And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was?" (D&C 132: 8-11)

Everything proceeds according to God's law. The government of God is not and never has been necessarily limited to an organizational structure. Instead it hails back to things that were committed, by God, in promises made to the fathers, which have yet to be fulfilled. It doesn't matter if we think we can capture that and tie it into an organization we control. We are unable to bind God into our preferences. He controls the agenda and always has. God's purposes are ordained according to a law that was ordained before the world was. He reminds us: "I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man

shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord.” (D&C 132: 12) In other words, if you were going to come, whoever you are, unto the Father, the only way you are going to get there will be through the Son.

God warns us: *“And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God. For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed.”* This is the law preordained which controls. Not a committee, not an office, not our common consent, but a law belonging to and ordained by God alone. We must find and submit to it, or our expectations will not materialize. This is another way in which we can know that “the Keeper of the Gate is the Holy One of Israel, and he employth no servant there.” (2 Ne. 9: 41) Because when it comes to this kind of material, involving this kind of salvation, for any of the children of men, God is hands on. Our Redeemer is not only the one who keeps the Gate, protects the way, and greets those along the way, but it is He alone who will introduce to the Father. Continuing, *“And it has to be by me, or by my word, saith the Lord. If it is not, then it shall be thrown down. And it shall not remain.”* Only God can, or does, ordain covenants. We do not make covenants. Covenants come as a consequence of God's will, and *only* as a consequence of God's will. We can accept them, or we can reject them, but we cannot create them. He does. Our participation is limited to, acceptance of, or rejection of, what he offers. The way in which we accept the covenants, is set out in Doctrine and Covenants section 130: 20, which states: “There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.”

Therefore what is important for you to understand and learn is what the relevant law requires of you. Because the way in which you accept the covenant offered to you is by learning the principle or the law upon which the blessing you seek is predicated. Then having learned what the law ordains, you follow through by obeying it. We learn all of this through the revelations given to us by Joseph Smith.

Before Joseph of Egypt, one of the fathers we need to look to for guidance is Abraham. Therefore I want to turn to Abraham, chapter 1 beginning at verse two next. *“And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers* [Once again we have Abraham who lived three generations before Joseph of Egypt, and we read about the same search for the blessings which belong to the fathers. Abraham was looking for the blessings of the fathers, hoping thereby to find happiness, peace and rest for himself. These all are connected. These are the things Moroni was telling Joseph Smith we, the children, must look for to avoid being utterly wasted] *“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,”* When I spoke in Logan, I talked about repentance being related to knowledge and that it is our ignorance that damns us most of all. Abraham perceived the same thing. Abraham believed redemption and possessing great knowledge went hand-in-hand.

When we read these things in scripture we should reflect on them. Perhaps these ancients were not so ignorant after all. Perhaps they were better studied and more thoughtful than are we. In Abraham's case he believed if he could obtain that great knowledge he would thereby become *“a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge,”* because this is one of those law upon which blessings are predicated. Knowledge, light, truth, or in other words the glory of God, all of those things are obtained by obedience to law. Abraham sought for, and desired to possess, more light and truth. And as a result of that inevitably would lead to him becoming *“a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring [most of all] to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God,”* As a result of all that desire, he 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 foundation of the earth, down 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.”* (Emphasis added.)

All of this ties back necessarily to Adam. Abraham is looking to acquire the original religion taught by God directly to father Adam in the beginning. Therefore Abraham records *“I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.”*

Everything about the original form of priesthood, everything about what it is Abraham was seeking, all of this ties together because there is only one gospel. In *The Lectures on Faith*, the Second Lecture paragraph 37 to 53, there is a chronology given. I'm not going to go through the chronology, and you needn't have brought it with you tonight. But that chronology is listed in *The Lectures on Faith* in order to save you the trouble of going through and tracking it yourself. It was important enough to Joseph Smith to put into *The Lectures on Faith*, so that you know how to reconstruct the fathers and who they were.

Noah was 502 years old when Shem was born. 98 years later the Flood came. Noah was 600 years old when the Flood came and Shem was 98. You can see that in paragraph 45 of the Second Lecture. Shem lived to be 600. Shem was 448 years old when Noah died. Shem was acquainted with both Noah and Abraham. Abraham lived to be 175 years old, and Shem was alive and a contemporary with him for 150 of the 175 years of the life of Abraham. Shem knew Noah. Shem knew those on the other side of the Flood, having lived with them for 98 years before the Flood. Abraham also had the records of the fathers from the other side of the flood. Look at Abraham chapter 1 verse 31: *"But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me."* (Emphasis added.) Since Abraham was acquainted with the priesthood that belonged to the fathers, and since Abraham had a knowledge which reckoned from that priesthood, his knowledge went back to the time of the patriarchs. This knowledge included the beginning of creation, and therefore he knew about the planets, knew about the stars, in the form in which that knowledge was made known unto the fathers. Now go back to Doctrine and Covenants section 121, talking about our dispensation. Look at D&C 121: 28: *"A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. [Because that's included within the knowledge that the first fathers had. That's included with what was here at one time.] 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."* (Emphasis added.) This is part of what we are expected to have given us, if we were interested enough to receive it. Abraham, unlike us, was interested. Abraham was not merely talking about something in this verse, Abraham 1: 31 but it becomes one of the major themes of his record. We read later on in the book of Abraham about the various stars shown to him, and the relationship between them. Then in Facsimile 2, there is an effort to lay out a relationship in the heavens, between certain positions of glory and authority and a configuration of the sky. Abraham's record is a testimony about this knowledge of the heavens which was part of the original gospel that was entrusted to the fathers, and those records were handed down to him. We are told, likewise, in Doctrine and Covenants section 121 that is part of what is supposed to be included within, and is ultimately scheduled for revelation to, those who will receive the restoration of the Gospel, when it is fully upon the earth in the dispensation of the fullness of times. This knowledge can only return to us through revelation. When it does return, then we, like Abraham, will be at last in possession of the Gospel Abraham knew, studied and taught.

Abraham received his priesthood ordination through Melchizedek. You see that Doctrine and Covenants section 84 verse 14: *"Which Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah;"* Now, Bruce R McConkie read that verse and he disagreed with what the church had previously taught. That is, at one time we believed that Melchizedek was Shem. Bruce R. McConkie took the position that verse 14 (Melchizedek received the priesthood through the lineage of his fathers, even until Noah) means there were fathers between Melchizedek on one hand, and Noah on the other. Therefore, he concluded, Noah cannot be Shem. I take the view instead, that it was received through the lineage of his fathers even until Noah, meaning from Adam down to the time of Noah. It was this lineage from Adam to Noah through whom the priesthood was preserved. Melchizedek, that is Shem, received it from Noah. In any event, it is clear in verse 14 that Abraham received it from Melchizedek. But if you go to Abraham chapter 2 beginning at verse 6 you read: *"But I, Abraham, and Lot, my brother's son, prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord appeared unto me, and said unto me: Arise, and take Lot with thee; for I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to make of thee a minister to bear my name in a strange land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession, when they hearken to my voice. For I am the Lord thy God; I dwell in heaven; the earth is my footstool; I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice; I cause the wind and the fire to be my chariot; I say to the mountains—Depart hence—and behold, they are taken away by a whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly. My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father;"*

There is a difference between ordination and confirmation by the voice of God. These are two separate events. We will speak more about this when we talk about Priesthood in Utah County, and therefore it is enough to take note of that here.

Jehovah spoke directly to Abraham, told him that from this moment, from the moment God spoke to Abraham before his departure, Abraham would now become the father of all the righteous. Now you ought to ask yourself: why would that be the

case? Why is it that Abraham becomes the prototype of who will be saved, and the father of whoever is saved from that point going forward? The answer is important. When you go back to the fathers and you began with Adam, there were immediate apostasies from the truth by Adam's posterity. It was generations before Eve bore Cain and thought she had a son that would at last be faithful. They (Adam and Eve) were grandparents when Cain was born. Then Able was born. Cain slew Able. So the hoped-for righteous were lost, one to apostasy and the other to murder. Seth came as a replacement to the grandparents, Adam and Eve. From Seth reckons then the seed of the righteous.

Priesthood then ran from father to son to grandson to great-grandson, and so on when you look at the list of those that are gathered together into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. That was briefly the first Zion, where the Lord came and dwelt among them. *"And he rose up and he called Adam, Michael [El being the name of God].* Jehovah appeared the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, where you find the names of seven from Adam. The seventh being Enoch, as you know. But in the beginning this priesthood is a line of continuity from Adam directly down all the way until you arrive at Shem.

Once we have Shem the line interrupts. There is a complete falling away. There are no righteous fathers for Abraham. His fathers had turned to idolatry. Abraham is the prototype of the saved man, and the father of all who would be righteous thereafter, because Abraham represents, coming to the truth in a generation of apostasy. Abraham represents coming back to the light despite the fact his fathers taught him idolatry. Abraham represents the challenge that every man, who would be saved from that point forward, must confront and then overcome: the idolatry of their fathers. Abraham is the prototype. Even you face this same challenge. Even you must overcome the idolatry of your fathers.

Therefore Abraham was acknowledged by that same Jehovah who visited with the fathers at Adam-ondi-Ahman and identified Himself again to Abraham. Father Abraham after generations of apostasy becomes literally the first to return to the righteousness of the first fathers. He was the first to return to the religion that belong in the beginning to mankind, and which is intended by God to be given anew to man in the last days. Abraham was the first to rediscover "a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers," after generations of darkness about the matter.

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Abraham was the one who desired to be a follower of righteousness. One who possessed great knowledge, to be a greater follower of righteousness and to possess greater knowledge still. It is this which made him a candidate the Lord could speak with face to face. It is this that made him the prototype in his generation, and for every generation who would follow. Abraham represents what it takes to turn away from idolatry, to turn away from the kind of corrupt and degrading religions that were then and play on the earth, the fertility cults and the human sacrifices and the vileness that surrounded him. Abraham succeeded. In a wicked and fallen world Abraham sought out righteousness by his diligence, not merely to satisfy his curiosity but to then be obedient to what he found.

After he succeeded and knew the truth, Abraham was asked by God to slay his son, as if there was some legitimacy to the human sacrifice practiced all around him. In the version that we have in the King James Bible, Isaac is not slain. There is an older tradition that you can find in the book of Hebrews (Heb. 11: 17-19) and in the Book of Mormon (Jacob 4: 5), in which Isaac is slain and then brought back to life, rather like Lazarus is brought back to life. The Old Testament version that we have in King James tells us of Abraham raising his hand with the knife to commit the act, and then the ram is found in the thicket to deliver him. (Gen. 22: 10-13) Sometimes as it turns out, rams are not found in thickets and the sacrifice will be required. The Lord says in Abraham 2: 11: *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) [Because fundamentally, what distinguishes Abraham and what distinguishes the covenant is the knowledge of the priesthood holder. Abraham was in possession of priesthood like the original fathers because he knew things that are true which relate back to the very beginning. As a consequence of that, those who are given the same knowledge, necessarily have to belong to the same priesthood.] and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), [Because you become a son of Abraham if you take upon yourselves the requirements for the covenant, you inherit that. Just as Abraham inherited it because of what he sought and obtained. It comes down from the beginning from the fathers.] for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal. Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee;"* Here again, Abraham stands as the prototype of the saved man, the father of the righteous, the example of all those who coming out of apostasy find their way back to God and redemption, because all of the servants that will be acknowledged by Him, must seek earnestly, and will as *The Lectures on Faith* promise, assuredly find Him.

Everyone who receives the gospel, this gospel, verse 10 of that Abraham chapter 2: *"And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name,"* You ought to ask yourself what is *"this Gospel?"* And are you yet in

possession of it? Because it would appear that the promises made to the fathers include rather more than what we talk about in our meetings and conferences as yet. But it is nevertheless the case that it is through Joseph, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham that promises remain. You can see that in Doctrine and Covenants 27: 10: "And also with Joseph and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, your fathers, by whom the promises remain;" That is, promises are still in play right now as a consequence of what God did in covenant with Joseph, and by His covenant with Jacob, and His covenant with Isaac, and His covenant with Abraham. Those promises are still in play. This is what Moroni was talking about to Joseph Smith. And also, most importantly, as mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 27, verse 11: "And also with Michael, or Adam, the father of all, the prince of all, the ancient of days;" These are promises that are in play today which go all the way back to them.

The covenant which we are to inherit will come as consequence of them. What they got, secured for us, are promises which the Lord intends to honor in the last days. Therefore when we are the beneficiaries of those covenants we are going, like Abraham, to have restored to us a knowledge of the beginning of creation, the planets, the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, as Section 121 tells us. This is part of what belongs to the dispensation of the fullness of time.

Go to Joseph Smith translation of Genesis chapter 14, beginning at verse 25: "And Melchizedek lifted up his voice and blessed Abram. 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 an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch, It being after the order of the Son of God;" There is an order that is after the son of God. But there was a covenant that preceded even the days of Melchizedek, it came down as a consequence of what happened in God's covenant with Enoch.

The account continues: "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 every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world." These are signs which follow that order. In every case, however, it is not your will. Even if you are given this ordination, it is by the will of the Son of God. That is to say, nothing has ever been broken or will be broken by this power, and nothing ever has been or will be held in defiance, and nothing ever gets done using this power except as it is done solely by the will of the Son. Remember that. It is a key to understanding who the Lord will entrust with such power.

Continuing: "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 hath 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." These are they who are coming, whose glory and brightness will burn them up on the earth, who are unprepared to receive them. These are they about whom Moroni was speaking to Joseph Smith. These things all fit together. There is one story being told here in all of the scriptures by the prophets. From the beginning to the end, it is the same.

Continuing: "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 wherewith Melchizedek had blessed him." Remarkable account, isn't it.

Joseph Smith restored this information, as he restored the rest of what Joseph of Egypt promised would come from the latter day seer. This is done in order for us to understand that God has sworn by Himself to the fathers about what it is He intends to accomplish in the last days. Therefore as we get near that event, as we are now over that horizon and inevitably going to fall into those dark days, some few will take it seriously enough to say, like Abraham, 'I too would like to seek for the blessings of the fathers. I would like also to have from God, a covenant. I would like to inherit, what it was that was given in the beginning.'

God alone makes the covenant. We accept it by abiding the conditions. The only thing we can do on our own is attempt to make vows to God. We can make vows, but Christ discouraged us from doing that in Matthew chapter 5. This was in the Sermon on the Mount. (You can read the same thing in 3 Nephi chapter 12.) Turn to Matthew 5:33: "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." He will say the same thing in 3 Nephi 12: 33-37.

The fact of the matter is, that you can make a vow to God, but you cannot create a covenant with God. God can make a covenant which you can fulfill by your performance. God can offer you something, but it's up to you to accept it. You accept it by what you do. It's not enough to say, "Yea Lord, I'll go out and do as I'm bidden." Instead you must actually do it. Because it is only through doing that the covenant is kept by you. It is only through doing the covenant is able to be empowered sufficiently to give you the blessing which a law has been established to allow you to lay ahold. You can't get there without God offering you the covenant and you accepting God's invitation.

So now we should realize, I hope, that that city which Melchizedek, the King of Peace, was able to teach righteousness sufficiently so that it was taken up from the earth, was reserved by God's covenant to return in the last days. They will return at the end of the world. Not the end of mankind or the planet, but the end of the world, or in other words the destruction of the wicked.

The next time we have an event on the earth in which a people of righteousness are taught and gathered, it will not be for the purpose of going up to heaven. Instead it will be for the purpose of permitting those who have gone up before with Enoch and Melchizedek to come back down. It will be for the purpose of preparing those who can endure the presence of those who will come. Because those who come, as Moroni put it, will burn up all who are unworthy, leaving them neither root nor branch. Therefore, some few need to be gathered, so that the earth is not utterly wasted at His coming.

We all know the Lord's expression, "As it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man." (JS-Matt. 1: 41) How many people were required in order to have the Ark be an acceptable place in which God could preserve all of humanity? It was a portable Ark of the Covenant, in which the family was preserved.

So if it's going to be as it was in the days of Noah there is this net that has been cast out to gather together all manner of fish. (Matt. 13: 47-50.) But as the Lord tells the parable, the angels are going to come at the end of the world to pick through all manner of fish, they keep the good, and the wicked are cast away. They are "cast into the furnace of fire," in the Lord's parable. So the question is, how diligent ought the search be into the things of God? How carefully ought we to consider the things that have been restored to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith?

The fact is, the fulfillment of these ancient covenants is assigned to occur in our dispensation. These comments are taken from the Book of Mormon which the world does not have or accept. They are taken from the book of Abraham, which the world does not have or accept. They come from the Joseph Smith Translation and the Doctrine and Covenants, which the world does not have or accept. All of you have this information in front of you as Latter-day Saints. All of this material has been restored through someone who we claim we honor and regard as a Prophet. Yet we neglect it.

Well, they who come, will burn up those who are unprepared. Therefore, what should we be doing in order to make sure that we are included among those who *are* prepared?

I want to look more into Enoch. So let's go back to the book of Moses. Moses 7: 60: "*And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live,*" [This is covenant language. This is God swearing by his own life. This is God promising that if He lives, so shall His word live. If He's alive He will vindicate what He's about to say.] "*As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah; And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle,*



*and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there,"* [These are they, who when they come, will burn up those unprepared for the coming, so that it leaves neither root nor branch.] *"we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest. And it came to pass that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years; But before that day he saw great tribulations among the wicked; and he also saw the sea, that it was troubled, and men's hearts failing them, looking forth with fear for the judgments of the Almighty God, which should come upon the wicked."* (Moses 7: 60-66.)

This was how the Lord described to Enoch what would happen before His return. It was given to Enoch through a covenant. When The Lord swears "as I live," "... even so will," followed by Him telling them what will happen in the last days, it is a certainty it will happen.

This covenant given to Enoch is among the promises that were made to one of the fathers, and Enoch is one of the fathers. These are the covenants whose time is now upon us. This is the day in which we need to be prepared, so that those who went before and ascended up the ladder can return and fall upon your neck and kiss you, and you fall upon their neck and kiss them. This is to be a sacred embrace through the veil, evidencing fellowship, between you here and them there. The Lord has promised and covenanted these things are going to happen.

But notice, there has to be a tabernacle to be built, like what He requested to be built in Nauvoo. He wanted to come to a Temple there and to restore what had been lost. (D&C 124: 28.) We failed and He did not come to Nauvoo. Yet to fulfill His covenant He must yet come to and take up His abode in a dwelling here. There has to be preparation made. These things require some effort to be made *here*, in order to prepare for His return. If there is no one here who is willing to engage in what's necessary to bring this to pass (because everyone looks around and expects someone else to do it), then you're neglecting the duty that's devolving upon you. Those who have been assigned to come down in this day, in order to honor the fathers, and honor the Lord, by allowing the covenants that have made to be fulfilled, have some responsibility to finish and fulfill the promised work. We are farther away from that day by day. What is presently underway doesn't even begin to accomplish what has been foretold. We are engaged in busy-work. But the Lord has a greater work in mind.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants section 107: 53, because in this we see that first brief Zion after which Enoch would later pattern his teaching: *"Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing."* [This is the original, first patriarchal blessing being given by Adam, he having summoned them there. While Adam was in the act of giving his last blessing, three years previous to his death:] *"the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam,"* [Ask yourself what comfort is it that the Lord ministers.] *"and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. These things were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time."* (D&C 107: 53-57.) This is the original covenant. This is the first father. This is what was set in motion before the death of Adam, under the binding influence and ratification of the Holy Ghost (or the mind of God), in which Adam, under the influence of that Spirit, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. This is the original covenant. This is the original father. Words spoken as a consequence of the influence of the Holy Spirit become the words of God because they are His. They will not fall to the ground unfulfilled. The new and everlasting covenant in our day, is "new" only as a consequence of it having been restored to our attention recently. It is not a new thing. It is a very old thing going back to the days of Adam. It was known to him. You were known to him. What was going to happen in your day was predicted and promised as a consequence of him.

Prophecies as I've said before, revolve around two, and primarily two events only. The first was the coming of the Lord as a mortal, and the second is the coming of the Lord in judgment at the end of the world. There are plenty of prophecies that reckon to intermediate events, so you can find exceptions to the rule. It is nevertheless a rule, however, that the primary focus of all prophecy is the first and second coming of the Lord. These two events vindicate the promise the Father made at the beginning that He would redeem us all from the grave, and He promised further that at some point, the world would come to an end as to its wickedness and there would be peace again on the earth. Everything revolves around those two prophetic events.

The seed that is to be preserved, and the effort that the Lord has made to try and preserve the seed, that He needs to have, in order to establish a population of the earth after His coming, is the topic Zenos' allegory addresses. Zenos' prophecy was picked up by Jacob as a part of his record, in Jacob chapter 5. Jacob's older brother, Nephi, wrote the first books in the small plates of Nephi. Located there is Nephi's testimony, his prophecy. Nephi adopted the words of Isaiah in order to explain what it was that he, Nephi, had seen. He used Isaiah's words as the means to do that. And Jacob does the same thing.

Jacob said, I want everyone to come up to the temple and I'm going to deliver to you a prophecy. (Jacob 4: 15) When he delivers the prophecy it consists of him reading the allegory taken from Zenos, about the history of God's chosen people. When he finishes reading this lengthy chapter from Zenos he says, Here's the words of my prophecy, because I told you I was going to give it, here it is: "the things which this prophet Zenos spake, concerning the house of Israel, in which he likened them unto a tame olive tree, must surely come to pass." (Jacob 6: 1) That's Jacob's testimony and prophecy! Jacob adopts the words of Zenos in order to bear testimony of the things which he, Jacob, had been taught by the Lord, when the Lord spoke to him face-to-face.

Jacob didn't invent a new allegory. Jacob didn't invent a new narrative. He didn't invent a new story. And he didn't invent new scriptures. He simply took the words of prophets that went before and said, 'Here they are. The words of my prophecy are: they are true.'

Nephi had done the same thing. Jacob does the same thing. Jacob saw in his older brother Nephi the example which he chose to follow, and he did follow. We are going to look at this prophecy, which originally delivered by Zenos, is reaffirmed, ratified, renewed, and a second witness is given to us, in the form of Jacob in the fifth chapter of Jacob. I want to skip to the time that is relative to our day in Jacob 5: 48, because all the rest of that stuff is past history and what we're trying to figure out from where we are, to how to get to the spot in which we might not be burned up, root and branch. Beginning at verse 48: *"And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard— have not the branches thereof overcome the roots which are good?"* [That is to say, the roots, the original covenant, the original stock from which we reckon, they were good. But we have become lofty in the way in which we approach things, and as a consequence of that, we have done something that has so cumbered the construct of where we find ourselves, that we've essentially destroyed the ability of the roots to do us any good.] *"And because the branches have overcome the roots thereof, behold they grew faster than the strength of the roots, taking strength unto themselves."* [That is their pride, their haughtiness. They decided that they were driving this, and not the covenants that were originally made in the beginning.] *"Behold, I say, is not this the cause that the trees of thy vineyard have become corrupted? And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Let us go to and hew down the trees of the vineyard and cast them into the fire, that they shall not cumber the ground of my vineyard, for I have done all. What could I have done more for my vineyard? But, behold, the servant said unto the Lord of the vineyard: Spare it a little longer. And the Lord said: Yea, I will spare it a little longer, for it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard."*

The Lord, despite the fact that He can't think of anything else that He's left undone, in all of His preparations—and, by the way, it is only that. It is only His preparations. Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 19 and look at what the Lord did for us in the atonement. In describing what He went through in D&C 19:19 the Lord says: "Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." You see that is what He did! And He finished that. He finished His preparations. But verse 20 is what is left for us to do: "Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power;" That's us. He's done his part. What more could He do? Well, the only other thing He could do is rob us of our agency, and He's not prepared to do that, because our existence then would come to an end. (D&C 93: 30-31.) That is because without the freedom to choose we don't have an existence. Therefore, what more could He have done? But it does grieve Him that is going to lose the trees of his vineyard. "Wherefore" the Lord says, *"let us take of the branches of these which I have planted in the nethermost parts of my vineyard,"* [That's where we find ourselves.] *"and let us graft them into the tree from whence they came;"* [That is, let's restore the covenant, or at least make it possible to do so.] *"and let us pluck from the tree those branches whose fruit is most bitter,"* [That is coming.] *"and graft in the natural branches of the tree in the stead thereof. And this will I do that the tree may not perish, that, perhaps,"* [Perhaps, or on the off chance. Because without the ability to control the outcome, depending on what you decide to do, perhaps the Lord may preserve unto Himself. You see this does depend upon us.] *"the roots thereof for mine own purpose."* [That is, some of the promises that were made back to the fathers, that their seed would not be utterly destroyed, might be fulfilled...perhaps.]

How great a number is required in order for the Lord to vindicate his promise? It's not about numbers. It's never been about a big volume. It's the quality of the salvation. Because if you can save but one, what you have saved is infinite and eternal. And therefore it continues on forever.

And so we get this happy reflection: *"Behold, the roots of the natural branches of the tree which I planted whithersoever I would are yet alive;"* [Those promises remain. They are still in play. What the Father promised, what covenants were established, did remain in play. It is yet possible for the Lord to vindicate everything that has been given.] *"wherefore, that I may preserve them also for mine own purpose, I will take of the branches of this tree, and I will graft them in unto them."* [This is the process by which house of Israel is restored, not in the way that is possible to mass-produce. But in the way in which, some rise up and lay hold upon that original religion that belonged to the fathers, that came down from the beginning, that existed at one time, and that is to exist again.] *"Yea, I will graft in unto them the branches of their mother tree, that I may preserve the roots also unto mine own self,"* [Notice that word "mother" appears in there too. The mother tree. This is genealogical and familial. The purpose is always to restore to the earth the Family of God.] *"that when they shall be sufficiently strong perhaps they may bring forth good fruit unto me, and I may yet have glory in the fruit of my vineyard."*

And then they go through things and so we skip to verse 61: *"...call servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, that we may prepare the way, that I may bring forth again the natural fruit, which natural fruit is good and the most precious above all other fruit."* [That's the whole purpose of the endeavor. And when they call servants in order to help them, the labor of the servants is confined to trying to make the vineyard finally produce fruit again.] Verse 62: *"Wherefore, let us go to and labor with our might this last time, for behold the end draweth nigh, and this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard."* He tells them again in verse 64: *"for the last time, for the end draweth nigh. And if it be so that these last grafts shall grow, and bring forth the natural fruit, then shall ye prepare the way for them, that they may grow."* Again in verse 71: *"Behold, this is the last time that I shall nourish my vineyard; for the end is nigh at hand, and the season speedily cometh; and if ye labor with your might with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come. And it came to pass that the servants did go and labor with their mights; and the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them;"* [Because the Lord in the last effort, is not going to leave the servants that he sends, unattended to, by *His* ministration. This is why in the verses we been reading, and every location we been at, we find that the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, direct, immediate and involved. He continues to remain personally in charge of what is going to happen. But as it begins to happen these Divinely appointed ministers have to sit back and watch. Because the question isn't, is the laborer any less, any well prepared, any less capable, any less complete? No, they are truly sent by the Master. Therefore, the question instead is: What are the branches going to do?]

You can minister all you want to the tree, but the tree has to respond, sometimes to what they view as offensive pruning, offensive digging, offensive conduct of cutting and moving and grafting. Sometimes the kindly service requires the blunt statement that what you have here is error. What you have here is a bundle of false tradition that will damn you.

You can plant the doctrine, you can restore the truth, you can have the Prophet Joseph Smith declare to you that he wants to be held to account for every word of the testimony that he delivers to you in a canonized set of scripture. But if you decide that you are going to throw that away, and you will not allow it to graft in and inform you about the nature of God, and nature of the religion that God is seeking to deliver to you, then the ministration, and the pruning, and the care, does not result in producing fruit. It simply results in a rather damaged vineyard, continuing to produce precious little, other than what is suitable to be gathered in bundles and burned as a consequence of the loftiness of the people.

Grafting is to restore, to reconnect, to return, or in other words, to plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers. *"And the hearts of the children shall turn to the fathers."* That's what Moroni said. That's why Moroni reworked the language of Malachi in verse 39 of the Joseph Smith History. *"He shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers. And the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers."* The work has been for one purpose. Joseph Smith began it. And he laid out all the information necessary for you to be able to identify who the fathers are. He also laid out all the information necessary for you to be able to identify what the covenants were. And now the question is, are we able at this point to preserve the roots, which is the Lord's purpose, by producing fruit in our day?

Well I'm hoping as a consequence of the things that we've looked at tonight, that you conclude that the choice seer in 2 Nephi 3: 7 and in JST-Genesis chapter 50, was more than answered by the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I hope that you conclude that the knowledge that was supposed to be restored through Joseph of the fathers and the covenants given to the fathers, the knowledge which will ultimately result in restoring Israel, as it is referred to in 2 Nephi 3: 15, has also been something Joseph Smith accomplished. Because Joseph Smith was the promised seer descended from the loins of Joseph of Egypt.

Now I want to change subjects only slightly, in order to address something that we have all been fixated upon. One of the problems with understanding the will of God is that religion was always intended to be proven, and provable, personally. I cannot prove it for you. You cannot prove it for me. But God can prove it for both of us.

When it comes to the proof of the things of God, it is necessarily anecdotal. Anecdotal proof means, that someone went out and they had an experience, and they come back and they tell you as an anecdote, what happened to them. You cannot know whether, when they tell you what happened to them, that they are telling you the truth or not, because their experience is theirs and belongs only to them. What you can do is say, Joseph Smith seems to persuade me. Joseph Smith seems to have arrived at a point in which, the things that have come to us from Joseph appear to be beyond the capacity of a mere man to have accomplished. Joseph Smith seems to say things which, because of their volume, because of their consistency, because of their purity, appear to me to be something which hails from God and not merely Joseph Smith. However, in the end you must trust Joseph Smith, because it is impossible for you to go back to the morning of a beautiful Spring day in 1820 and be there in the woods near Palmyra to see for yourself. It is a one-time occurrence. It was Joseph's experience.

The only way in which you can know for yourself, is if you go out and you encounter something *for* yourself, in which, you come back from that experience and say, "God spoke also to me." Therefore, as a consequence of God speaking to me, I now know something, which independent of Joseph Smith and independent of the scriptures, God has covenanted with me, and I know now to be true. Your knowledge of God is necessarily anecdotal. Your knowledge of God is necessarily yours, and yours alone. That knowledge of God becomes your property, belonging to you, your covenant in the final analysis, in which, God promises by His own voice to you, in words that He cannot break (because He is a God of truth (Ether 3: 12), and He is the same God today as yesterday, and will be the same tomorrow). He does not change. When you fall into His orbit, you are now revolving around the center, in which, all truth is to be found.

All the answers to the dilemmas that you have, are to be given. But they are to be given to you individually, by Him, and not by another. Even if a man has power to declare things that have been kept hidden from the beginning of the world until now, it's of no use if it's mere voyeurism on your part. If it's just entertainment to you, rather than transcendent in effect to your mind and soul. It's not supposed to be entertaining. It may appropriately be inspiring. But if it is inspiring, it's only so if it results in you taking action. Because the action that is required is for you to go out and to acquire for yourself your own anecdote, your own experience, your own testimony, or more correctly, your own knowledge of the things of God.

One of the reasons why we look at the scriptures is because these are evidence of, how often the Lord has, and how frequently does, covenant with those who seek after Him. When the restoration began through Joseph Smith there was already in place a restorationist movement. It was all over the Western Reserve including frontier Ohio, spreading into upstate New York. That restorationist movement already knew that what was missing from true faith was a New Testament church. What was needed was a New Testament church that was modeled, governed, patterned and authorized in the same way in which Jesus had authorized a New Testament church in the meridian of time.

But what was Jesus up to in the meridian of time in establishing a church? He was about to launch the Gospel into the Gentile world in which you would not find those who could organize themselves as the House of Israel. Therefore in order to accomplish that, as a substitute for the 12 princes of Israel, the 12 sons of Jacob, He called 12 apostles to model that family. And he called 70 others because the family of Israel included 70 souls in Exodus 1: 5. You will find that when Israel went in Egypt, the family of Israel consisted of 70 souls. And so He remodeled the ancient family of Israel in the New Testament church.

But the restoration of the Gospel in the last days is not reaching back to the meridian of time. The restoration of the Gospel in the last days is reaching back, at a minimum, to the time of Enoch. Because what you have to accomplish is not a return merely to the center of the events. Rather, you must walk back through the dispensations in a mirror image or chiasm, to the beginning of mankind.

Ultimately back from the fall itself. Therefore the symmetry of the history of mankind will match at the end what was in the beginning. It's unfolding according to a pattern. It's unfolding according to a plan. It is vindicating the promises and the prophecies that were made, beginning with Adam in the first days.

And what is now needed for the culmination of the last days are those who will at last say to God, "I am not satisfied with my Sunday School lessons, and the disappointment that I see all around me. I'm not prepared to wait on another before I rise up to know God myself." We need a generation of belief to arise and then act according to their belief to become people of faith.

If any of *you* lack wisdom, ask God. He gives to all men liberally. He does not upbraid. That means He doesn't send you away discouraged, telling you, don't inquire of me. You have no right to ask of me.

We saw in that first talk in Boise that we were commanded to pursue after the mysteries of God. What is more mysterious than what went on in the beginning generations? Because we have so little left from which to reconstruct that it is entirely a mystery. And yet, we have enough to know the pattern the Lord intended for the last days to unfold. That pattern is to return us, in the end, to what was here in the beginning. It is God's intent to return us to a state of knowledge about things He has always had in His heart, as the goal, as the ambition, as the desire to fulfill. Not a New Testament church, although a New Testament church is absolutely part of the last-days pattern.

When the Lord hung on the cross, and the sun was darkened at noon, if you had looked up in the sky to see what was overhead, you would see the sacrificial sheep in the pattern of the stars; what we call Aries today. Proceeding forth from under the forefoot of Aries, we have renamed it "the bands of Pisces," but it should be more appropriately rendered as the net of Pisces. Because from under the fore leg of the Lamb, was cast out a net. This is the New Testament pattern or church. That net gathers in at least two kinds of fish. The larger one that is gathered in the net is forever circumnavigating the ecliptic, and will do so eternally. The larger group in the star field, though caught in the net cast by the Lamb will never rise up to the North. The smaller group, the smaller star field of Pisces, which also is caught in that same net, is pointed to the sides of the North, where the Throne of the Father is to be found; that place around which all things revolve and where the Father presides and sustains all of His creations.

The religion that was established in the beginning recognized the testimony set out in the stars above us, which we cannot touch, corrupt, corrode, alter, or change by our apostasy, which is beyond our ability to reach and alter. That testimony above was placed there in the beginning and remains overhead still. But it serves us no purpose today because, when mankind could not destroy the testimony written in the heavens, then we simply lost it through ignorance; or in the words we read tonight from Enoch, darkness was permitted to reign upon the earth. Satan is content with darkness, because it works just as well as any of the other tools used to condemn and chain mankind.

The God of heaven intends for the testimonies that He has given to be understood. In the beginning they were understood. Now don't think that you can start doing Google searches, and you can reconstruct what it was they knew. I know because I've looked at it. I've looked at the best sources that are out there. I bought a library of material to look into whether or not it would be possible to talk about these things without using any source other than what already exists here. If I can't find a source already in existence I do not feel presently at liberty to go further in the discussion. That will be in another day. Now Francis Rolleston has a good book to raise awareness of the subject. John Pratt uses Rolleston in a lot of what he's written. I've looked carefully at what John Pratt has done as well, and I've spoken with him about these subjects. He is a Latter-day Saint astronomer, who has paid attention to this subject and written articles in Meridian Magazine. I can tell you that the resources simply do not exist here on the earth. You would probably be better off not trying to reconstruct it at this point, because even the constellations are so messed up in what has been bequeathed to us that the wrong images are now believed to be part of the testimony above. One of the earliest sources about the constellations you can find in the Egyptian temple at Dendra. It too is a mess. Historically it is also late.

The Egyptians tried to preserve the things that came down from the beginning, as we read in the book of Abraham. The Pharaoh "sought earnestly to imitate the order that came down from the beginning." (Abr. 1: 26) Pharaoh succeeded in large measure in doing that. He was a righteous man, "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 of Noah, his father." (Abraham 1:26.) Pharaoh was not out there freelancing. He was trying to imitate something, and Egypt generally did a commendable job of preserving some things that had fallen into decay elsewhere. But the restoration through Joseph Smith, and the promises that were made to the fathers, and the statement that was made by Moroni to Joseph on the evening that he came to him, when he reworded the promise given through Malachi, all of these are pointed to something that is, at this moment, still incomplete. This points to a work that at this moment is still undone; a project that remains for us, if we will receive it. But it will require revelation from heaven to be able to restore it. Therefore it will require people willing to receive new revelation.

When Zion does come to pass, heaven will look down and see what is to them, so comfortable, and so familiar, that it appears to accurately reflect a pattern that exists in the heavens. When they see we have that here, then they who come not only will not burn them up, but they will instead fall upon them and they kiss their necks. This will be because, at last, they had a sister and

brother on the earth, united by belief, united by covenant, united by knowledge, united by light and truth, or in other words, the glory of God, which is intelligence. The purpose of the Gospel has always been, to inform, edify, to raise up, to instruct. It was never meant to be reduced to something that is merely repetitious. It was intended to challenge you to your very core. What you do and what you think and how you act is intended to make you godlike in your understanding. And you're not godlike when you're bored out of your mind in a meeting.

If you have the opportunity to teach, you *must* push the envelope. You *must* teach and instruct and try to raise people up. The grafting serves no purpose if it simply continues to produce the same barrenness. Fruit is a genealogical term. Be fruitful and multiply was what Adam was told to be with Eve, at the beginning. It's about preserving a "family of Gods" if you will. It's about creating a circumstance in which it is possible for the work which began an eternity ago can continue to go on for an eternity from now, because *you* were saved. Because *you* were redeemed; because *you* tied into that same connection, that unifies all of the Gods who have gone before.

The work of salvation is not achieved by ignorance and indifference. The Gospel of Christ is not limited to, making you feel better about yourself. Quite frankly, my wife and I marvel all the time at how unprepared and unworthy she and I feel in everything that has gone on. But, I know God. And therefore, because I know God, I am confident that you can know Him too. I am absolutely confident that you can know Him too. He *will* speak to any one of you, just as He spoke to Joseph Smith, and that He will answer any earnest seeker. No one is sent away disappointed.

Do you think the Lord, who would not turn away the blind, and the halt, the crippled, and the leprous, do you think the Lord who, seeing the widow whose only son was being carried away dead, and was moved with compassion to restore the life of that young man, so that she, in that circumstance, in that culture, in that environment, she now had future security because she had a son to look out for her; do you think that that Lord doesn't intend to answer the prayers of the earnest seeker? My suspicion is that God has answered, and you have turned a deaf ear to much of what you looked for, because you want something other than the answers He has already given in the material that sits in front of you unexamined. My suspicion is, that if you would spend time looking into the revelations given us by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and studying history, however perilous that may be a prove to you, that you will conclude that God has already given an answer to the inquiry you've made. And with a little effort you can find it. [Holding up the scriptures.] And when you find it, you'll hear the voice of God saying, "There it is. Now was that so hard? Why don't you keep going and see what else is in there for you." Because this stuff was given to us at the price of the life of a 38 ½ year old young man and his older brother, whose blood was shed in order to restore what we now have in our possession. And we take it lightly and we look away.

I could write my own Gospel. I could bear my own testimony. I could invent a new narrative about our Lord, if it were necessary to do so. But I will tell you the only thing that is necessary is to open the scriptures and read them, and to tell you, the things that we looked at tonight are true. Like Jacob. In fact, if you go all the way back to Jacob chapter 6: 1: "And now, behold, my brethren, as I said unto you that I would prophesy, behold, this is my prophecy—that the things which this prophet Zenos spake, concerning the house of Israel, in the which he likened them unto a tame olive-tree, must surely come to pass."

So here are the words my prophecy: That the things that we have looked at this evening, restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the seer named Joseph, the son of the father named Joseph, fulfilled the promise of Joseph of Egypt, and they are all true. I know them to be true. And you could know them to be true too. But the price you have to pay to gain that knowledge is to study what was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Otherwise, they're just something gathering dust on a shelf. Don't read them as if you're trying to vindicate the religion you already understand. Don't read them as if you're trying to defend your current group of preferred doctrines. Read them as if you are as ignorant of the will of God as the convert you hope to make living somewhere in Florida or New Guinea or Guatemala. Because the truth of the matter is we have been devolving in our understanding from the day of Joseph Smith until today at an ever accelerating rate. And what we have left, Enoch called gross darkness.

I bear testimony that Joseph Smith was a Prophet. I bear testimony that our Lord lived and lives. I'm one of those who can say that I am a witness of that. I have seen His suffering. I have heard His voice. He doesn't intend that I be a solitary witness of Him, or Joseph be one. He intends for everyone of you to rise up and do as James bids you to do. If you lack wisdom, ask God. He gives to you, He gives to all of us liberally. He is real. It is His work to bring this stuff to pass. The only thing that we can do is to offer to be a servant. And I am confident that I am a poor one of those. But I am His servant. I serve Him however poorly, however offensively, however inadequately. He intends to call, in the plural, servants to fulfill what needs to be done in the last days. He does intend to bring again Zion. That will be his, and not a man's work.

When we get together again the next time I talk, the subject is going to be Priesthood. And the time after that we'll talk about Zion. Hopefully as a consequence of covering the subjects we do, in the order that we address them, you'll begin to appreciate the restoration that has come about through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Hopefully you will understand Joseph's work as only the beginning of the work of God in the last days. Much of what is left yet to be accomplished will not be accomplished unless it is through others, eventually leading to the return of the natural fruit. A proposition that remains a challenging and undone and an incomplete labor.

The things I've talked about tonight were chosen precisely because they focus on the issue, the real issue involving covenants, we need to begin to understand in the last days in order to know that the covenants of the fathers and the work of reuniting His children with the fathers is something yet to be accomplished. But it is something which, hopefully, we will begin to see happen again. Joseph did not return without some success in that. Joseph was able to obtain what he sought. Now we need to do the same to save ourselves in our day.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

# Priesthood

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Lecture 5 Orem, Utah

40 years ago, I had been a member of the Church for almost 2 months. Bishop Ernie Ellsworth, although he was a civilian, worked for the Navy. He would be transferred to Hawaii shortly after I left New Hampshire, but he was still Bishop at that point, and he called me to be the ward newsletter writer for the Portsmouth, New Hampshire Ward. That was the first calling I had in the Church.

Before that, Elders Quorum President George Hoyer had ordained me to the Aaronic Priesthood. I have his line of authority, a topic we might look at today, and he had also previously called me to be home teacher. He took me home teaching to introduce it to me, and I was given a route that required I leave the state of New Hampshire in order to go home teach. The wards and stakes in New England, particularly in those days, were enormous. And so I had to leave the state in order to home teach.

I had been assigned to a fellow who was inactive and kind of hostile, who lived up in Maine. I went up to home teach him with George on the first visit. This fellow was kind of angry and upset and hadn't had a home teacher in a while and wanted to know what the crap we were invading his privacy for. This was my first impression of what home teaching was all about. After he had vented a little while, and me in the zeal of my recent conversion, I asked him, "Why the hell are you are damn Mormon then if you're going to act like this?" Well he showed up in the Portsmouth Ward building shortly thereafter, and said, "I got home taught. My home teacher wanted to know why I was a damn Mormon." He said he thought that visit was interesting enough that the Church probably has some new characters in it. He was going to show up and see what this was all about.

Well today we are talking about priesthood. A topic which probably everyone in this room thinks they know a whole lot about, and can recite a whole lot of history, and give a whole lot of details, and explain everything there is to know about it in so far as the restoration is concerned. You all probably think you know what Joseph has said and what the scriptures tell us about priesthood. I'm going to ask you for purposes of today to assume that what you know is riddled with incompleteness, omissions, and gaps in the storyline. And it is a fact that Joseph Smith never set out to ever give a comprehensive accounting of the subject of priesthood. He gave snippets. He gave a grab here and a grab there. In the process of doing so he left things that have been filled in by the imagination of people, but not necessarily by anyone, who like Joseph, knew what he was talking about. Therefore, as you run into new things throughout the talk today, things that you think I'm off base with, or making a mistake because it doesn't agree with what you think you already know, I would ask you to be patient enough to hear the whole matter through today. And then be further patient enough to take it back into the scriptures, and prayerfully look at it. Because it's just possible, in fact in my view it is probable, that you know things that are wrong and you need to abandon them. So I would ask you to be patient as we go through this today and at least try it on for size and see if something doesn't click.

There are two precautions I want to put into this discussion: First, this is an overview and cannot contain all there is to be known about this topic. Second, this is merely a brief review of my own understanding. You should not assume this represents all I know about this topic. It is merely introductory and an attempt to clarify some of the larger misunderstandings about priesthood. Much more needs ultimately to be understood by anyone who would like to have a complete understanding of priesthood.

Joseph Smith said, "All priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it. That portion that brought Moses to speak with God face-to-face was taken away, but that which brought the ministry of angels remained. All prophets have the Melchizedek priesthood and were ordained by God himself." That is taken from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* on pages 180 to 181.

Ask yourself then if there is a possibility that when Joseph speaks about "different portions or degrees" of priesthood, whether he is talking about something altogether different from the offices we have in the Church of Elder, Priest, Teacher, Deacon, Bishop, Seventy, Apostle, High Priest, Patriarch, Church President, Area Authority Seventy; because even in the understanding of the Church, the way in which we ordain today, and the way that we once ordained suffered from an interruption that lasted over two decades. Today we lay hands upon someone and to confer upon them alternatively, either the Aaronic priesthood or the Melchizedek priesthood, and then to ordain them to an office. The way we phrase it today, is an office within that priesthood. But they confer, on the one hand, Aaronic or on the other hand Melchizedek, priesthood. For over two decades they did not confer priesthood, but only ordained to an office in the church. I would like you to entertain the idea that Elder, Priest,



Teacher, Deacon and so on aren't priesthood at all; they are offices in the Church. They occupy the position in the Church of these various church offices, with or without the presence of priesthood.

When the first missionaries went out and preached, taught, exhorted and expounded, they did so because they had been sustained by common consent to an office within the Church. Since the Church had been organized by the command of God, the offices within the Church had the authority to go and to implement the program of the Church. Therefore, I would like you to entertain the idea that an office in the Church is not coincidental or coextensive with priesthood. There is no such thing as the priesthood of Deacon. There is no such thing as the priesthood of Teacher. There is an office in the Church called "Teacher." There is an office in the Church called "Deacon." And the occupant of that, out of tradition, is supposed to have Aaronic priesthood in order to discharge that office. However, within the Church, we also sustain as "teachers," for example Gospel Doctrine teachers, females, who hold the office of "Gospel Doctrine teacher" within the Church. What is the difference between the office of Gospel Doctrine teacher that we sustain by our common consent on the one hand, and Teacher in the Aaronic priesthood, Teacher held by someone with the Aaronic priesthood of the other hand? We make a big deal out of the offices in the Church which are associated with Aaronic priesthood. However, they are offices in the Church. They were offices in the Church to begin with; they are offices in the Church yet today. And priesthood and offices in the Church are not necessarily coincident with one another.

So when Joseph says there are different portions or degrees, that all priesthood is Melchizedek. That all priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are "different portions or degrees" of it, I want to suggest to you that he is not talking about offices in the Church. I want to suggest to you that instead, what he's talking about is a continuum that I hope by the end of today, we have some greater appreciation or understanding for.

So if we turn to the oath and covenant of the priesthood which is contained in Doctrine and Covenants 84, and that's something we all think we know, because as parents, we've had our kids go through this, as adults we've had it parsed through. But if you look at it with the idea that all priesthood is singular, and that there are merely different portion of degrees of it, starting at verse 33 of section 84: "For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods..." [Now I want to pause there for a moment, because here in a revelation through Joseph Smith, is a statement by the Lord in revelation to Joseph, in which he calls it two priesthoods. And yet Joseph explains there's only one. There is only one and the one is Melchizedek, but there are different portions of it. Here in the revelation, it is dividing it into two. Therefore, there are two portions of it, there are two distinctions. And the possibility that those two distinctions are significant enough that they warrant treatment in the plural instead of the singular shows up right here in the revelation. I think Joseph knew what he was talking about. And I think the Lord knows what he's talking about. Because they're trying to get ideas across into our minds that we tend to resist. Now I should mention as a footnote, that there were discussions in the leadership of the Church about what was required in order to pass along priesthood. During the administration of Heber J. Grant for a period of over two decades, he ceased the practice of conferring priesthood upon people. But he had only ordained to an office in the Church. Therefore, whenever someone was ordained to priesthood during those two decades plus time period, they were ordained to an office. After the death of Heber J. Grant the practice was reverted again and they began to confer priesthood in addition to ordaining into an office. But that is something that Heber J. Grant at least did not think occupied any significance. So when I tell you that there is a difference in the office in the Church and the priesthood, Heber J. Grant at least would say, that I'm dead wrong on that point, and I don't know what I'm talking about. But entertain the idea and see where it takes you.]

Returning to Section 84: "For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling..." [You see, priesthood is not simply putting hands on someone's head and then reciting a formula and there you are. It requires that you get it, but then faithful to obtain, and then faithful to magnify, and faithful to magnify it as "a calling." "A calling" being an operative word there and that means service.] "...are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies." [Sanctified by the Spirit. Renewing their bodies. These things have meaning. Perhaps we'll get to that at some point.]

"They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God." [So they *become*. But they become as a consequence of having been sanctified. They become sanctified because they magnify their calling. They had to first obtain the priesthood, and the obtaining of the priesthood requires something that is "faithful." And you ask yourself, faithful to what? And always it is faithful to *Him*, to our Lord, the One who redeems. All of these things flow together as one continuum. It's not just: I got ordained. It doesn't matter that you got ordained. There's a process that is involved after ordination in which you follow these steps. We read it as one sentence and say, there it is, he was faithful, he passed the Bishops interview, and therefore he obtained it. That means he sat down there and got a certificate. When I was on the High Council I was the one responsible for fetching the Melchizedek priesthood certificates and delivering it to him. And that was a

definite point in time at which we can point to and say, on this day this person, gave this authority, to this guy, on this occasion, and when that happened he also got a line of authority.]

When I got ordained to be a High Priest, the Stake President handed me a line of authority, which when I looked at, I found to have mistakes. So I went back and did the research, and I corrected the line of authority. Then I went back to my Stake President and I said, 'you gave me your line of authority but it was wrong, here's the right one.' Then he had to go find all of the people who he had ordained and correct that. The problem arose because a fellow in the line thought it would more commendable to have been ordained by Marion G. Romney after he was an apostle, rather than as he really was ordained, when Marion G. Romney was called to be the Bishop. Bishop Romney called this fellow to be his counselor, and so Marion G. Romney was ordained to be a High Priest, to serve as the Bishop, and he ordained this other fellow to be a High Priest and his counselor. Subsequently, when Marion G. Romney got to be an apostle, this guy then improperly reckoned his priesthood line from the date on which Marion G. Romney became an apostle<sup>1</sup>, which screwed the whole line up. Therefore after noticing the mistake I had to fix that, and my Stake President was grateful. But it imposed upon him the obligation then to go back and straighten out all those he had ordained. Well that's neither here nor there.

"They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God." [I spoke in Centerville about what it meant to be the seed of Abraham. You ought to listen to that talk. We don't have time. We have to accumulate, we have to aggregate information. And we have to assume that you've "got" what we talked about before, so we can press on. This is all one long talk, after all. Therefore we cannot begin repeating or we will never finish.]

Once you have done those things, it continues, "And also all they who receive this priesthood..." [Now it's worded in the singular. Now it has been reduced back to the unitary. Now we're talking about that which is the fullness. We are now talking about something other than the different portions. We're talking about *this* priesthood.] "...receive me saith the Lord." [We generally take that to mean, not actually *the Lord*, for goodness sake, but rather instead, that if you have this priesthood, somehow the Lord has received you. Somehow if you've got this, you belong to Him in some metaphysical sort of fashion. In which, on account of having priesthood, the one ordained has received of Jesus. But let's take the words literally. And say to yourself, if you've got this, if this is what you have managed to accumulate, then one of the evidences of having accumulated it, will be receiving the Lord. Literally.]

"For he that receiveth my servants receive me." [I suggested in Centerville that the word "servants" in this context meant angels. And "angel," the word is derived from a Greek word that simply means "messenger." The messenger can't be on their own errand. They have to have a message that is being brought from the Lord. Therefore if the message originates with the Lord and the message is delivered by a messenger, it does not matter if the one delivering the message is a mortal. We find in the Book of Mormon where Jacob was told what he was to preach by an angel the night before he taught. (See 2 Ne. 10: 3.) King Benjamin said his sermon was based on what the angel told him to teach, after awakening him at night. (See Mosiah 3: 2-23.) In that context, both Jacob and King Benjamin were angels, or messengers with a message from God<sup>2</sup> Therefore, as long as they bear a message from the Lord, they fit the definition.]

"For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me." [That is, if the content of the message comes from the voice of God, and it is coming to you from Him, and is authentically His message, and you receive it as if from His own mouth, then you have received from Him His voice. But it doesn't end there.]

"He that receiveth me receiveth my Father." [In this context, what he's talking about is the same thing that you find in the 14th chapter of the book of John, in which Christ says that He will not leave you comfortless, but He will come to comfort you. And

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore I know that among those through whom my line of authority descended was included at least one individual whose regard for what he believed to be an honor tempted him to lie about his own ordination and authority. President Heber J. Grant is likewise included in this line for ordination to be a High Priest. Thankfully neither of them were in the line of authority when I was ordained an elder and originally had the Melchizedek priesthood (such as the Church possesses) conferred upon me.

<sup>2</sup> In the Centerville talk I referred to Lucifer's deception when he appears like "an angel of light" intending to mislead. The transcript from that talk makes it clear the reference was to the pretender, attempting to deceive by feigning to be an "angel of light." Questions I've received about the reference make it apparent some of those who listened to the talk have failed to recognize the difference between an angel sent by God and the deceiver who pretends to be "an angel of light." For the first, the message is God's. For the pretender, God is not the author of the deceiver's message. The point was to make you responsible for living your life true to the light, so you can distinguish between true and false messages.

then He and his Father will “make our abode with [you].” (John 14: 23.) This is not an abstraction. The idea that this is something that happens in your heart, you can read in the Doctrine and Covenants, is an old sectarian notion and is false. (D&C 130: 3.) It means a literal appearance of these holy beings to minister, to comfort, and ultimately to take up their abode.]

"And he that receiveth my Father..." [And I would add, while yet “in the flesh” because this is what the authority is designed to accomplish, as we see in this same revelation D&C 84: 21-22. It remains an obligation to accomplish “in the flesh” so that you then “may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory.” D&C 76: 118.]

"And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him. And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood." [And what is that oath and covenant? It is the Father's word which cannot be broken. It's not something you aspire to, but it is something that you accept by the conditions that are set out in Doctrine and Covenants section 84. It is something which, received by an oath and covenant, given by the one who *can* establish eternal covenants by His word, just as we talked about in Centerville. It is a covenant which originates from God. It is His word which cannot be broken. (Ether 3: 12.) Therefore when the Father covenants that you're going to inherit, it is a covenant that will surely come to pass.]

"Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, [notice now the reference is in the singular, implying it speaks now about the singular, fullest manifestation which comes from the Father] “receive this oath and covenant of my Father..." [This is not talking about abstractions, quorums, groups, churches and organizations, orders, and choruses among men on this side of the veil. This is talking about a direct covenantal relationship established by the Father with *this*, meaning the fullness obtained directly from the Father, which comprises “this priesthood.” This priesthood is the one about which today I would like to speak. This fully endowed priesthood.] "...which he (the Father) cannot break..." [Because if he were to break this once he has made this covenant with someone, he would cease to be God. And he cannot do that. Therefore, *this* covenant cannot be broken by Him.] "...neither can it be moved," That is, once the Father has made that covenant, earth and hell cannot make it otherwise.

"But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come." [This would be a very curious statement if your view of “this priesthood” is limited to the ordination you obtain through the agency of the Church, which establish what we call here a Melchizedek priesthood holder and an elder. This is referring to nothing of the sort. This is dealing with the covenant established by God the Father, directly. If you think it applies to what the Church dispenses, then does that mean that when an elder drifts off into inactivity in the Church or apostasies from the Church then he is not going to have forgiveness of sins in this world or the world to come?! Of course it doesn't mean that at all. It's not talking about what goes on in the Church and its brotherhoods. It's not talking about receiving an ordination and participating in an Elders Quorum, or thank God, a High Priest group. It is talking about something much higher, more directly connected with God, and therefore more holy requiring that it be taken more seriously in fidelity to the One who sits upon the Throne.]

Now here in verse 41 it's talking about the condition of having arrived, at the point in which a covenant has been established with the Father. *That* covenant. If you turn from that, if you turn from the Father, you're in a state, at this point, of willful rebellion against He who has called *you* to be his son. Against Him who sits on the Throne, in the midst of all eternity, from whose Throne He sustains everything that exists. Including everyone in this room and this creation itself. (See Mosiah 2: 21.) At the point you possess this priesthood you have been in His presence, and you've willfully turned away from Him. It's not the same thing as an elder drifting off into inactivity. It is standing in the light of the noon day sun, and denying that it is light<sup>3</sup> In these circumstances it is rebellion. It is rebellion against knowledge. That is what that verse is talking about.

But look at verse 42: "And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood..." So there is a "wo" associated with failing to come to the Father. It is not, however, a threefold doom: "wo, wo, wo." It is not a dreadful, despicable, wretched outcome. It is simply disappointment in the afterlife. Because the invitation was extended to all of you by God, and if you do not rise up to accept that invitation, then you will suffer disappointment. You will come to the point in which your condition is woeful. Because there's something that you know that you might have obtained, and you did not.

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<sup>3</sup> See *TPJS*, p. 358: “What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy.”

Then we come in these words which I think are critical to understanding the topic, and we're going to spend a lot of time on today: "which ye have received, which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice out of the heavens; and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you." [Oh my! You see the priesthood is being conferred. And the priesthood is being conferred, not by the laying on of hands, but by the voice of God, given to those who were present on this day.]

This is section 84, given in September 1832. On an earlier occasion there was a conferral of priesthood in June 1831. One of those upon whom it was conferred upon that day, by the voice of God out of heaven, was Ezra Booth. Brother Ezra Booth would later drift off to rebellion and doubt about Joseph Smith and the restoration. He wrote a series of nine letters which were published in a newspaper explaining why he rejected Mormonism. But he had had the conferral by the voice of God in June 1831, yet we get down to January 1841 we learn the fullness had been taken away. (D&C 124: 28.) The fullness had been taken away at least as it pertained to the Church. I do not think the revelation given to the Church meant that Joseph had forfeited the fullness. After all the revelation discussing the loss was given to Joseph as God's prophet. This is another matter, and will not be discussed at this point.

So we want to focus on those words in verse 42 about priesthood being conferred by the voice of God. But we've got some other things to look at in order to get there. First of all I want to go to Joseph Smith's translation of Genesis chapter 14: beginning at verse 26. This is in the back of your Bible. "Now Melchizedek was a man of faith," [by the way Melchizedek is a title; it's a name-title. It is a compound of two words. One is "king" and one is "priest" and therefore in one sense it's a name-title, and in another sense it's a new name. It was not the birth name given to someone, rather it was a new name title given to Shem and fashioned after Christ. Because Christ is the great King and the great Priest who is the King of Kings and He is the Great High Priest. And so because Melchizedek is really a name-title that belongs to Christ, it began to be used as a substitute to prevent the frequent repetition of the "Son of God". Therefore, when you talk about the Holy Priesthood the correct full name would be: The Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God. But to prevent the too frequent repetition of that Melchizedek (a name-title for Christ), was used as a substitute.

But Melchizedek, that is, Shem grew up to become the one that received that name-title. He "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." [This is Melchizedek as a child. This is Melchizedek doing something by faith.] "And thus having been approved of God, he was ordained." [That is, ordination occurred *after* faith.]

Can a man heal by faith without priesthood? Of course they can. Could Melchizedek as a child without priesthood, stop the mouths of lions? Yes, the scriptures say so. Could this man Melchizedek by faith quench the violence of fire without priesthood? Yes.

Therefore, this revelation through Joseph is evidence that faith and priesthood are not coequal. Both are independent powers. Even the evangelical minister Oral Roberts whose ministry was largely based upon healings could, through faith, is able to heal. Could he or anyone do so without priesthood? Yes of course. These are two different things. These are altogether two different things.

So Melchizedek accomplished these things by faith. And then having accomplished these works by faith, God ordained him, "an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch. It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man nor by the will of man..." [That is, we can't vote in that power to confer it upon some guy. We can't hope and pray and sustain with our prayers and faith and confidence, someone to hold such power. We can't have our will bundled into such claims and make it appear as a mantle upon some man. The possession of this authority by any man comes only as a consequence exclusively, not of father, not of mother, not of the will of man, but by the will of God. This is this is after all, sons of God we're talking about.]

"... neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God." [Because God is endless, His word is endless, His covenants are endless, and His commitments are therefore endless. If you lay hold upon it, you lay hold upon something which is endless.]

And it was delivered to Melchizedek just as we saw in Doctrine and Covenants section 84: "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 every one being ordained after this order and calling should have

power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God." [Now take that impressive list of things, and read it in light of this,] "... 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."

Such persons holding such power *are never freelancing*. And in fact, evidence of the possession of this power does not come as a consequence of someone displaying every one of these things, *but* you can know they hold it if they display *any* one of these things. For example, Nephi when he was bound in the desert and left to die by his brothers was able to break every band that bound him, having been strengthened by God. (1 Ne. 7: 16-18.) But that same Nephi bound to the mast when the storm came that threaten the survival ship, not only could not break the band, but when they finally got around to relieving him, he said his hands were "exceedingly swollen" as a consequence of the trauma that he suffered. (1 Ne. 18: 15.) Nephi, who had power given to him by God to break the bands that would've cost him his life, was left to subject to the bands, because it was not according to the Father's will, or the word of the Son when he was bound to the mast. In the circumstances of the later binding, had Nephi called upon that power and not suffered, Nephi would've been offending, and not conforming to the will of God. Once loosed, he prayed and God responded by abating the storm. (1 Ne. 18: 21.) If you use this authority as the Lord desires it to be used, you will nonetheless suffer when it serves God's purposes. If you rebel and pursue your own will, you are not fit for the calling.

Moses had power to divide the seas. He did that by the word of God. (Exo. 14: 15-16, 21.) And yet when Moses used the power to cause the rock to bring forth water, and not at the command of God, he suffered some loss.<sup>4</sup> Possession of the power does not mean you freelance. Because in

the very statement about the possession and the capability and the capacity it says it is wielded according to His will. Therefore, in order to be someone who can be trusted, you have to be someone who will subordinate to His will.

The Lord was not misstating the case, when he said, "No man takes my life."<sup>5</sup> Because the Lord had the capacity, at His own word, to prevent the entire armies of Rome from doing any harm to him. He told Pilate he had no authority over Him. (John 19: 11.) "Don't you know," he asked Pilate, "if I asked there would be 12 legions of angels given to me by the Father?" (See Matt. 26:53.) You know, you don't even need a legion of angels to take on a legion of Rome, much less a little Centurion's cohort in Judea.

Whenever you have anyone who arises to receive this priesthood, and can be trusted, they nevertheless can be slain when it is God's will for them to die. Because, like our Lord, they don't get to use power in any manner other than God's will. They are trustworthy enough so as to not misuse what has been entrusted to them. Therefore, the fact that they can "hold in defiance the armies of nations" means that they will do so only in accordance with His will. Because sometimes instead of delivering, it is His will to destroy the children of Israel because they have sinned against Him. (See, e.g., Joshua Chapter 7.) And then they have to detect the error and repent of it before they can go forward.

Well, continuing on, all "men having this faith, coming up unto this order of God, were translated and taken up into heaven." [That being a statement about, not today, but the moment of Melchizedek's ordination in his day and those that had lived before him in their day.] "Translated and taken up into heaven." [We will get to the point later, where we will find out that the same authority that was in the beginning is going to return at the end of the earth also. But when it's returned at the end of the earth, it has a different purpose. At the beginning of the earth, this was the purpose. At the end the purpose changes.]

"And now, Melchizedek was a priest of this order; therefore he obtained peace in Salem, and was called the Prince of peace." [That is also one of the titles given to the Lord, 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

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<sup>4</sup> Moses was commanded to strike a rock with his rod while at Horeb so that water would come from it. Moses did exactly as he was commanded, and the rock brought forth water. (See Exo. 17: 1-7.) Later the Lord commanded Moses at the place called Meribah to speak to the rock and bring forth water. Instead Moses did as before, struck the rock with his rod, as he had previously done, thereby departing from the strict instructions given for a man to be using God's power. (See Num. 20: 7-13.) The Lord expects exactitude from those who come to be His sons and all the more from those whom He permits to command the elements and have them obey. Few are able to govern themselves sufficiently to warrant such trust by God.

<sup>5</sup> See John 10: 17-18: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

latter days, or the end of the world. And hath said, and sworn with an oath, that the heavens and the earth should come together..." [See that city of Enoch is reserved unto the latter days until the end, it was separated from the earth, but it's going to come again in the latter days. These are they who are coming to "burn up" all those who are unprepared for their glory.]

And the Lord swore "...with an oath, that the heavens and the earth should come together; and the sons of God should be tried so as by fire." [Meaning that, when they return again, those sons who remain standing are going to have to remain able to endure the fire that is coming. "They who come shall burn them up." We talked about that briefly in Boise, and we've been trying to track that down through Idaho Falls, and now we see it again here. Therefore, this priesthood has something to do with all of the talks that I've been giving up until this point, as well as where we go from here in the remaining talks to be given.]

"And this Melchizedek, having thus established righteousness, was called the king of heaven by his people, or, in other words, the King of peace." [Because he brought peace to them.] "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." [And Abraham paid him. In any event, Melchizedek established righteousness, his city was a city of peace.]

Priesthood is *not* a franchise. Priesthood is *not* something that is given in order to control others. Priesthood in its highest form is an opportunity, afforded you by God, to serve and to bless others. That's not true of it in other lesser forms, and we'll get to that. But in its highest form the priesthood is a call to service. It is a call to save, it is a call to redeem, and it is a call to rescue others from destruction. You can condemn people with very little authority. But to raise them up and offer to them salvation is a far greater work requiring a far greater authority.

Now I want to suggest a new definition for priesthood. And I want to go to Doctrine and Covenants section 121, and read some old familiar words, and then see if today we can pour some meaning into this idea of priesthood that is in the scriptures, but not often noted by those who read them. I confine myself to the existing body of scripture when I teach. I suppose if I were to advance ideas which go beyond your scriptures you would be unable to accept them. Therefore I confine myself for your sakes. I do so in the hope that you will be able to bear how great things the Lord is doing.

This is Doctrine and Covenants section 121:36. "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." I want to suggest to you that the word "powers of heaven" is a proper noun, and not just a phrase encompassing some abstraction. Powers of Heaven: a title, a status and a reference to persons who hold such a title. It is not some mere feeling, abstraction or emotion. That's not it.

Powers of Heaven is actually a proper noun. If you are an Elder, or you are a High Priest, or are you are Seventy, or you are a member of the Quorum of the 12, whatever that Church office is once it has been associated with Melchizedek priesthood by the Church, it is appropriate to refer to you by the nomenclature "Elder." Hence we call members of the Twelve "Elder LeGrand Richards." "Elder McConkie." "Elder Nelson." The title of "Elder" applies to all of them, even though they hold a different office in the Church. There is within the structure of the afterlife, different rungs on Jacob's ladder, and they leak through in our scriptures, though Joseph never bothers parsing them. And whether you are talking about an angel, or an archangel, or a principality, or a power, or a dominion, or a throne, or a cherubim, or a Seraphim, it doesn't matter which one you are referring to, it is appropriate, just like it is appropriate to refer to all those offices as Elder, to refer to any and all of them as "powers."

I want to be clear about this. I am not talking about the kind of hierarchy we see among the gentiles in the gentile Church. We do not see people who love to control and compel others rising on Jacob's ladder. It cannot be scaled that way. This is talking about developmental stages of growth. Each is moving toward perfection. To be higher in your progression is to be more near to and therefore more like God. We err when we think of this as a dominion in which ranking gives any right to abuse those who are lower in station or degree. The only continuing tools used throughout this progression are persuasion, love, meekness and pure knowledge. This is why so few who are in a position of being "called" in this life are ever "chosen" in the next. (D&C 121: 34.) They simply do not learn how these rights are inseparably connected with the same Spirit as our Lord and His Father. They never obtain the "mind of God" or Holy Spirit, or associate themselves with the third member of the Godhead.

The Powers of Heaven: Whatever rung these ministers may be upon, they are all "Powers." So I want to suggest to you, that the real definition of priesthood is an association between, mankind on the one hand, and those on the other side of the veil on the other hand. It is a brotherhood.

Oh my, and it is potentially also, a sisterhood. And it is a fellowship, and it is a ministry if you will, in which there is connected together, and the real definition of priesthood is a connection between, a fellowship between, the "Powers of Heaven" on the one hand, and you on the other.

We can form a fellowship, and have, among themselves. And we have in fact ordained one another in our various fellowships, and we have called ourselves Elders Quorums, and High Priest Groups, and Teachers Quorums, and we have called ourselves all kinds of different bodies of fellowship. They are all, I suppose, a form of priesthood. There are others who have formed different kinds of associations, and they are a form of priesthood. Even Satan has organized his associations and calls them his "priesthoods" because they are in fellowship with him. Whenever a priesthood results in condemning and not raising others up to salvation they might be regarded as one of Satan's priesthoods, because the association does not and cannot save souls.

But the scriptures are talking about a relationship between, Powers of Heaven and the few men who become the recipients of authority. And that is priesthood because it is fellowship with the Powers of Heaven. When you do something to sever that fellowship then you have done something that damages, injures, hinders, or altogether departs from, the fellowship that you had. This is why the revelation states "Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man." (D&C 121: 37.) Nothing done thereafter has the approval of heaven. Men are left to their own vain ambitions at that point.

"...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." [So then, if one has this fellowship that has this authority, or is in fellowship with that group from which such power reckons.]

How is it then that you exercise that authority? Well the answer is also contained in the same revelation. "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—" [So if you find someone who is armed with this, what you are going to discover is someone whose tool is persuasion, and who offers knowledge. This will be someone whose knowledge does not reckoned merely from the writings, the theories, the research and the philosophies of men. But it will reckon rather from a higher place. It will always be filled with new truth and therefore new light, because those who hold such authority are themselves in possession of light and truth. Remember the reason the authority is given in the first place is to make men more like God, to lift and to elevate them. Therefore this priesthood will be plain in the language, in the light and in the flood of new truths which emanate from the holder of this authority.]

I want to turn to Doctrine and Covenants section 132:19, because in here we then run into a brief description of some of the Powers who exist behind the veil. It is about in the middle of that verse where it mentions those who will come forth in the first resurrection to inherit, and here are the words. "thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—" Those words are referring to, different steps in the process of rising up to the place where God occupies. This is telling you something about the map to the afterlife. This is telling you something about, how there is a ladder to be scaled there as you move toward the Throne of the Father.

You must proceed, as Joseph Smith put it: from one step to the next. When you begin to climb a ladder, you always begin at the bottom, and you go step-by-step until you reach the top. This fallen world is the bottom of that process. The challenge here is to get the opportunity to continue to develop hereafter.

There are those who believe they have a correct placement for these various stages of development. Because this topic arises in connection with understanding priesthood and the Powers of Heaven, I find it useful to use the ideas advanced by others. I do not claim they are right. And I am not prepared to lay out what I know or have seen today. But instead I will use this layout because I'm trying to avoid originating the topic today. There is enough that is being introduced today without needing to correct these things as well.

Rather like what Nephi did with Isaiah, if I can lay this at the feet of someone else, then I can say that I didn't break any confidences. In any event, the ranking goes: angels, and then archangels, and then principalities, then powers, then dominions, then thrones, then Cherubim, and then Seraphim. Seraphim being those who dwell in everlasting burnings, the glorious ones, the ones who dwell in flames of glory. For a description of them, we've already looked at that in Doctrine and Covenants section

109:79. I'm not going to go there. These conditions are developed by degrees. They are not achieved in a single step. But when they are achieved, they are done by obedience to the laws upon which such blessings are predicated. If you want to see what a Being acts like who has risen to the point they are moving onto the Throne of the Father, then you have Jesus Christ as your model. He is, according to the *Lectures on Faith*, the "prototype of the saved man." And, as I explained in an earlier talk, He represents what you must be like in order to be saved. You must be "precisely" as He is, and nothing different. Therefore when you consider these developmental stages through which all must pass, you should not look at this as a model for an afterlife church akin to what we suffer under here in mortality. There will be no proud gentiles there bossing one another around. Rather it will be knowledge which will exalt you there. It will be light and truth, or in other words the glory of God which will exalt you. Therefore you progress always, eternally, according to the grace within you.

But in any event, here you have in section 132, a listing of some of the things which can be inherited by abiding the law upon which blessings are predicated. You probably think we have a singular afterlife consisting of not just heaven and hell, but instead three levels of glory for the resurrected and immortal. You probably think of the Telestial, which kingdom you are presently occupying by the way. Then you think of the Terrestrial. For this condition most hope to manage to get there sometime during the Millennium, but is a "heaven" which also occupies this same globe. Finally you probably think of a Celestial kingdom, which oddly enough also will occupy this same globe. You distinguish between them by time frames. Telestial being now, Terrestrial being Millennial and then the Celestial being post-Millennial. Yet you probably never stop to ponder how they are all here. And your parsing of it by reference to time seems oddly ill-fitted to the timelessness of the afterlife. (See e.g., Rev. 10: 6.) Well, we cannot solve all these matters in one talk.

This revelation as well as the rest of scripture is suggesting a much more complex afterlife, in which, literally the ascent is by degrees as you move upward. As Joseph said, and I read that in Boise, it will be a great time after we have crossed through the veil before we will have learned all that needs to be learned in order to qualify for our salvation and exaltation.

Turn to Moses chapter 7:27: "And Enoch beheld **angels** descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son; and the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were **caught up by the powers of heaven** into Zion." (Emphasis added.) There they show up again. "The powers of heaven" ...plural, in the same verse where it's talking about angels descending. This is the kind of thing that is littered throughout the scriptures if you have the eyes to see it. This is because there is actually a structure there. There are within what we regard as priesthood, two brotherhoods, or two fellowships. One is between men, or women. It is a fellowship which exists among us here on this side. There is a second one. There is a second fellowship that exists potentially between us and the "Powers of Heaven" who dwell on the other side. On that other side there is a fellowship, or a priesthood. By and large when the scriptures speak about priesthood having authority, priesthood having power, it is obtain by a mortal who has become connected with a fellowship that extends into the immortal, to the other side. It's a relationship with "the powers of heaven."

So that you can be clear in your own mind about this, I will walk you through a few examples. Let's look at Doctrine and Covenants section 107: and go verse 52: "Noah was ten years old when he was ordained under the hand of Methuselah." So Moses got priesthood as a consequence of the hand of Methuselah having ordained him. That is a priesthood, or fellowship or brotherhood, on this side of the veil.

Now go back to Moses chapter 8 and in verse 19 it says: "And the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his Gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch." Or in other words, in the case of Noah, the fellowship that originated as a relationship between him and his older brethren, here, but was extended by God ordaining him also to a fellowship on the other side. Therefore he belonged not merely to the priesthood held by men, but that the priesthood held by the immortals.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 107 and look at verse 48. "Enoch was twenty-five years old when he was ordained under the hand of Adam..." So he got that brotherhood when he was 25. But look at what then happened when he was 65: "...and he was sixty-five and Adam blessed him. And he saw the Lord, and he walked with him, and was before his face continually; and he walked with God three hundred and sixty-five years, making him four hundred and thirty years old when he was translated." So there Enoch's ordination to a brotherhood here at age 25 which allowed him join in the one fellowship. This one was a brotherhood, association, or priesthood that involved men. Then at 65, there is another priesthood, there is another association, there is another fellowship which Enoch then joined.

Jethro the father-in-law, ordained Moses to a brotherhood here. D&C 84:6. "And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he (that is Moses) received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro." Then go over to verses beginning at



21: "And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. 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 while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also." This is referring to the other, higher brotherhood involving those "Powers" beyond the veil.

If you go to Moses chapter 1 beginning at verse one. "The words of God, which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain, And he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence.

And God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty," [threefold, that is three titles] "and Endless is my name; for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless? And, behold, thou art my son..." [And so Moses was first ordained by man, and he was later ordained by heaven. These are two different fellowships.]

You can see it in the case of Jacob, Nephi's younger brother. Go to 2 Nephi 5:26 "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land of my people." This is the brotherhood among the mortals. But if you go to Jacob chapter 1 and you look at verse 17, you see Jacob saying; "Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord." This is the second ordination, in which he joined in a brotherhood with the Lord, beyond the veil. Jacob didn't go out to commence his ministry following Nephi's death, even to his own people over whom he had been consecrated as a priest, until he had first obtained that second ordination.

Well, you can find it throughout if you look for it. These few illustrate the concept enough to point it out today. The fact is that there are two levels, the more important one of which requires a connection beyond the veil, and a less important one of which is between mortals. It is not enough, and you ought never to be content to simply have the association that exists here. You should always seek to know and associate with "the Powers of Heaven."

If you go to Doctrine and Covenants section 84:26, it talks about "the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel." Even the lesser priesthood holds some connection with heaven. Even the lesser priesthood holds forth the opportunity to have some link with the Powers of Heaven. Therefore, in the lesser priesthood, there is an association, a fellowship, that is anticipated for those who will receive it.

Of course the greater priesthood, held by Moses, is a priesthood which allows the power of godliness to be manifest unto men, *in the flesh*, "for without this no man could see the face of God, even in the Father and live." Don't let anyone deceive you into believing that this association is merely meant for the afterlife. If it were so, the words "in the flesh" (D&C 84: 21) would not appear here and other places in the scriptures that I pointed out to you (see, e.g., D&C 76: 118; D&C 93: 1; and generally my book *The Second Comforter: Conversing With the Lord Through the Veil*) as I have gone through these various talks. It was meant to be laid hold upon by you while you live here in mortality. As a consequence of laying hold upon it here, you qualify to receive that in the world to come. (See D&C 76: 118.) If you fail to lay hold upon it here, then according to Section 84, verse 42, "wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood." That doesn't mean that you are condemned forever. That just means that you've wasted *an* opportunity, and therefore the struggle for you will continue. Put it away now in this probation, get it done by keeping your second estate. (See Abr. 3: 26.) Otherwise you will continue "worlds without end" to suffer from your loss. (D&C 76: 111-112.) Rise up and become an heir of "eternal lives" among the saved. (D&C 132: 24.) Because it is an endless wo unto those who continue to inherit the deaths, and yet many go in thereat. (D&C 132: 25.)

The question was asked to Joseph Smith: "Was the priesthood taken away when Moses died?" Joseph said, and it was in this context, that we began earlier, that all priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it. I'm hoping now when you read there are "different portions of degrees of it," you will realize this has reference to these different fellowships, these different associations that one can have with those "Powers of Heaven" which exist on the other side. Because there is a level of growth, a level of development, and an entrusting of the authority and the power of godliness, that continues on into the eternities, until at last you arrive at the final point, which Joseph calls: "attaining to the resurrection of the

dead."<sup>6</sup> He knew what he was talking about. Many of us do not. Attaining to the resurrection in that context, means to inherit everlasting burnings. Or, in other words, to be able to dwell in a position of glory, from priesthood that reckons from mortal descent through mothers and fathers is well-nigh impossible.

Remember, "all priesthood is Melchizedek but there are different portions or degrees of it. That portion which brought Moses to speak with God face-to-face was taken away but that which brought the ministry of angels remained." Then Joseph added as I read to you at the beginning: "All the prophets had the Melchizedek priesthood and were ordained by God himself." It is possible I suppose, to pass along something you could name "Melchizedek priesthood" in a fellowship between men, but invariably it is the case, that, when you find someone in possession of the Melchizedek priesthood in that form to which Joseph made reference in *this* answer, it is *always* the case that all prophets had the Melchizedek priesthood and were ordained by God Himself. It is not enough for a man to have fellowship with other men. When it comes to saving the souls of mankind, it requires a form which only God Himself can confer.

Next you must realize that all priesthood is perishable. We saw that in Doctrine and Covenants section 121 verse 37. "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..." [This limitation on such priesthood should be coupled with an understanding of the only possible tool to be used when you possess such priesthood. Ask yourself: If I ever were to obtain it, how do I get to use the priesthood? How is it that I do get to exercise some influence? And the answer is:] "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."

I thank God that I do not preside over any of you. I thank God I have no responsibility for any of you, my family aside. Let me tell you that even within my own family, I don't feel it is my prerogative to do anything other than use persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness and meekness, and love unfeigned when it comes to preaching the truth to them. I preside over them as the father in the home, but I try only to persuade them to believe. From time to time I will lay the matter out. But it is ever so much better to lay the matter out when the question is asked, rather than it is to lay out the answer and force-feed it to someone who doesn't even have the idea occur to them that there is an issue to be discussed. One of the reasons why I solicited questions for this topic was to find out the extent you're ready to hear something, about a topic which should confuse you in the present state of our common discussions at church. Some of the questions were quite poignant and touched my heart. Hopefully be able to solve a number of them as we go along.

Priesthood is perishable. Even that priesthood conferred by the voice of God is perishable, if you are unwilling to restrain, and to contain yourself within the bounds which the Lord has prescribed.

As we get to the topic of sealing power there are some things about that you need to have parsed, and you need to understand differently than what is taught us. When we talk about priesthood we throw about lavish claims among ourselves, because we have a vocabulary. As a consequence of possessing that vocabulary, we think then that we have understanding. Instead the scriptures are telling us a whole different story. That whole different story is what we are pursuing here today. Hopefully when we get to the end of this today, you will walk away and say, "I need to back and study my scriptures! Because it sounds like there's a whole lot in there about priesthood that makes distinctions which I had not heretofore appreciated."

As a reminder that all priesthood is perishable, look at Doctrine and Covenants section 124 verse 28 which says: "For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood." [Now that's a verse that this moment I'm not prepared to get into all the implications of. I just want to use it as a reference point for the proposition that something given can be taken away, including "the fullness of the priesthood." All priesthood is in fact, perishable. While we're here in the mortal realm, it is possible that any person can fall away.

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<sup>6</sup> See *TPJS*, p. 346-347: "Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods, yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, *until you attain to the resurrection of the dead*, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. And I want you to know that God, in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me." (Emphasis added.)

This then leads me to the next topic that I want to try and get through. I want to discuss a topic about which some of you may be completely unaware, but which has occupied a lot of attention of a number of very careful and thoughtful people. In this discussion they will initially think I disagree with their efforts. But I don't view their efforts to parse this topic as unworthy or worthless, or that they are all wrong in their conclusions. Instead I want to try to solve a problem that is plagued by a still insufficient vocabulary. To get past that, I will propose a new vocabulary to be used.

Let me be clear, however, about my reasons for proposing a new way to approach the topic. I reckon my understanding from revelation and experience not merely as a result of a scholarly search for understanding.

Remember that *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* were a reduction into a singular account of a variety of note taker's accounts of Joseph words. The original note taker's accounts have been gathered together, in Andy Ehat's book, *The Words of Joseph Smith*. Therefore, if you go to the Andy Ehat version, and you look at what all the note takers say, you can see the various versions and you can contrast what the note takers have and then compare those with *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*.

Let me use an illustration to help explain why the various note taker's accounts are insufficient. There have been perhaps hundreds of occasions when I have listened to a judge make a ruling from the bench on a matter before him. As the ruling is pronounced I take notes. When the ruling is on a complex dispute the my notes become more difficult in the attempt to get an adequate record while the judge is speaking. When the ruling is finished, the judge will ask one of the attorneys to prepare a proposed form of order to be entered. Sometimes I will put a checkmark beside a point to remember to ask a question of the judge. However, there have been many times when the ruling is just too involved for notes. Therefore I have asked for a transcript of the ruling, and then reconstruct the judge's ruling so I can track the actual words used.

In contrast to the challenge I have faced hundreds of times as a lawyer preparing an order based on a judge's ruling, those who took notes in Nauvoo had no transcript, no recording, and no Prophet Joseph Smith to ask for clarifications. Their notes were all they had. Once Joseph died, our ability to understand his talks were now tied to the notes alone. Or, we can still seek understanding as Joseph did, by asking God who gives to all men liberally and does not upbraid. But we must ask in faith, nothing doubting. (James 1: 5-6.)

For my purpose in discussing this topic it is not important to parse all the different note taker's accounts. It would take too long and I find what is in the *Teachings of the Prophet* adequate in order to explain the topic. Because I use the Teachings it does not mean I believe it is a great reconstruction of Joseph's talk that day. In fact, in many cases, there is doctrinal significance to the difference between the various note taker's accounts. You can almost feel from the varying accounts, that they listened to Joseph and recorded their notes based upon their understanding. They were measuring Joseph's words against what they believe the doctrine to be, as opposed to instead allowing the words of Joseph to inform them. Then the compiler of *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* has made his own consolidation of the note taker's various attempts. Let me say once again, this is adequate for my purposes today. I'm reading from page 322 of *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*:

"Respecting the Melchizedek Priesthood, the sectarians never professed to have it; consequently they never could save any one, and would all be damned together. There was an Episcopal priest who said he had the priesthood of Aaron, but had not the priesthood of Melchizedek: and I bear testimony that I never have found the man who claimed the Priesthood of Melchizedek. The power of the Melchizedek Priesthood is to have the power of 'endless lives;' for the everlasting covenant cannot be broken." [You see Joseph here is referring to that covenant given only when you obtain that priesthood by the Father, who swears by Himself about the results of having attained unto that priesthood. So it holds that power of endless lives, the everlasting covenant made by the Father cannot be broken.]

Continuing: "The law was given under Aaron for the purpose of pouring out judgments and destructions." [So the Mosaic law was given and the priesthood was accommodated in order to pour out judgments and destruction. This helps explain a great deal about the lower portion, or Aaronic/Levitical priesthood.]

If you go to Doctrine and Covenants section 1 there is this interesting set of verses beginning with verse eight: "And verily I say unto you, that they who go forth, bearing these tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth, to them is power given to seal both on earth and in heaven, the unbelieving and rebellious; Yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure—Unto the day when the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his work, and measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man." [These are all negative. These are all sealing up unto destruction. These are all condemnations. These are all in a word, *Aaronic*. But remember the Aaronic priesthood is not without hope, because within it is the power to baptize, which is an ordinance of

hope. But primarily the purpose of the Aaronic priesthood is to condemn. When you think of condemning, therefore, you should think of Aaronic authority.]

Continuing with Joseph's sermon on page 322 of *TPJS*: "There are three grand orders of priesthood referred to here. First, The king of Shiloam (Salem) had power and authority over that of Abraham, holding the key and the power of endless life. Angels," [now remember what I said earlier about there being different ranks] "desire to look into it, but they have set up too many stakes."

See, the angels were unwilling to receive what they might have received, and as a consequence of that, they could not go on in their development. Look at Doctrine and Covenants 132 verse 16. "Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory." Angels in this context, if you will hear it, are included within Joseph's description of "Angels desire to look into it but they have set up too many stakes." As a consequence of their unwillingness to receive what God freely offers to all, and they are hedging up their own way by their failure to develop that faith and confidence necessary to lay hold upon the blessings of heaven, because they believe that those blessings are reserved for others and not for them. Because as the now de-canonized *Lectures on Faith* suggest, they fear that they do not have the power to lay hold upon all the blessings which were entirely reserved and promised to them. (See *Lecture 3*, paragraph 23.) Because they have not that faith required they become limited in what they seek for, and therefore what they obtain.

Continuing Joseph's talk: "God cursed the children of Israel because they would not receive the last law from Moses. The sacrifice required of Abraham in the offering up of Isaac, shows that if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life; he must sacrifice all things. When God offers a blessing or knowledge to a man, and he refuses to receive it, he will be damned."

Which is why when the Lord puts in motion His hand and begins to declare the truth again by His servants, and He offers a message that needs to be received, but it is not received by those to whom it is offered, the results are: "they refused to receive the blessing or knowledge that is offered to them, and therefore they will be damned." Damned in the sense they hedge up the way, they limit the ability of God to confer upon them what they might have received. They partake of the sufferings of the damned, because the pain of the mind is exquisite when they realize that they have not laid hold upon what God freely offered to give unto them. And therefore they are their own condemner and they are their own judge.<sup>7</sup>

Continuing: "The Israelites prayed that God would speak to Moses and not to them; in consequence of which he cursed them with a carnal law."

Note that! Can you imagine?! If the children of Israel in that day, were cursed by God because they said Moses must talk to God and not us, how much greater must be the damnation upon those who say, you must not talk to God because we have one who does so for you! Who preach: you're not entitled to receive anything beyond the bonds of your limited position, in this beehive we've constructed! Damnable heresy! Doctrines of devils! Propounded by those who are purveyors of a false priestcraft! Unauthorized by God! Unsanctioned by Him! They suffer not themselves to enter in, and they will hedge up the way if you will heed them. There is no man on his own errand in this world, who can offer to you salvation. But if God sends a message you better heed it, even if you find it difficult to hear.

Continuing: "What was the power of Melchizedek? 'Twas not the Priesthood of Aaron which administers in outward ordinances, and the offering of sacrifices. Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings." [This is because the Aaronic portion only holds limited authority and is given for judgments and destruction. The Melchizedek is given instead for blessing and giving life. When someone claims to hold Melchizedek priesthood but they use it in order to offer up judgment, and condemnation, control, compulsion, and authority over the souls of men, you can mark it as a sign that they hold no such authority. If they refuse to constrain themselves, to use persuasion only, and gentleness and meekness then you know by that sign alone that you are listening to an Aaronic and not a Melchizedek authority (if they have authority at all). Because the office and the authority and the keys of the Melchizedek is

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<sup>7</sup> See *TPJS*, p. 325: "The disappointment of hopes and expectations at the resurrection would be indescribably dreadful." Also, p. 357: "A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man."

given by God to a man to bless, to enlighten, to raise you up<sup>8</sup> by bringing to you light and truth, which is the glory of God, or intelligence. (See D&C 93: 36.)

Continuing: "In fact, that Priesthood is a perfect law of theocracy, and stands as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam." [Because once again there is always an underlying genealogical function. It is always going to become familial by restoring a broken family tie. It has always been "turning the hearts of the children back to the fathers." The final father in that chain being Adam, the first man.]

"Abraham says to Melchizedek, I believe all that thou hast taught me concerning the priesthood and the coming of the Son of Man; so Melchizedek ordained Abraham and sent him away. Abraham rejoiced, saying, Now I have a priesthood. Salvation could not come to the world without the mediation of Jesus Christ. How shall God come to the rescue of this generation? He will send Elijah the prophet. The law revealed to Moses in Horeb never was revealed to the children of Israel as a nation. Elijah shall reveal the covenants to seal the hearts of the father to the children, and the children to the fathers." [This talk on this day, by Joseph Smith is seven years after the 1836 Doctrine and Covenants section 110 incident.]

So, "Elijah *shall reveal*<sup>9</sup> the covenants to seal the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. The anointing and sealing is to be called, elected and made sure. 'Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.' The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right from the eternal God, and not by descent from father and mother; and that priesthood is as eternal as God Himself, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." (Emphasis added.)

That is not to say, that because one receives that priesthood they cannot fall. Because while you are in this world, as Paul put it, you stand in jeopardy every hour. (1 Cor. 15: 30.) Here is the place in which the trial, the test, the temptation, the burden of mortality exists. It exists for so long as you have the flesh. Even if you come to possess the authority you will not have that abide with you continually on into eternity until you have finished the course. Not until you have resisted the temptation, until you have completed the race and finished the work. (2 Tim. 4: 7-8.) Only when you successfully lay down the burden here and have completed this test, are you permitted them to take it up there, as a matter of right. But here although the priesthood is endless, although the covenant of God is eternal, a man may fall from it, and therefore you proceed, recognizing you do so at your eternal peril.

Continuing: "The 2nd Priesthood is Patriarchal authority. Go to and finish the temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood."

Now there is a controversy, in which, almost to a man, all of those who is researched the subject have reached the conclusion that, Melchizedek priesthood is greater than patriarchal priesthood, and that Levitical priesthood is inferior to them all. So that if he were, as those who have researched it, ranking them, he would say it would be Levitical at the lowest, then patriarchal authority as a second level, and then Melchizedek at the highest. That is the way in which it is parsed by those who have studied the words of the note takers.

For my purposes in setting this topic out I am going to disagree with that ranking. I disagree with that for two reasons. First of all, I do not believe that this talk, given by Joseph Smith, in the order in which he expresses it, requires the conclusion that he ranked these three in order from top, then to middle, then to bottom. I believe it can be instead ranked as middle first, then top next, and then he picks up the bottom with Levitical. Before you lock in a different arrangement, you would either need to be absolutely confident the note takers were correct, and that you know Joseph was trying to explain it in the way in which the note takers have left the record for us.

The other reason why I think patriarchal ought to be viewed as the highest form, is because the priesthood which began with Adam was a single form of priesthood which was a Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. That priesthood after the Order of the Son of God descended from Adam down to the time of Enoch, and then it got renamed the priesthood after the

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<sup>8</sup> This does not preclude judgment and condemnation coming if you reject a Melchizedek priest's message. Nor does it preclude a warning that rejection of God will cause His judgments to befall the audience. But the primary purpose Melchizedek priests serve is always to save souls by teaching truth to those who live in darkness.

<sup>9</sup> This reference to an expected still future coming of Elijah was spoken by Joseph in August, 1843, more than seven years after the Kirtland Temple appearances recorded in Section 110.

order of Enoch. These are the "Patriarchs" and therefore their priesthood, in the original form of the Holy Order, can be rightly named "Patriarchal priesthood" because it was the priesthood of the original Patriarchs of mankind.

Later it got renamed the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, or the priesthood of Melchizedek. When Adam promises that the priesthood that was at the beginning, is going to return at the end of the world also (Moses 6: 7-8), he was talking about return at the end of the world of that priesthood which was held by the original patriarchs. He held this authority at a time when for generations, it was unitary, there was only one form of priesthood belonging to these patriarchs. The correct original designation of that priesthood is, the Holy Priesthood, or The Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. It's a long name, but it was that priesthood that was held by the patriarchs. As a consequence of it being that priesthood, held by the original patriarchs, which was in the beginning of the world and is to return at the end of the world also, I would prefer to regard the highest order, under the name designation of, Patriarchal Priesthood. And so when I use the term, I'm referring to that priesthood originally held by Adam, that priesthood held by Enoch, that priesthood which is more correctly called, The Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. Therefore, if you are going to say patriarchal priesthood as a scholar, and parsed the words differently, you need to understand that I'm using them in this way.

We also have a church whose excessive use of the term Melchizedek priesthood has transfigured that name into such common use that to use it to designate an original, Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God can only create confusion among the Latter-day Saints. Therefore I use a different name, and use Joseph's designation of "Patriarchal priesthood" to call it by.

Continuing, "Go to and finished the temple and God will fill it with power and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood."

This statement is another reason I suggest the third, or highest form of the priesthood should be called "Patriarchal priesthood." Joseph's words suggest that ordination to what I call the middle/Melchizedek priesthood could occur outside the temple. He had given those ordinations to others. But for what he calls the Patriarchal priesthood it required something which by its nature, necessitated the completion of the temple, and required the presence of God. To restore this fullness, as the revelation given in January 1841 recounts, needed God to come: "For there's not a place found on the earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost onto you or which he has taken away, even the fullness of the priesthood." (D&C 124: 28.) This highest form requires Him, God, to come to that place, and for Him, God, to restore to you that which has been taken away, the fullness. As Joseph put it: "Go to and you finish the temple. God will fill it with power. You will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood."

Even in these words of Joseph from which the scholars have divined the highest as Melchizedek and the second as Patriarchal I see reason to question this ranking. If you take the need for a temple in order to obtain it, taken together with Doctrine and Covenants section 124:28, it suggests the highest form, the one that brings you in contact with, God and his holy temple, that one, that priesthood, is correctly designated "patriarchal." Remember also that Joseph called "all priesthood" by the term "Melchizedek. However, he said there were different degrees or portions of it. Why not, therefore, permit this highest degree of the Melchizedek priesthood to be called "patriarchal?"

In this talk by Joseph given in August, 1843 I don't think Joseph is necessarily enumerating the three degrees by priority. I think he's just giving you list. He's not necessarily trying to prioritize that list. But even if you disagree, permit me to call the highest by the term "Patriarchal Priesthood" so that I can address this subject in a coherent way. The common Latter-day Saint usage requires me to change the vocabulary in order to make this topic clear.

Continuing, "The 3rd is what is called the Levitical Priesthood, consisting of priests to administer in outward ordinances, made without an oath; but the Priesthood of Melchizedek is by an oath and covenant." [But the oath and the covenant is the oath and the covenant that is given by the Father. It's not these verses which we read from Section 84 to the newly ordained church Elder. These verses are only an aspiration to the church's Elders. While it's very good to have aspirational notions preached to us in connection with the priesthood we should realize an aspiration is not a reality. Similarly knowledge concerning the covenant is not the same thing as possessing the covenant itself. Therefore, if you're going to receive the covenant which cannot be broken, it is obtained by, and from, the Father.]

Continuing, "The Holy Ghost is God's messenger to administer in all those priesthoods." [You see, it was by faith and the power of the Holy Ghost, that Melchizedek did what he did. And if someone gets possession of any or all of these priesthoods, administering in them must be through the power of the Holy Ghost. I just read you what Joseph said: "It is by the power of the Holy Ghost." So let me ask you the question, and you answer it yourself: Let us assume the case that a woman is filled with

the Holy Ghost. Rather like Anna in the temple when Christ was brought forth, and Anna, by the power of the Holy Ghost prophesies concerning the young babe, who had been brought to the temple. Given the fact that the authority by which priesthood is to become operative, as Joseph just explained, is the Holy Ghost, what possible difference does it make, if the prophetess Anna, standing in the temple, prophesying concerning the child who is brought in (see Luke 2: 36-38), cannot grab a knife and go over to the place where they tied the animals, and cut the throat of the sheep? Of what significance is it if she could not divide up and carry part of the carcass to the iron grate at the top of the ramp upon the altar where they burned it? And of what significance is it if she could not take the bowl and hyssop and walk around and splatter the four corners of the altar, at the bloodline of the altar? Why would it be more significant that Anna was deprived of the outward ordinance performance, then that she, as a prophetess, filled with the Holy Ghost, spake and prophesied concerning the Son of God on the day that He was brought to the temple, for the offering of the cleansing of Mary, having completed her day? Only a fool would prize the outward performance above the power of the Holy Ghost animating Anna on that day. Those priests performing their functions were unaware of the babe's significance. Unless, of course, they gave heed to the testimony of the prophetess.

You see, the Holy Ghost is God's messenger to administer in all these priesthoods. You envy the unenviable, and you focus on the irrelevant, if you are distracted by church offices. Because quite frankly, given the fact that the purpose of the Aaronic priesthood is to pour out judgments and destructions, and it's purpose is to seal people under condemnation, I can't imagine—well I take that back. I can imagine why a woman would want to possess that. I have a law partner who does divorce work. There are so many unsavory and bitter motives on display during divorces. So I can imagine it.

Continuing, "Jesus Christ is the heir of this Kingdom--the Only Begotten of the Father according to the flesh, and holds the keys over all this world. Men have to suffer that they may come upon Mount Zion and be exalted above the heavens. I know a man that has been caught up to the third heavens, and can say, with Paul, that we have seen and heard things that are not lawful to utter." (Aug. 27, 1843.) DHC 5:554-556.

Well, I believe that the purpose of the heavenly association is to accomplish two things: One, is to have valid ordinances. And the second, is to obtain answers or direction. I want to read from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 272: "Where did the kingdom of God begin? Where there is no kingdom of God there is no salvation. What constitutes the kingdom of God? Where there is a prophet, a priest, or a righteous man unto whom God gives His oracles; there is the kingdom of God and where the oracles are not, there the kingdom of God is not. In these remarks, I have no allusion to the kingdoms of the earth. We will keep the laws of the land; we do not speak against them; we never have, and we can hardly make mention of the state of Missouri, of our persecutions there, but what the cry goes forth that we are guilty of larceny, burglary, arson, treason, murder, &c., &c., which is false. We speak of the kingdom of God on the earth, not the kingdoms of men." [If you read the paper I wrote, *Brigham Young's Telestial Kingdom*, you'll recognize in that paper that Brigham Young thought the kingdom was to be an earthly institution. Joseph denounced that. He denounced a lot of things we have subsequently taken up. We have gone far astray from what Joseph began.]

Continuing: "The plea of many in this day is, that we have no right to receive revelations; but if we do not get revelations, we do not have the oracles of God; and if they have not the oracles of God, they are not the people of God. But say you, What will become of the world, or the various professors of religion who do not believe in revelation and the oracles of God as continued to His Church in all ages of the world, when He has a people on earth? I tell you, in the name of Jesus Christ, they will be damned; and when you get into the eternal world, you will find it will be so, they cannot escape the damnation of hell." [The oracles of God, meaning the revelations of God, and the revelations of God were given to us from Joseph Smith as the foundation, as the font from which we draw. But it was always intended that there should arise in you, the power of obtaining oracles for yourself.]

Continuing, "As touching the Gospel and baptism that John preached, I would say that John came preaching the Gospel for the remission of sins; he had his authority from God, and the oracles of God were with him, and the kingdom of God for a season seemed to rest with John alone. The Lord promised Zacharias that he should have a son who was a descendant of Aaron, the Lord having promised that the priesthood should continue with Aaron and his seed throughout their generations. Let no man take this honor upon himself, except he be called of God, as was Aaron; and Aaron received his call by revelations. An angel of God also appeared unto Zacharias while in the Temple, and told him that he should have a son, whose name should be John, and he should be filled with the Holy Ghost. Zacharias was a priest of God, and officiating in the Temple, and John was a priest after his father, and held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, and was called of God to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God. The Jews, as a nation, having departed from the law of God and the Gospel of the Lord, prepared the way for transferring it to the Gentiles. But, says one, the kingdom of God could not be set up in the days of John, for John said the kingdom was at hand. But I would ask if it could be any nearer to them than to be in the hands of John. The people need not wait for the days of Pentecost to

find the kingdom of God, for John had it with him, and he came forth from the wilderness crying out, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand,' as much as to say, 'Out here I have got the kingdom of God, and you can get it, and I am coming after you; and if you don't receive it, you will be damned;' and the scriptures represent that all Jerusalem went out into John's baptism. There was a legal administrator, and those that were baptized were subjects for a king; and also the laws and oracles of God were there; therefore the kingdom of God was there; for no man could have better authority to administer than John; and our Savior submitted to that authority Himself, by being baptized by John; therefore the kingdom of God was set up on the earth, even in the days of John."

John was a legal administrator. Christ recognized him even though there was an existing priestly authority which He also respected, who were in control of the temple at Jerusalem. But the presence of one set of recognized authorities did not prevent Christ from respecting another, unrecognized priestly authority. You see John was unrecognized by the earthly fellowship or priesthood, but was recognized by the heavenly fellowship or priesthood. Christ gave polite deference to the earthly, but submitted to the heavenly. As it turned out, Christ's submission to the heavenly authority was necessary for His own salvation. (See 2 Ne. 31: 5-12.)

Continuing, "There is a difference between the kingdom of God and the fruits and blessings that flow from the kingdom; because there were more miracles, gifts, visions, healings, tongues, &c., in the days of Jesus Christ and His apostles, and on the day of Pentecost, than under John's administration, it does not prove by any means that John had not the kingdom of God, any more than it would that a woman had not a milkpan because she had not a pan of milk, for while the pan might be compared to the kingdom, the milk might be compared to the blessings of the kingdom. John was a priest after the order of Aaron, and had the keys of that priesthood, and came forth preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, but at the same time cries out, 'There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose'" and Christ came according to the words of John, and He was greater than John, because He held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood and kingdom of God, and had before revealed the priesthood of Moses, yet Christ was baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness; and Jesus in His teachings says, 'Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' What rock? Revelation. Again he says, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' and, 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' If a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he can get into the kingdom of God. It is evident the kingdom of God was on the earth, and John prepared subjects for the kingdom, by preaching the Gospel to them and baptizing them, and he prepared the way before the Savior, or came as a forerunner, and prepared subjects for the preaching of Christ; and Christ preached through Jerusalem on the same ground where John had preached; and when the apostles were raised up, they worked in Jerusalem, and Jesus commanded them to tarry there until they were endowed with power from on high. Had they not work to do in Jerusalem? They did work, and prepared a people for the Pentecost. The kingdom of God was with them before the day of Pentecost, as well as afterwards; and it was also with John, and he preached the same Gospel and baptism that Jesus and the apostles preached after him. The endowment was to prepare the disciples for their missions unto the world." [This is as important to understand today as in the days of John and Christ. The same Gospel will require the same test of all who will be saved. Nothing will vary in the challenges from one generation to the next. The kingdom of God will always arrive as unwelcomed and unheralded as a thief in the night.]

Continuing, "Whenever men can find out the will of God and find an administrator legally authorized from God, there is the kingdom of God; but where these are not, the kingdom of God is not. All the ordinances, systems, and administrations on the earth are of no use to the children of men, unless they are ordained and authorized of God; for nothing will save a man but a legal administrator; for none others will be acknowledged either by God or angels." [Joseph Smith was entirely correct. These are words for all of us, and as relevant today as they were when Joseph first spoke them.]

Continuing, "I know what I say; I understand my mission and business. God Almighty is my shield; and what can man do if God is my friend? I shall not be sacrificed until my time comes; then I shall be offered freely. All flesh is as grass, and a governor is not better than other men; when he dies he is but a bag of dust. I thank God for preserving me from my enemies; I have no enemies but for the truth's sake. I have no desire but to do all men good. I feel to pray for all men. We don't ask any people to throw away any good they have got; we only ask them to come and get more. What if all the world should embrace this Gospel? They would then see eye to eye, and the blessings of God would be poured out upon the people, which is the desire of my whole soul. Amen." (Jan. 22, 1843.) quoting from *DHC* 5:256-259.

In another talk Joseph Smith also said, "John wrested the keys, the kingdom, the power and the glory from the Jews by the holy anointing and decree of heaven." That's from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 276. Further Doctrine and Covenants 84:28 points out that John "was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare



them for the coming of the Lord, in whose hand is given all power." John was sent forth, in part, to be rejected by the Jews so that he could wrest "the keys, the kingdom, and the power and the glory from the Jews, and this by the holy anointing and decree of heaven." Because an angel had established it, and because the Powers of Heaven were behind it, the rejection of John was a necessary step to permit one dispensation to close and another to begin. God follows patterns in every age.

Well then, we have this also from Joseph: "All men are liars who say they are of the true Church without the revelations of Jesus Christ and the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which is after the order of the Son of God. It is in the order of heavenly things that God should always send a new dispensation into the world when men have apostatized from the truth and lost the priesthood, but when men come out and build upon other men's foundations, they do it on their own responsibility, without authority from God; and when the floods come and the winds blow, their foundations will be found to be sand, and their whole fabric will crumble to dust. Did I build on any other man's foundation? I have got all the truth which the Christian world possessed, and an independent revelation in the bargain." That's from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 375-6. No matter how small its appearing may be, even if it is found only in the ministry of the solitary John, yet the kingdom of God is there. Joseph Smith knew this. It was because of this he had the confidence to proceed with his ministry, knowing that heaven supported him.

There are indeed three grand orders of the priesthood. If you turn to Doctrine and Covenants section 107, that same prophet Joseph Smith who described the existence of three priesthoods, said in the opening verse of Doctrine and Covenants 107, "There are, in the church, *two* priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood." (Emphasis added.) This is yet another reason why I think the third priesthood ought to be called patriarchal. If the church has two and the two are called by the names Aaronic and Melchizedek, it makes sense to allow the third to use the designation "Patriarchal priesthood" to distinguish it.

Patriarchal priesthood is not obtained by going and being sealed in the temple. It is one that one obtains by going and meeting with God in *His* temple. That greatest priesthood before the days of Melchizedek "was called *the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God.*" My view is we've had enough name changes. When this highest order of priesthood returns again in the last days, it will no longer be called after a man, or men, or those who have held it in the past. But it will be called once again *The Holy Order after the Son of God*. The authority to be given by heaven to man on earth at the end of the world, will be in a mirror image of that which was in the beginning.

Even Christ had to be ordained to this order. Look at Matthew 3:16. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The other evening Margaret Barker suggested that if she were describing the voice, she would have that voice be the voice of a woman saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." I didn't say it at the time, but if I were staging it, I would have the voice of a man and woman speaking in unison the words, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." That is if I were staging such a thing, or attempting to portray it.

Which reminds me of a conversation with I had with her earlier that evening when we had dinner together. They are planning to do a conference on sacred fabrics at the Temple Church next year. For this Margaret Barker is going to try to put together a veil, and we discussed how she would be accomplishing that. She is thinking of depicting cherubim as a winged disk, the winged disc being the symbol of the feminine. I suggested to her that if I were using that is a representation, I would have six feathers or six flutes on each wing to depict the appropriate level of ascent. She like that idea. So if in her next presentation of the veil of the temple there is a winged disk cherubim being depicted which has six flutes, she has my permission to own that design. That can be her idea. She can have it from me.

Again, returning to Christ's ordination, in the book of Hebrews chapter 5 beginning at verse four, it reads: "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him...." You see Christ didn't do this. It was done by Him that said to Christ: "Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee."

This is a complete aside, but I really like the work that Bart Erhman has done. He's tried to reconstruct the Christological debates of the second and third century, in which they rewrote the New Testament in order to conform with their false Christological ideas and arguments. See, when Christ was baptized, the statement that was made to Christ, Bart Erhman has shown, is the statement that you find in Psalms chapter 2: 7, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." Which was changed during

these debates to read instead: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This change was in order to solve a debate going on in the second century over the idea of adoptionism. This was the argument among some of the clerics that Christ was merely mortal, and He was adopted by God through that statement. And so that statement which appears in Psalms 2 :7 was really what was one time in Matthew. But these earlier words got changed.

And Bart Ehrman<sup>10</sup> points in part, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee," this is the Hebrew statement, because Paul was writing the book of Hebrews at the time.

I also recognize there is an argument among scholars as to whether Paul is the author of Hebrews, and we will just take it as a given. Joseph didn't quibble over it. I'm not going to quibble over it. I don't want to go there, that's a whole other argument that I will leave that to the damn scholars, because they surely are damned.

This re-writing of the New Testament texts came because of those early Christian debates. But Hebrews was written before then. Therefore the words we find in Hebrews are words that mirror the statement in Psalms. It's an earlier record. The 'Deuteronomists'<sup>11</sup> were busy, not only during the time of the Old Testament second temple period, they were busy, post New Testament era before the formation of the great harlot, and they are surely busy even today. Today we call them correlationists. So Christ was begotten by the Father. That is a statement that was made to Christ at the time of this baptism. Christ was called by the Father to be His Son while Christ was in mortality.

This is true of others. It was true of Moses, as well. Go back to Moses chapter 1. I've already read it, but I want to remind you that it's there. In Moses 1:4, it is the Lord speaking to Moses. "thou art my son; wherefore look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands; but not all..." This is another astounding example of what the purpose of God is for man. The purpose of God is to bestow upon people the glory of God. What is the glory of God? The glory of God is intelligence, or another words, light and truth. (D&C 93: 36.) And what is truth? It is the knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come. (D&C 93: 24.) Those are all in the scriptures and you ought to all know that. That's the purpose of God. The glory of God is reflected when you know something. Which is why am trying to communicate something to you in these talks; so that you might have glory.

Look what happens to Moses: "Behold, thou art my son; wherefore look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands; but not all, for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease." Look at that! God's words never cease. Even when silence is caused to reign (D&C 38; 11-12) because the Powers of Heaven are so disgusted with humanity that they withdraw themselves, yet God's words don't cease at all. His words do not stop. Even if the angels refuse to minister, communicate, visit, yet will God still speak to men.

Some people asked the question about God speaking to Cain as a result of the talk I gave at Idaho Falls. This arose because of me referring to your privilege of talking to God because He spoke with Cain. It doesn't say that God appeared to Cain, it says that God spoke to Cain. Cain heard the voice of God speaking to him. He didn't get caught up to the throne of God, he did not have a throne theophany, he was not brought back and redeemed from the fall, but he heard the voice of God. God spoke to Cain after the murder of Abel. The angels withdrew from him. The angels were grieved. They would have nothing to do with him, yet the God still spoke to him.

God's words are endless. I don't care what malignancy you think you carry around within you. The fact is, none of you have done the same wickedness that Cain did, because Cain possessed greater knowledge that you did, at the time of the murder he committed. And yet God spoke to him still. Therefore, have the confidence, even if you grieve angels, that God will still talk to you. "My words for they never cease." Yes, God is talkative. God desires us to know more than we know, if we will receive it. The minute we tell Him to be quiet and withdraw and leave us alone, we are in the very act of damning ourselves. Because what we're saying is, that which you offered unto us we reject because we would prefer silence instead. Don't ever do that.

Not only were Christ and Moses called to be God's sons while they were mortal, but Abraham was likewise called God's son. In Abraham 3:12, we encounter God saying, "And he said unto me: My son, my son (and his hand was stretched out), behold I will show you all these. And he put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many;

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the topic see Bart Ehrman's book: *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*.

<sup>11</sup> These revisionists were not called "Deuteronomists" for the New Testament textual revisions. I'm just calling them that to convey an idea. I suppose they might more accurately be referred to as Pseudo-Deuteronomists.

and they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof." Once again, you have at the same instance, that he is being acknowledged as a son, the outpouring of the intelligence of God, the glory of God. Light and truth knowledge of things as they are and as they were as they are to come were given to each of these because they were sons of God. That is part of the calling.

Joseph Smith was also a son of God. We read in Doctrine and Covenants 121:7, "My son, peace be unto thy soul." I point these things out so you may comprehend what priesthood really is, and what the highest degree of the priesthood entails.

Okay, if you view priesthood as a brotherhood or an association, then I want to suggest, that the way in which you should parse the three orders of priesthood, is to parse them this way: As among men, it's merely a brotherhood of men. As between mankind and the heavens, the first order, is an order in which there is an association between men and angels. The second order, is an order in which there is an association between mankind and the Son of God. And third order, the highest order, the patriarchal order, brings one into contact with the Patriarch, who of all the names that He could choose to be called by, chooses to have us call Him, our Father who art in heaven. The third grand order being sonship to the Father and association with Him who sits in the bosom of eternity, and who sustains all of His creations.<sup>12</sup>

The highest priesthood is an association with the Father, brought about as a consequence of the Father calling the recipient to that status with the words, "My son." It is the Holy Order after the Son of God, because those who inherit it become, by definition, one of His Sons. They are the Church of the Firstborn, because they are in association with and made by the Father equal to all those who rise up to be Firstborn.

Go to Moses chapter 6. There we read a prophecy given by Adam which constituted one of the covenants I referred to in the talk given at Centerville. Chapter 6, 7: "Now this same Priesthood," [this is Adam speaking] "which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also. Now

this prophecy Adam spake, as he was moved upon by the Holy Ghost," [Therefore, it was by the power of the priesthood Adam held as he was animated by the Holy Ghost, which established as a matter of right and therefore of covenant, the promise that this priesthood, this authority, this power and this relationship, which once existed in the beginning of the world, is to exist again at the end of the world. And that too, arises as a consequence of the covenant given in the beginning.]

So what kind of person receives that ordination? Going back to the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis chapter 14. This is the kind of person: "Melchizedek was a man of faith who wrought righteousness." [You have to have faith. You have to perform righteousness. Which is not the same thing as virtue. Virtue can be offended by righteousness. Virtue would never kill, it just never would. But it is righteous in the case of Nephi, at the command of God, to slay Laban. Virtue would never do any number of things, say any number of things, or behave in any number of ways. Take for example the statement made by John the Baptist to the disbelieving Jews. "You generation of vipers!" (Luke 3: 7.) We translate that as if, what we're reading is some nicely phrased King Jamesian version of a mild insult. If you were trying to put it into modern English, this is John the Baptist, a righteous man with whom the kingdom of God existed, essentially in the language of their day saying the modern equivalent of: "You sons of bitches!" Because in our vernacular, by saying, "You sons of bitches," what you're saying is your mother is a female dog, and therefore you are a dog, and since you're a dog, you are a cur and you are unworthy. This is guttural language. We read, "You generations of vipers!" And we say, Oh isn't that a nice way to parse out that John's thinks he's talking to the bad guys. We look sometimes at righteousness, and we say it can never be so, because it is not presented in a way which allows us to see it as virtuous. Because we overlay virtue atop righteousness, and it does not work, and never has worked that way. Righteousness controls, and virtue surrenders. Whenever it is necessary to do so virtue yields every time to righteousness. Else Abraham could never have been commanded to slay his son. Because that was not a virtuous act. Abraham was put to the test and submitted to the demands of righteousness. It is likewise with all of us. We should not be confused when a righteous man speaks things we regard as less than virtuous. Some believe our Lord is incapable of an unvirtuous act, and yet He is indeed coming to slay the wicked and to burn the unbelieving who reject His warnings. They can all be slain in righteousness. But their deaths we not be regarded by them as a virtue.]

Therefore, Melchizedek was a man of righteousness. "and when a child he feared God" [not man,] "and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, having been approved of God" [and not man. In fact to be approved of God, in many cases, conforming to His will make you offensive to man. But the opinions, vagaries, and the fashions of

<sup>12</sup> Although Christ was the lead in the creation of this world, He did so under the direction of and employing the power of His Father. Therefore I make this statement in contemplation of the Father's grant to Christ the role to organize this creation.

men, the opinion polling and the drifts of what is and what is not popular at one point or another, are damnable. They ought not even be considered. Righteousness does not give any regard to such things. And yet it may be virtuous to do so. It may be virtuous to be a limp wristed, weepy, happy-go-lucky, "have a nice day" kind of effeminate chap. But righteousness will kick his ass everyday.]

Continuing, "Having been approved of God." [It is God, and God's approval alone that matters. It is what God regards of you. It is what is in your heart, because God can detect what is in your heart. God knows why you do what you do. God knows why you say what you say. God knows what is in your thoughts. Therefore, to be approved of God, is to be weighed against His perfect standard of righteousness, and not the whims of fashion. Fashion will come and go, and ideas will be popular or unpopular. Righteousness will endure forever. This is the kind of man to whom the words get spoken, "My Son." The fathers about whom I spoke in Centerville, had this association with God. They had this fellowship with God. They had this sonship with God. And they had this priesthood from God. And the hearts of the children need to turn to the fathers, and that too, because Elijah is still coming to plant in the hearts of the children, the promises that were made, because the work remains yet undone. Therefore even though Joseph Smith was God's offering to the gentiles to reconnect with "the fathers who are in heaven" that offer was rejected. Therefore seven years after the Kirtland Temple events Joseph spoke of Elijah's yet future coming.]

Now, I want to take another detour into parsing things in a way that you might not have considered before and for this I want to go to Doctrine and Covenants section 128 and look at verse 21. This is Joseph's letter to the church that got canonized. He talks about all the stuff that has gone on in the process of getting the restoration fully established through him back upon the earth. He mentions in this letter these things had happened: "And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!" [So the voice of God has been there throughout all of this. As Joseph presided and as the Church rolled forth.] "And the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of Gabriel," ["El" being the name of God] "and of Raphael, and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!"

I want to remind you that Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael are known to us by other names and roles while they were mortal. As those who have come, though they were part of the El, or in the plural form, the Eloheim, they came into mortality and they served here among us. They came and they ministered here. Michael descended, and he came to the earth and he was known as the man Adam in mortality. Gabriel came to the earth and he was known in mortality as the man Noah. There is a big debate over the identical to the Raphael. I will tell you what I think and you can take it or leave it. Raphael is the name that was given to the man who in mortality we know as Enoch.

Now there are four angels who preside over the four corners of the earth. Joseph surely knew that. Joseph's letter mentions the names of three of the four. But he leaves the fourth one out. And I find the absence of the fourth one rather extraordinary. Now the fourth one's name is Uriel, also one of the Eloheim. There are certainly some who believe the reason for omitting his name from the letter was because Joseph Smith was Uriel. I do not subscribe to that belief.

Although there are those who will absolutely cry heresy, and throw dirt on their hair, and tear their clothes because they are scholars, and they are *bona fide*, and they know I'm talking out of my hat—but I'd remind you that Joseph talked out of his hat too. That fourth and missing, unmentioned angel, Uriel, in mortality was known to us as John, the one who was beloved of the Lord.

These are the four great angels at the four corners of the earth. Adam is the one in the East, the angel who is considered the one who presides over and has control of the air. Which is apt because onto Adam was given the breath of life in the beginning. Raphael is in the South, and he is associated with the power of fire, which is apt because of his fiery ascent with his people into heaven. Gabriel is the angel in the West who has the power over water, which is apt because in mortality, he survived through the Flood. And Uriel, though not mentioned, is the one who in the North has the power over the earth, which is apt because he remains upon the earth and he is the guardian at one gate with Elijah at the other end. But you can take and leave all that as you will. I find the mention here in this letter by Joseph, of these individuals and these powers, and these four, three of whom are named, the fourth of whom, potentially is unnamed, to be interesting. Though he does mention "divers angels for Michael or Adam down to the present time."

Now I want to focus on the topic of "keys." This is a continuing theme of meetings, conferences and articles put out by the church. Like the Catholic Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints focuses attention continuously upon the claim to possess "keys." The Catholics claim they have perpetuated them from Peter to the present. The Latter-day Saints claim

to have been given them more recently. But both of these churches base their legitimacy on the claim to have something they denominate “keys” and therefore they can offer salvation to their respective memberships.

With all the crying of “Lo, keys here!” and “Lo, keys there!” I ask you what do you make of it all? Who is to be believed on these claims? And even what does it mean to have possession of a “key” in the first place? For all the grandeur of the claim, who can explain to me exactly what a “key” is? And exactly what “keys” do you Latter-day Saints possess? How do they help you to be saved? You are told that you must follow them, to obey them, to submit to them, and that you are in eternal peril if you doubt them, and yet who can explain to me what these “keys” consist of and how they are employed in your salvation? Is it that you learn certain key words and signs and hand-grips? Because if that is what you mean then even the apostates who read the temple rights on-line can have them as well. Can they offer me salvation? Is it your temple sealing rites? If so you better not have made any changes to them, as we shall presently see.

If we allow the claim to have these “keys” as something important then what about the other matters which God cared so much about as to send angels to Joseph Smith to restore them. Joseph’s letter refers in addition to “dispensations” and to “rights” and to “honors” and also to “majesty” and further to “glory” and then also to “power of their priesthood” and all of this was to “confirm hope.” Where is mention of these things? What are they? Joseph apparently needed to receive them, and yet we hear nothing about these other matters. Are they not important for our salvation?

Now you tell me, you declare to me, what are your *dispensations*? (I have one, and Joseph had one, but do you have one also?) Tell me what your *rights* are? Can you even tell me what your *keys* are? John Taylor tried to develop *The Book of Keys*, because he didn’t know what they were and he hoped to be able to parse the matter out so he could understand it better. You tell me what they are. Stop proclaiming that you own them, and tell me in plainness so as to persuade us all they both matter to salvation and you understand them enough to explain exactly what they are!

If you say they will unlock a hunting lodge in Nevada I will understand that, but I will doubt that has anything to do with anyone’s salvation. If you got them and they affect salvation, you ought to understand them! If you trust that you need to have them for salvation, then you should be able to explain them; because a man cannot be saved in ignorance, after all. I ask this rhetorically to focus your attention.

Tell me what your *honors* are. Tell me what your *majesty* is. Tell me what your *glory* is. Tell me then what the *power* of your priesthood is. Because if keys alone were sufficient, I rather think that Joseph Smith who understood what he was writing, would not have gone to the trouble of parsing through the words: dispensation, rights, keys, honors, majesty, glory and power, if it was all speaking to exactly the same thing.

I say to you that it is not speaking to the same thing. There is so much more that has to go on and be understood, if you are going to save yourself and any soul in this generation, in that kingdom which we claim we would like to inherit. We claim we’d like to inherit it without any idea of the consequences of what it would take in order to ascend there. Or without any regard to the fact that, you don’t take one of the El and bring them down into mortality, pain-free. You say that the Son of God condescended to come and be here. And I say so did Michael, and so did Raphael, and so the Gabriel. Because coming down and condescending to be here on a rescue mission, by those who dwell in glory, is an act of service and sacrifice, that we simply take for granted out of the abundance of our ignorance. You hardly comprehend the things of God. You simply do not know how great things God has done for us. You remain content to allow conceit and foolishness to lead you from error to error without any fear you are losing your souls.

Yet if you go to and you look at Doctrine and Covenants section 76 beginning at verse 50, you can read through the list of things that describe those who are going to inherit celestial glory. Beginning at verse 50, we don’t have time to go through all the things that are there. But in verse 51, it says these are people “who receive the testimony of Jesus,” that is, Christ testifying to them that they are saved, “believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given— That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;” [that sounds a little different than what we do, doesn’t it?] “And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds 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 has given all things—They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;” [I hope you read those words now with a little different meaning than you did when you came here] “And 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." [That is in the future.] "Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet. These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever. These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people. These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection.

These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just. These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all. These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn. These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all. These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood. These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun..." [Those who inherit everlasting burnings. These are those who are referred to as the "Elohim." These are those that were referred to when Moroni said, Elijah will come to plant in the hearts of the children, the promises made to the fathers. When Joseph spoke in August 27 of 1843, that Elijah *will* come; and he will come again after August 1843. I've written a paper on this and I'm not going to repeat that again here.]

As you read Section 76 remember that the things of God are not to be taken lightly. Nor are they given to you merely by study. You also must receive revelation in order to understand revelation. The scriptures are a launching point to take your mind upward. You must commune with God to understand the things of God. Do not be fooled by man's pretensions into sloth. No man, or committee or organization will ever save you. Nothing some financial institution managed by lawyers, bankers, managers, businessmen and professors offers will matter in the afterlife. The only things which will matter there will be what you secure for yourself from the Powers of Heaven while you live here. This is a probation. Act like the choices you make are the choices a god-in-the-making would choose. Be responsible for your life's outcome. When the Day of Judgment comes you will not be able to hand a Temple Recommend to your Diving Judge and have Him respect a mere man's judgment of you. All that document proves objectively is that you paid money to the church. It is a receipt. And you don't even know what your money got used for, because you do not even dare to ask the question of your leaders about how the money was spent. For the rest of the Temple Recommend questions, they are merely subjective in nature and allow the vain, the misled and the blind to announce their purported "worthiness." All of that is a mirage which will pass away when you depart this life.

I do want to talk about sealing authority, because there have been many questions asked about sealing, and I intended to address that in any event. I would suggest that there are generally three kinds of sealing authority which are given.

There is a first form of sealing power, and I'm not talking about the kind of power that can seal you up into condemnation, or judgment, which is Aaronic. I'm talking instead about Melchizedek sealing power, the kind that was designed to bless and to preserve. The first kind of sealing power is that kind which is given to someone when there is a dispensation of the gospel being founded. An example of that, you can find in Exodus chapter 34 involving Moses as a dispensation head, in verses 27 and 28 the Lord says: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights," and so on. And as a dispensation head, a form of sealing power is given to that person, which establishes a covenant that was intended to go beyond that individual alone.

For another example of this first kind of sealing power take a look in 2 Nephi chapter 1, where Lehi teaches, "Notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord." This was a covenant made by God to Lehi as a dispensational head, the beneficiaries of which included those beyond merely Lehi as that dispensation head. It included all those who come thereafter. They are beneficiaries of that. The covenant gets established through one as the head of the dispensation, but it is intended to be able to benefit others also.

Another example is Joseph Smith, as we read in Doctrine and Covenants section 22. "BEHOLD, I say unto you that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning." So through Joseph, there was a covenant formed, which would be binding beyond the person with whom God covenanted directly.

Dispensation heads are given the power, the sealing power, the authority, the ability to use the power to seal up by embodying the covenant that is given to them by God, by establishing an ordinance to perpetuate the covenant. That ordinance remains in

effect after the death of Moses, after the death of Lehi, after the death of Joseph Smith, so long as it remains embodied within the ordinance. This kind of ordinance or this kind of sealing authority, then requires and gives rise to, the second kind.

The second kind is a sealing power is embodied within authoritative ordinances. All dispensations of the gospel follow the covenant giver's ordinances; or preserve the ordinance established through the dispensation head. For so long as the ordinances that were handed to mankind through the dispensation head are kept intact, the covenant is kept intact. Therefore the second form of sealing power is a sealing power which is not dependent upon the persistent presence of a dispensation head. It is only dependent upon keeping the ordinances which were established and handed down by God through covenant.

This second form of sealing power is the sealing authority which the Church claims to possess. It is the sealing authority that was referred to by Henry B. Eyring in the General Conference talk given in April 2012, *Families under Covenant*. In it he proclaimed that the Church has the authority to seal families together by using the ordinances that have been handed down. I'm quoting from this talk. "The Holy Spirit of Promise through our obedience and sacrifice, must seal our temple covenants in order to be realized in the world to come. The Holy Ghost is one who reads the thoughts and hearts of men and gives his sealing approval to the blessing pronounced upon their heads. Then it is binding, efficacious and of full force."

I agree with what he has said. I believe that is a correct way to explain the limited authority to seal enjoyed by the Church. The condition remains, even in the ordinance, which requires the faithfulness and the subsequent sealing by the Holy Spirit of Promise in order for those ordinances to endure. Nevertheless, the Church claims to possess only that second form of sealing authority and uses it in the temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The second form of sealing, however, has a condition upon it; because God is not bound by anything that differs one iota from His word. It doesn't matter who it is that causes the variance, once the ordinance has been approved as a covenant you cannot change it. God is bound by His word, not by man's. Therefore, when you handle such ordinances, you must keep in mind the admonition that was given in the prophecy of Isaiah; "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." (Isa. 24: 5-6.) Isaiah was writing about a future time describing "His" (the Lord's) coming. But Isaiah laments a condition you are responsible to decide whether it describes your current condition.

So when you have possession of that second form of sealing authority you have to recognize that the covenant handed down from the dispensation head, can be broken. It was broken rather abruptly in the case of the covenant given to Lehi, when at the death of Lehi, his family fragmented into two groups. One of whom desired to preserve the covenant, and one of whom rejected it and walked away from it. Therefore, it was not to the ones who rejected the covenant to whom the Lord would subsequently appear. Instead they, by and large, would have been destroyed because they rejected the covenant. So handling the second form of the covenant, after the dispensation head has established it, is a matter of fidelity to the word of God. It is a question of faithfulness to the word of God, and faithfulness in practicing the ordinance that has been established.

There is a third kind of sealing power. And this third kind of sealing power goes beyond either of the first two. It has absolutely unique application, and is given only in rare circumstances, and for highly specific purposes. That third form involves giving the authority to control the elements. This was authority possessed by Enoch. This was authority possessed by Melchizedek. This was the authority possessed by Christ. This was the authority Christ had to suspend or not employ, in order to permit those who would kill Him, to kill Him. This is the kind of authority which, in the case of every such individual, they must give their lives up willingly. Their lives cannot be taken.

An example, and it's a good example, because it gives you insight into why such authority would ever be given to a man, is found in Helaman chapter 10 beginning at verse five. This is the Lord speaking to Nephi, son of Helaman, son of Helaman. To Nephi God says: "Because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness..." [And this "unwearyingness" has been described in verse four. That is, Nephi has gone and declared what the Lord has asked him to declare. And he hasn't feared them, nor has he sought to protect his own life. But he has instead sought to keep the commandments of God. Therefore because he has done this with such unwearyingness,] "behold, I [God] will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for *thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will.*" (Emphasis added.) [That is not a commandment given to Nephi. Instead this is a description of the character and the nature of Nephi. God was not saying, "I'm giving this to you, but be careful how you use it. Please don't do anything that isn't according to my will." It is not that at all. Instead it is the Lord saying, "I, God, have faith in you, Nephi. I, God, trust you." God is proclaiming that Nephi is sufficiently trustworthy that he will not do anything other than God's will. You see, the whole thing

turns on its head at this point. This is God having faith in a man. What manner of man then does God have enough faith in to permit him to employ God's power at his word?]

Continuing, "Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels..." [This is because this decree in this circumstance, may require those angels who are watching over this world to obey the word of the man. Therefore the angels, the Powers of Heaven, must give heed. God declared this in the presence of the hosts who are standing before Him.] "I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels, that ye shall have power over this people, and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people." [That's a rather Aaronic behavior. But it is given to accomplish Melchizedek ends.]

Continuing, "Behold, I give unto you power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and thus shall ye have power among this people." [This is rather Melchizedek, because you can seal up unto eternal life. This is the positive side. This is the thing which those who are given this authority seek earnestly to do. Their lives have as the purpose to save others. They are here to rescue lost, potentially damned souls. Therefore they can be trusted because their hearts are right before God. They, like God, seek the immortality and eternal life of man.]

Continuing, "And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple it shall be rent in twain, it shall be done." [This is because the temple is subordinate to the word of God. The temple is not the place that controls the word of God, the temple is the place which most of all ought be subject to the word of God. It's not a place to innovate the ordinances. It's a place to obey, to follow, to give strict heed to and not vary. But when it offends God and frustrates His purpose, then one with this third form of sealing authority can declare it would be cast down. When such authority makes this declaration, the temple is surely cast down, so that not so much as one stone will be left atop the other.<sup>13</sup>]

Continuing, "And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done. And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass." [Then because he knows the nature and character of the man involved in giving this authority, God commands him to smite the people using God's word. He must go out and deliver the threatening message.] "Except ye repent ye shall be smitten, even unto destruction." [He didn't want to do that. Because that's not the character of the person who with unwearyingness, would go out and declare the word of God. Such holders of this third form of sealing power have in their heart one and only one objective, which is the salvation of the souls of men. But Nephi was told he was required to deliver this troubling message. Yet when he delivered it, he didn't even use the authority he was given. He meekly asks the Lord if the Lord will smite.]

Look at Enoch in the book of Moses chapter 6, because once again, we are looking at someone to whom this third form of sealing authority was given. Moses chapter 6 verse 34, God speaking to Enoch. "Behold my Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me." [This was because it was Enoch's purpose to abide in God.]

Therefore when he speaks and elements obey, they obey precisely because it is the word of God which Enoch was speaking. It was not Enoch innovating. Enoch would have forfeited his life before he would have said or done anything that was not in accordance with the will of God, as would have the first example of Nephi. Therefore, these men are trustworthy.]

Next you can look at Joseph Smith's translation of Genesis chapter 14. Melchizedek was given the same power, and qualified in the same way. He was likewise interested only in preaching righteousness in order to save others. He taught righteousness and established peace among his people, and therefore was called the king of righteousness or the king of peace. Like the others, Melchizedek was a man God could trust.

As to these three kinds of authority, the first authority given to a head of a dispensation, only God can pass that to man. Man cannot pass that to man.

The second kind of sealing authority we talked about can be passed from man-to-man, from generation to generation, and remains in full force and effect for so long as the covenant is not broken. But to remain unbroken the ordinance cannot be changed.

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<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Christ's declaration in Luke 21: 5-6.



The third kind not only cannot be given by man-to-man, but is given as a consequence of that extraordinary combination of mortality and immortality, in which you find a person on the earth that God has faith and confidence in. You all should become this kind of person.

Now I want to talk for a minute about sealing as it manifests itself in some of the records of the Church. And parse some things we find in scriptures. Because in the minutes of Far West in October 1831, Brother Joseph Smith, Jr. said, "That the order of the high priesthood is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life. And said it was the privilege of every elder ordained to the high priesthood." This statement led everyone to think they had the power to seal, and they ran about doing all kinds of sealing. Things which again, I reckon Joseph held as authority given to him to head a dispensation, which at that point had not been embodied into an ordinance, and he was simply saying: We can do this stuff. At which point, those who thought they had the authority, ran about doing that. Later the authority would be embodied into an ordinance established through Joseph.

If you turn to Doctrine and Covenants section 68 verses three and four. "And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation." Now go over to verse 12. "And of as many as the Father shall bear record, to you shall be given power to seal them up unto eternal life. Amen." So this is talking in the context of someone having authority to seal as a result of them being moved upon by the Holy Ghost. That is authority which anyone of you, and the prophetess Anna in the temple at Jerusalem when Christ came into the temple, can have through the power of the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Spirit of Promise which makes the declaration. The one moved is simply declaring by the voice of prophecy what God has done. This power even women can use when they are moved upon by the power of the Holy Ghost to make the declaration. It is the word of God, and in a real sense it is obtained by an ordination. Rather it is the power of prophecy. The prophetic word contains the power to seal if it originates from God. It doesn't mean it's the same thing as a dispensation head. It doesn't mean that the same thing as an ordinance. And it doesn't mean it's the same thing as the control of the elements given in those rare cases. But what it does mean is that the word of God will always be respected both in time and eternity, provided it is in fact given by God. Conditioned upon it being through the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are those who have heard that their calling an election has been made sure. They have heard it as a witness to them from God. Don't doubt the word of God given to you. However, don't think for one moment that is the end of the matter. Remember that in the cases that we looked at before, one of the purposes of ascending up in the presence of the Father is to be endowed with knowledge, with light and truth and with intelligence, to possess a God-like mind, and a God-like understanding. Therefore, no matter what you receive, you ought to always search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of God. Indeed we are commanded to do so, as I reminded you in Boise, and won't repeat again here. I've also read you previously, and won't repeat it again here, Doctrine and Covenants section 1 verse 8 through 10. The sealing power manifested in an Aaronic setting, in which it is sealed up unto condemnation.

I want to mention that beyond there being a fellowship of man or males, and a brotherhood, there is also a fellowship that is extended as well to women. If you find a woman in scripture who has had the ministry of angels, you have a sister who has joined in that association. I won't take time to do so, but if you look and Judges chapter 13 verses 2 to 5, you have Samson's mother being ministered to by an angel, promising the coming of the one would be a judge in Israel. You have in Genesis chapter 18 verses 9 to 15, Abraham's wife entertaining with her husband angelic ministrants. The most obvious case would be Mary in the book of Luke chapter 1 verses 26 through 31 in which Mary is ministered to by Gabriel, one of the Eloheim, who came to announce she would conceive and bear a child though she knew no man.

You should take note that there are on a number of occasions, women who conceive and bear children, whose births are miraculous. In the case of Mary, the child was conceived in a miraculous way. So also was Samson. So also was John who baptized Christ. Whether it's infertility and barrenness, whether it's being past the age of menopause, or whether it's not having had intercourse, there are these children who come into the world as a consequence of something other than the normal manner of conception. Yet everything else unfolds biologically the same as a normal birth. Any of these children born through these miraculous means obviously inherit mortality, through the blood from their mother.

Parse that in your own mind, and then take a look at what the Lord says in Abraham chapter 3 about the "souls" in the preexistence who were good. (See Abr. 3: 23.) You should recognize that the definition of the soul given in the Doctrine and Covenants is *both* the spirit in the body. (D&C 88: 15.) Joseph Smith knew this definition which had been given by revelation in 1832, but when he translated the Book of Abraham he described that among the pre-earth gathering in the council there were

"souls" who were good. These good "souls" having both a spirit and a body, were chosen before they were born to come and minister here. They were called "noble and great" before coming to earth. As I explain in my paper on the First Three Words, they do not come here to be "proven" but instead come to "prove" others. I will not repeat that here. However I will merely state that when it comes to the topic of priesthood, there is more going on than you realize from a cursory reading of scriptures. There is more to know than you will ever learn from the Church's wholly inadequate curriculum.

Most people think of priesthood in a model in which the ordination consists solely from what is given by the Church. That priesthood is only something passed from man-to-man. That it is something that involves a brotherhood among men. And that it can be removed by institutional shunning.

It is probably better to think of priesthood in terms of at one degree, we would call Aaronic or Levitical, priests possess an association with angels. And then in the next, higher degree, priests possess an association with the Son of God. And yet there is still a third, still higher degree which has an association that makes all those who hold this order son of God. This third, or highest order, is The Holy Order after the Son of God. That is an apt way to describe those who hold it. They have the status of being changed or called to be a son of God by the Father's own voice. They are all sons of God, or among the bar-El.

Now how is priesthood communicated in every instance? If you go to Doctrine and Covenants section 20 to find out how ordinations to any office in the Church or any priestly position is to be accomplished. Ordinations in section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants verse 60 are accomplished this way: "Every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him; and he is to be ordained *by the power of the Holy Ghost*, which is in the one who ordains him." (Emphasis added.) So it is the power of the Holy Ghost that animates the one doing the ordination, and such power is required to be in the ordination before a person is elevated to serve in one of the offices in the Church, namely Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons. That is the manner in which these offices are supposed to be filled. They are elected (even still today) by common consent. Then they are ordained to the offices in the Church through the power of the Holy Ghost in the one who ordains them.

In Moroni chapter 3 verse four: "And after this manner did they ordain priests and teachers, according to the gifts and callings of God unto men; and *they ordained them by the power of the Holy Ghost*, which was in them." (Emphasis added.) Therefore, if you have the power of the Holy Ghost, you have the power to ordain.

At the beginning, when the Church was first formed, the notion that there was this integrated priesthood that animated everything was not present. Those early missionaries who went out, went out because they had been chosen by common consent, and ordained by others through the Holy Ghost, which gave them the authority to go out and do these things. They were supposed to preach, teach, exhort and expound etc. And they did so. Their baptisms had the required effect.

When you read the Book of Mormon, and you look at the baptismal prayer that's furnished in the Book of Mormon, as taught to the Nephites by the resurrected Jesus Christ, He tells us to use these words: "Having authority of Jesus Christ I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." (See 3 Ne. 11: 25.)

But instead of these words Christ commanded to be used, in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we say "having been *commissioned* of Jesus Christ I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (See D&C 20: 73.) That was actually a word change. It's a word change instituted by Joseph Smith, and it ought to give you confidence, that since the Lord in the first instance *commissioned* the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was done at a time before priesthood was generally disseminated into the Church, that it is acceptable to God to allow the LDS Church to baptize in His name. By commissioning the Church, and giving to it the authority and *commission* to go out and baptize, the Church possesses the authority to baptize. Until He overthrows the Church and establishes a new order, the Church remains that great net gathering in all manner of fish which Christ foretold in one of His parables. I talked about that in Centerville and will not repeat it again here.

Also when John the Baptist came to Joseph and Oliver, and it doesn't matter if you read the account by Joseph in the Joseph Smith History, or you get it in the footnote in the Joseph Smith History, written by Oliver Cowdery, the words are similar in effect.

Both state the Aaronic priesthood will remain.<sup>14</sup> But that authority of the Aaronic order to baptize, that's going to linger. That is a far more persistent form of priestly authority and it's going to remain.

Now there is a question that has been asked, and probably the most blunt way of posing the question was this, "Is there any priesthood authority or power in most of the LDS Church?" I want to remind you of an incident we find in 1 Samuel chapter 1. Now remember that Hannah was barren. Hannah could not have a child. But Hannah was a faithful woman. She was a faithful, believing woman. She went up to the tabernacle presided over by the High Priest Eli. There was only one High Priest, of course. He was the one who presided over the Aaronic order, rather like the Presiding Bishop of the Church. Today we've changed that Aaronic office into a Church order we have redesignated as belonging to our Melchizedek priesthood fellowship.

But in any event, Eli was the High Priest and he raised despicable children, who were ultimately slain by God. Eli would be replaced by Samuel on the same day that his two sons are slain in battle, the Ark was lost to the Philistines, his daughter who was pregnant miscarried his grandchild. On that same day he, Eli, fell over backwards, and fractured his skull and died. The whole family wrapped up in a Holocaust of death, on the same day.<sup>15</sup> This was Eli. He is often called the wicked priest Eli.

Well, righteous Hannah went up to the Tabernacle, and Hannah in faith was praying at the Tabernacle. And to give you an idea of the lowly state of the Tabernacle in that day, drunkenness was so common place there that when Eli saw her praying, her lips were moving but there were no words coming out, he assumed she was like the rest of them. She was just another drunk. He was a little upset at the drunken woman at the Tabernacle and so he complained to her. Eli in verse 14 of 1 Samuel said: "And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee." And Hannah says, No I'm not. I've come here to pray. In verse 17, Eli answered and said, "Go in peace and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him."

A faithless, wicked, insubordinate priest who will be slain by the hand of God with his sons and his grandson, on this day is enabled by the worthiness of Hannah, to give to Hannah through her faith a blessing from God. This is a true principal. It is the worthiness of the recipient that drives blessings. Nothing is withheld from those with faith. Even a wicked High Priest can confer a blessing upon the worthy.

This is because in the ordinances the power of God is manifest. Not because of some white shirt wearing, dark suit clad, institutional chap with a certificate given to him by the institution and common consent allowing him to perform an ordinance. It is not that at all. But it will be in every case because you come in faith to God believing, and you wrestle a blessing from God, through the means He has allowed for it to be bestowed: by *your* faith. You can have God take note of your diligence, and your faith.

I want to suggest that, if you go to a patriarch in the Church, in faith believing, that God is able through any inspired man giving a blessing, by the power of the Holy Ghost without regard to priesthood. Remember priesthood is animated by the power of the Holy Ghost. Bring that with you. Anything done by the power of the Holy Ghost comes from God.

In large measure your faith matters far more than you think it does. I know a great deal more than I knew at the time I went to the Jordan River temple to perform vicarious work for deceased ancestors for the first time. However I have related an incident in one of the little vignettes in *The Second Comforter*. I went to the temple in faith believing on that day. I met eleven of my ancestors who were redeemed because of my faith. They could use any condition in which they can find the rites, any tattered ruins left, they could use so long as there was faith on the earth to act in their behalf.

We think there is some magic, big-whammy voodoo, which the Church possesses like a franchise from God. We envision the franchise holders are able to use this powerful magic in order to, push away or gather in people to salvation. We can bless and curse. We can seal and loose. We think we have the power. This enables Church leaders' families and favored insiders, and the beneficiaries of their favor, and their cronies, can use that franchise from God to get supercharged celestial blessings. And in like manner "the least" can be shunned and held away from this power, thereby costing the disfavored their position in God's kingdom.

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<sup>14</sup> Joseph quotes John the Baptist with these words: "this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness." (JS-H 1: 69. Oliver quotes John the Baptist with these words: "this authority, which shall remain upon the earth, that the Sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness." (JS-H, footnote.)

<sup>15</sup> You can read the account of the demise of Eli and his family in 1 Samuel Chapter 4.

All they are doing is behaving like a parade of fools when they act this way. Don't be taken in. *Your* faith matters. *Your* confidence matters. *Your* driving the power of the Spirit into your life matters. You want an authoritative baptism? Go get someone to baptize you who claims that they know the ordinance and can perform it. You go in faith believing, and let the Holy Ghost ratify the event.

The first missionaries sent out by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were not ordained to any priesthood. They were elected by common consent to an office. And they baptized, and the names of their converts are on the records of the Church. Although we've done some revisionism with our history, and we have manipulated the record to put priesthood on them now. Still, if you go to the contemporaneous stuff, it wasn't present. And yet their baptism mattered. Because converts came in faith believing, repenting of their sins, and going before God to shed their sins. These converts emerged from the waters of baptism having been cleansed of their sins by the power of the Holy Ghost.

At the end of the day, the ordinance you receive by the laying on of hands is simply an admonition for you to go get it! In fact if you pay real careful attention to the scriptures, you look this up, prove it one way or the other: the only ones who have the power to give the gift of the Holy Ghost in the scriptures, are apostles upon whom Christ laid hands. (See Moroni 2: 1-3.) Today we conflate it because in the same verse where it says apostle, it says elders. (D&C 20:38.) An apostle is an elder, and we go on to say, as a result of what Elders can do in the scriptures, they are able to confer the Gift of the Holy Ghost. But the purpose of establishing the apostleship was to give someone who had contact with the Second Comforter the power to be able to give the Comforter. And so the laying on of hands authoritatively was originally restricted. But the general admonition to seek out the Holy Ghost is given to all, and therefore all have the ability to lay hold upon it by the power of the Holy Ghost. Lay hold upon it.

Joseph Smith said on page 308 of *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, "If a man gets fullness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments, and by obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord." I want to suggest that, if you define the house of God as a temple, a building, with walls and a spire with an angel on top, if that is your definition, then there are an infinite number of things that can interfere with your ability to accomplish this. One of them being that the temple has been undefiled. Another one being that the ordinances have been changed, and therefore the covenant has been broken. Another of them being that the officiator who shows up has left his adulterous paramour to come in and perform the sealing. And so there's any number of ways in which you at the altar, kneeling in good-faith, have no way of knowing whether or not you can do this, and therefore, you can let your doubts lay hold upon you.

Let me read it to you again and offer another definition. "If a man gets fullness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments, and by obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord." I want to redefine that "house," not in terms of physical structure or a building, but in terms of familial relationship, in which God alone establishes His house. And that to by acknowledging who His sons and daughters are. That house can never be overtaken, touched, trampled, broken, forsaken, compromised, or adulterated, because man is powerless to control God. And so when the house of God is to be set in order in the last days, don't think of that as a movement that you are waiting for someone else to accomplish. How do you not know that the One Mighty and Strong, to be sent to set in order the house of God, is not Jesus Christ himself? (See D&C 85: 7.) Our Lord is waiting to minister to all those who will come to Him. Because, receiving our Lord is in itself an ordinance.

Now keeping in mind everything I've said, now we are really going to parse the scriptures in a way that may not yet have occurred to you. But I find perfectly delightful. Doctrine and Covenants section 132. I want to begin at verse eight. I want you to remember what I've said the house of God is. "Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name? Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed? And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was? I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord. And everything that is in the world, whether it be *ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be*, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God. For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed." (Emphasis added.) None of the Powers of Heaven<sup>16</sup> can act independent of God's will.

<sup>16</sup> Lucifer pretends to be an angel of light because he was once one of the Powers of Heaven. He was "an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled." (D&C 76: 25.) He still feigns to that authority. And fools are still misled into

The Powers of Heaven themselves have limits. This is the reason why that third form of sealing power is so rare a commodity. Because even the angels desire to inquire into it but the angels don't possess it. It doesn't matter if from the hierarchy of those on the other side of the veil you manage to wrestle something from them. Even if it comes from one who claims to possess thrones, or principalities, as "the god of this world" claims to hold. God says in this revelation if you can understand His words, that even His angels and those who have ascended far up, must in every case, only establish that which comes by the will and covenant of the Son and the Father. The Son because He possesses the right to do so. The Father because He is the one from whom the original covenant began in the preexistence. So don't think because you've had an angel promise you something it is always to be yours. Recognize that according to Doctrine and Covenants section 132, you have to connect up with the Father's word before you obtain an eternal covenant.

Changing topics again, I want to discuss the first meeting at Adam-ondi-Ahman. Adam was not considered to be among those who were mortal, because Adam began life in the Garden in the presence of God. Therefore, mortals were those who had been born following the Fall of man. Those who were born in the mortal realm in that meeting began with Seth. The seven who gathered at Adam-ondi-Ahman were mortal because they were born outside of God's presence. They were restored again into God's presence at the meeting at Adam-ondi-Ahman.

The fact is, that same thing that was in the beginning will be in the end of the world also. That's the covenant, that's the promise, and that's the destiny, and God will surely fulfill that.

We take a lot of comfort and spent a lot of money buying all of the stuff around Springhill Missouri, valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman because that was a place where Adam was. (D&C 116:1.) It is the place where God will come to once again. I want to suggest that, the wicked, knavish, proud, boastful, those fare sumptuously and who seek the honors of men, will never have possession of, and be able to control or prevent the unfolding of God's work. The words Adam-ondi-Ahman mean "Adam in the presence of the Father." Therefore, any place that the Ancient of Days comes to, while Christ is there also, is by definition Adam-ondi-Ahman. It can occur anywhere. When it does, that will be Adam-ondi-Ahman. Therefore, it doesn't matter if a fallen and corrupt society owns a piece of real estate. God is not bound by the stratagems of men. Nor are His purposes controlled by the vanities of men.

And yet if they will repent, and if they will hear what the Lord has to say, He can still work with them. But if not, then He'll work with you. Assuming that you came and are willing to hear, and assuming your heart is soft and you're willing to take in the things that God required to be included in what I'm saying today. Some of the content of today's talk came by revelation as recently as this morning.

I'm doing this to be faithful to the things that have been asked of me, not by man or men but by God. I don't even control the content of this material. I'm not parsing these scriptures because I think they are nice. I'm telling you what I know to be true, because it is what I've been asked to declare by Him whose presence I have been in.

In *The Second Comforter* I told you, shortly after being baptized into the Church, I was told by an angel: "On the first day of the third month in nine years, your ministry will begin, and so you must prepare." Well a couple things I should clarify about that: On the first day of the third month nine years later, I was called the Gospel Doctrine teacher. And so it began, then and there, and in that setting, and within the structure of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But it has never ended. It began by a calling from an angel, it continues still. Therefore, don't think I'm just some vain fellow hoping to attract notice. Most of what I attract in my universe, in my setting, is negative, as some of you know. It has not been the source of delight. It's been the source of profound discomfort and trouble for me.

But there was a question I was going to answer before we end: "How are you and your family doing since the excommunication? We worry about you." We've been doing great. The blessings of God are without constraint. And you do not have, and no man can control, the outpouring of blessings upon, those who will give heed to Him. Therefore, I've been surprised at how much of a rather non-event it has been in many respects.

There are a couple things that are little different. I really have to go out of my way to make some people feel comfortable inside of my own ward, because they just don't know how to behave. It's "the damndest apostate" they've ever run into, because he

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covenanting with him. But these are vain things, and are not established by God's word, therefore they cannot endure into eternity. They will all end.

still has a testimony and attends his meetings and all the rest of that. I feel worse for other people, and their awkwardness. It's a challenge for them to imagine what to talk about now. Because we used to talk about doctrine and stuff and now they cannot be so sure that maybe my positions on doctrine might be like toxic waste. So if I say something about doctrine I might poison the listener. And so we have conversations like: "How about them Sox?" [laughter] Well how about them Sox? I mean really! They were supposed to be last place, and they won it all.

Things are great, couldn't be better. The Lord told me years ago about many things, including this present challenge. We continue to preach, teach, exhort, believe, teach our children, go to Church, make compensation for the awkwardness in which people approach it.

There is one recent event involving our ward's chili cook off. For the last year I was going to make my habanero chili, and I was going to win the hottest chili award. My wife, wise counselor that she is, suggested that after excommunication that might be viewed by some as retaliation. And so that's a difference. I toned the chili way down, and we still had people dancing around saying...Oooo, ahhhh, oooo, ahhhh. Like the background of some of those dowap songs.

So things are fine. Things couldn't be better. And my daughter the Little Leaguer is trying out again for the boys baseball team, having dabbled once again in softball. She and I prefer baseball. Therefore she's going to try to go back to play baseball, and so we have things to do.

I want to thank you for coming. We've gone on way too long. I've added some to the transcript of this talk because the discussion lasted over three hours. Some was too cryptic and I've clarified more in this transcription to make up for that.

I close this in the name of Jesus Christ, whose cheerful, faithful witness I remain. Amen.



## Zion

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Lecture 6 Grand Junction, Colorado

This is the sixth in a series of talks given in connection with 40 years of membership in the LDS Church. At about this moment, 40 years ago, I had already been responsible for a number of conversions and baptisms into the Church. In my zeal I was an obnoxious missionary, trying to convert anyone I encountered along the way. I confronted everyone with zeal (more zeal than knowledge in those days).

By this time 40 years ago, there were a number of baptisms that had taken place. The first one was 18 days after my own baptism which involved Ron Mahle, who I mentioned earlier. There was a Jewish fellow named Shapiro who converted. There were Pitman, Greg Ford, Steve Manchester and others I had helped to convert. Around this time, in April, on a Saturday or Sunday, I don't recollect which, there was a fellow who was in the military barracks where I was living who left his door open. I got up early in the morning and I was going to some church related activity.

As things were wont to be back then, the church was everything. Something was happening on your Wednesday and on your Tuesday and on Saturday. Church was certainly all of your Sunday. In any event, as I was leaving, this door was open and the occupant was sitting on his bed in the barracks. Sensing this was an invitation to intrude, I said, "Hey Mike, what's going on?" He replied, "Oh, there are no good people left in the world today!" I said, "Yeah, there are! Get your stuff, come with me and I'll show you some!" He said, "Where am I going?" I told him, "Don't worry about it, you'll find some good people when we get there."

So he got his shoes on and put a shirt on and he came with me. We went to some kind of gosh awful activity like we did back in those days, and I introduced him to the Elders, (because the Elders were always there). And that was the end of that. Mike Kirby is now living in Colorado, he's been married in the temple, and he has several generations of his descendents who are members of the Church.

So let me tell you, missionary work is, and has been, the easiest thing of all to do, and I would encourage any of you who run into someone who is curious about Mormonism to talk to them. It's even easier today because people know a whole lot more about Mormonism today than they've ever known before. They know Mitt Romney. I mean when I began, the world did not even know about Donny and Marie, but now they know David Archuleta. There are a thousand things to talk about. And then there is all that anti-Mormon crap, which, by the way, if you approach that - that is the best entrée. When they've got some complaint, some "absolute demonstrable proof that..." and you can choose your bad issue:

- Book of Abraham
- Joseph Smith and plural wives
- Indian DNA
- Mountain Meadows Massacre

Choose whatever you want, the subject is an invitation to talk. By the way, the more upset someone is about Mormonism, the more angry they are, the more emotionally connected they are to denouncing Mormonism, the easier it is to have a conversation with them. In my experience, it is easier to make a convert from an emotional critic because they care about the topic. That is why they are emotional. So I would encourage all of you to share your religion. Perhaps in the exchange you will learn something true about the faith, as well. Some of the greatest criticism leveled against our faith is based on truth, and we shouldn't be afraid to correct our own misunderstanding when we encounter that. True religion ought to be a search for truth, even when it is uncomfortable. Shedding our false traditions can be painful, but it is necessary if you intend to arrive at last at the truth. A false religion is unworthy of a faithful man or woman.

Zion is not just a topic. Zion has occupied the attention of every prophet from the days of Adam down to today. When I talked about covenants in Centerville, ultimately many of the covenants made throughout history have as their bedrock the assurance that in the last days God would bring again Zion. That was a critical component of the covenant made in the days of Adam. That was part of the covenant made with Enoch. To understand Zion, is to necessarily comprehend that there were covenants made by God with the earliest of our righteous ancestors that He intends to vindicate. To understand Christ's Gospel, it requires you to understand Christ's Zion.



Zion cannot be brought through a "Strongman." The talk I gave about the priesthood in Orem was given in part to inform you about what is necessary as a priesthood component for the existence of Zion. But a Strongman will not work. Remember the character of those whom God has called in times past when Zion was offered. In the case of Enoch, who established Zion, he described himself as "but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?" (Moses 6:31.) I've explained in the talk on *Elijah Reconsidered* that "slow of speech" does not mean some speaking impediment. It meant he would rather not talk, because he was more reflective and contemplative than vocal. Enoch was not a "Strongman" in the Gentile fashion, but was a man of meekness and mildness, rather more like our Savior than like the rulers of the Synagogue. Likewise, "Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." (Num. 12: 3.) I have explained this in the talk on *Priesthood* in Orem. I will not repeat it again here. God cannot bring Zion through a man whom the Gentiles would regard as a "Strongman" but will instead use only suitable men, like those He has trusted before, and none else.

If you go to Doctrine and Covenants 84: 19, we read, *"And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest."* (I would add you have to have the Priesthood in order to have valid ordinances accepted by God.) *"And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh."* (And I would add further that Zion is a fleshly endeavor to be accomplished by living mortals. It is to involve living, breathing people.)

Therefore, as you read these verses, you ought to recognize that the power of godliness being manifest to man in the flesh through the ordinances is a component, constituting the rudiments required for Zion. *"For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. 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 while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory."*

The glory of God is intelligence. The "rest of the Lord" is the fullness of His glory, or in other words light and truth. Or in other words, it requires a people who are competent in the things of God, who have an understanding which will reach into heaven.

*"Therefore he took Moses out of their midst, and the holy priesthood also."* Thus ended even the possibility of Zion. As soon as the required authority was removed, the condition which was part of the rudimentary requirements for Zion came to an end.

Moses went up the mountain, and he talked with God, and spoke with Him face-to-face. Moses wanted to bring the people up there with him so that they, like he, would speak with God and be in His presence, face-to-face. That's what Moses sought after. At which point Moses' status as the leader would have ended because no one would need to say to another, "Know ye the Lord," for they all would know him. This is the prophecy about Zion in the last days. (Jer. 31: 33-34.) That accomplishment requires people to know God, and not merely an individual. When the people refused to rise up, that ended the possibility of Moses establishing Zion.

It did not end the people's desire to be merely led by a strong man. Because they kept Moses for another 40 years, wandering about in the wilderness, as they did. They trudged in a wasteland because they would not accept anything better, eating manna from heaven and grouching and bitching about it, as they did. But they had a strong man to lead them. So what? You can't get there by relying on the strength of a leader, even if the leader is the meekest of all men. That model will not work and cannot work.

Here's the incident described in Exodus 20:18 *"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was."*

You can't have a model of Zion where there is some "Strongman" leading you.<sup>17</sup> Moses is the perfect example of one of the strongest men in history. Zion failed in his day precisely because they wanted only a "Strongman" to support them, rather than assume the responsibility devolving upon them. They wanted Moses to go speak to God for them, rather than them going to speak

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<sup>17</sup> The contrast between a "Strongman" and a meek one is best illustrated in the two great opposites: Lucifer and Jehovah. In the case of Lucifer he proclaimed himself strong enough to save all: "Behold, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor." (Moses 4: 1.) In contrast Jehovah submitted meekly to do the Father's will alone, saying: "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." (Moses 4: 2.)

to God directly. Zion requires a people to rise up and it cannot come otherwise. It will require you to have faith, which was the subject addressed in Idaho Falls. It was addressed in Idaho Falls because it was necessary to get that on the table before introducing the topic today. It will require that you repent to know God, the topic covered in the Logan talk, also required to understand the subject today.

If you do not comprehend the foundation, you will not understand the subject. You are not just going to walk into Zion and take up residency there. You must have sufficient intelligence in order to be comfortable there. Its glory must be within you. As I read a minute ago, "Which rest is the fullness of his glory," in other words, you have to possess light and truth, which is the glory of God. (D&C 93: 36.)

Moses saw Zion. If you go to Moses 1:8, it tells you, *"And it came to pass that Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created; and Moses beheld the world and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are, and which were created; of the same he greatly marveled and wondered."*

It's amusing to me when I encounter Moses dealing with this vast revelation of all things in one verse. Nephi made a valiant effort to hint around it, and he defaulted back to the words of Isaiah to try to convey what it was that he saw. Isaiah made an enormous effort to put into epic poetry what it was he saw. And Moses, when he's given that same opportunity, his response in his record is that he, *"beheld the world and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are, and which were created;"* Well put Moses. I understand why you did it that way. Another description is given by Lehi, recorded by Nephi. That explanation reads: "and he saw and heard much." I understand why these former prophets do that, and there's certainly a reason.

Moses knew what it would take because he saw Zion. If you go to Numbers, there is an incident that happens in chapter 11, verse 26. Two of the men in the camp, Eldad, and Medad had the Spirit rest upon them so they began to prophesy. They did this inside the camp led by Moses. A couple of young men were alarmed and ran and told Moses this spiritual abundance was taking place, and this is in verse 28, *"And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!"* Moses was not jealous of someone having revelation, he welcomed it. He understood what it would take to create a people of God. He was not jealous that there happened to be two of the people of God within the camp, demonstrating the gifts given to the people of God. The "Strongman" model with only one prophetic figure will not work if you seek Zion.

I'm going to read from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. I want to draw a contrast. I want to draw a comparison between the attitude we found at the beginning of the restoration, and the attitude that subsequently took over: *"President Joseph Smith read the 14th chapter of Ezekiel--said the Lord had declared by the Prophet, that the people should each one stand for himself, and depend on no man or men in that state of corruption of the Jewish church--that righteous persons could only deliver their own souls--applied it to the present state of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints--said if the people departed from the Lord, they must fall--that they were depending on the Prophet, hence were darkened in their minds, in consequence of neglecting the duties devolving upon themselves, envious towards the innocent, while they afflict the virtuous with their shafts of envy."* (TPJS p. 237-238.)

That was a call by Joseph Smith for the Saints to rise up. That was a call by Joseph Smith for the Saints to lay hold upon the promises he had heard from Moroni. We began talking about that topic back in the first talk in Boise. Joseph wanted the Saints to rise up and become a people of God, a people holiness, those who could and would were to commune with God. This is Joseph declaring it!

I want you to contrast that, with this statement:

*"We can accept nothing as authoritative but that which comes directly through the appointed channel, the constituted organizations of the priesthood, which is the channel that God has appointed, through which to make known His mind and will to the world."* That's on page 42 of *Gospel Doctrine*.

We have a myth that, unlike every other dispensation, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints claims it cannot lead you astray.

Again reading from *Gospel Doctrine*: *"If any man in that position [referring to the Church President], should become unfaithful, God would remove him out of his place. I testify in the name of Israel's God, that he will not suffer the head of the Church, whom he has chosen to stand at the head, to transgress His laws and apostatize. The moment he should take a course that would in time lead to it, God would take him away."* That's from page 44.

I don't know - I get in trouble when I'm tempted to say things like what I'm going to say next. My wife is counseling against it by shaking her head at me because she anticipates when I will say something like this. Against her wise counsel I will admit I've spoken with brother Joseph F. Smith. He rues having taught that. I can tell you if he were here today, with what he knows now, he would not declare that doctrine. He would retract it and repent of having used the name of Israel's God in connection with a false doctrine. Make no mistake about it - that is a false doctrine.

The "Strongman" model deconstructs Moses' desire for all men to be prophets. It deconstructs Moroni's prophecy when he quotes from Joel. It is the opposite of Joel's prophecy, which says in Joel 2:28: *"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;"* (Again we read the "flesh. It is here. Now. You. The living. The breathing. In the flesh.) *"...and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."*

The "Strongman" model is the opposite of that prophecy. It would prevent Zion, precisely because God must dwell among the people. If He does not dwell among the people it is impossible to have Zion because Zion is a place where God comes to dwell among them. And if God is dwelling among the people, no one need say, "Know ye the Lord," for everyone shall know Him who is there. (Jer. 31: 34.) The false construct of the "Strongman" has got to be replaced because it invites you to neglect the duty devolving upon each of you.

Zion will require a covenant. It will require authority from God for that covenant because He alone can establish it. He will not make this covenant with many people, but will make the people *one* by His covenant. Then it will require a level of conduct from the people that meet the requirements, or honors the covenant.

I want to illustrate this by what may appear to be a curious incident in Acts. I want to point it out before you get too enthusiastic about signing up or clamoring for what the Lord is about to bring to pass in our day. I want to remind you what happens when a covenant is established authoritatively, approved by the Lord, but then violated by those who take upon them the covenant.

If you turn to Acts 5:1-10: *"BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband."*

It's a good thing we have forfeited the power to make authoritative covenants from time to time. Because if we really had everything we claim, and if we lived under an obligation God would honor, then chose to violate it as we do, God would act to enforce the violation. That will be the case when we have Zion. In Zion you will not be able to endure a Terrestrial glory in a Terrestrial state. Lying, stealing, deceiving, adultery, and whoremongering are all abominations that people prize in this generation. Lusts, ambitions, desires to lord over one another are common afflictions of the Gentile. All of those things are only tolerated a level below what Zion requires. The last Zion will also occupy a location. That place will likewise be under the covenant with God. Therefore, the location itself can only be occupied by those who will live a Terrestrial law.

When this comes to pass, if one happily strolls into Zion while profaning the conditions upon which it will be established, they subject themselves to the penalty resulting from being where they should not be, in a condition they cannot endure. The destruction that occurred at Christ's death on the Americas involved the destruction of the wicked only. If you look at 3 Nephi 10:12 you find out that the more righteous were saved. Those who live a Telestial law will likewise be destroyed if they attempt to enter Zion without repentance.

Turn to Doctrine and Covenants 76: 98. I want you to remember the chant "Follow the Prophet, Follow the Prophet," which we can drill in mindlessly to the youth with the drumbeat cadence that sounds like an Indian chant. Follow the Brethren!

*"And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world; 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; But received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant. [yet to be established] Last of all, [And this is a general description of those who have terrestrial behavior] these all are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the Firstborn, and received into the cloud. These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire."* (D&C 76: 98-105.)

That is a broad description of those who cannot be in Zion. Notably, it begins with a list of those who follow the prophets! It's almost as if the Lord, in the revelation to Joseph Smith, anticipated your day and warned you: „Do not go thither! Do not partake of that! Receive the testimony of Jesus! Prepare when He offers the Everlasting Covenant! Do only that!" To the extent that a church or an organization worships or trusts a man in lieu of Christ, it will lead you in the end to Telestial destruction at the Lord's return. Those who believe a mere man can offer them salvation (because the man has "keys" with which to bind heaven and let them in) will not survive the destruction of the wicked that precedes the Lord's return.

I'll tell you what you get from a "Strongman" model. What you get from a "Strongman" model is a multibillion-dollar shopping mall. What you get from a "Strongman" model is a red Cadillac Escalade stopped on a back road in Nevada with \$54,000 cash in the back of the car and the false prophet arrested for child abuse and child sexual exploitation. (That's Warren Jeffs.) I'll tell you what you get with a "Strongman" model: you get pretenders and you get fools. You get people who hold onto their power, like the LeBaron's did, by murdering one another so they could claim that they have "the keys." I'll tell you what you get with the "Strongman" model: you get Brigham Young who takes women who are already married to other men and not divorced, seals them to himself with his purported keys, and then proceeds to father children with them.

Brigham Young condemned Parley Pratt for doing the exactly the same thing. He even observed at Parley's death that he probably deserved to be killed by the jealous husband because it was adultery for Parley to have done what he did. Brigham pronounced his own condemnation in this. What then is the distinction between the conduct of Brigham Young on the one hand, and the exact same conduct of Parley Pratt on the other hand in the religion of Brigham Young? The difference lies in the fact that Brigham Young claimed to have the keys. If keys allow adultery, I want no such keys. If keys allow adultery, then I say damn me now because I want nothing of it, or of your pretended keys. I don't think that the pretenders in all of the various "Strongman" models have any clue what it would take to bring again Zion. They do not kneel down to serve and elevate others through their teachings in the least. They have no glory of God within them, and therefore cannot instill light and truth upon those who will hear them speak. The only way to bring again Zion is if you rise up. You must come to know the Lord, not just me. The only way is if you comprehend the Gospel of Christ, accept the invitation, prepare your heart, prepare your mind, prepare your soul, clean yourself up, leave behind your sins, and come and face the Lord.

Zion is level. It is absolutely level. Here's a description of the level. This is Moses 7:18. *"And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them."* There were no poor among them, because it's intolerable for your sister to suffer in want if you have enough and to spare. There were no poor among them because you cannot dwell in righteousness if you find a need and you're unwilling to fulfill it.

Here is how you destroy Zion. We know because there was an abortive attempt made during the time of Joseph Smith. Joseph represented an actual offering by God to mankind. Through Joseph, an authoritative covenant could have been offered. But those in his day were unwilling to abide the conditions required.

Doctrine and Covenants 101: 6. This is after it failed. This is the Lord explaining why. Here's how you avoid or destroy Zion: *"Behold, I say unto you, there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among*

*them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances.*" That's how you destroy Zion. It's a fairly simple thing to accomplish because we all jar one another, we all contend one with another. And if you've got a great "Strongman" standing at the head to be admired, we all envy him. Change that into one who kneels, serves, and is the meekest of all men, and there is no reason to envy or admire him. He deserves your sympathy, because he will mirror only the Man of Sorrows, who was acquainted with grief. (Isa. 53: 3.)

We all have our lusts, meaning "ambitions" in this context. Lusts and ambitions are the same thing for purposes of this verse. For example, „I really want to get ahead in the organization," is a covetous desire. Inequality invites lusts. Inequality invites covetous desires. To be one, you must have equality. You can't have one heart, one mind, and no poor among you if you have a stratified group of people. There can't be any rich or poor. As a consequence of what it takes to have Zion, you cannot have a "Strongman" model. It will not work. As Gentiles, you are prone to this failure. You crave a "Strongman" to be your idol. Therefore, you seek what cannot be in Zion.

Go to Luke 22 where Christ makes an observation about Gentiles. Luke 22: 25-27. *"And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."*

The Gentile affliction is the widespread desire to have someone rule over them. Gentiles call such nonsense by these pseudo-royalty "a benefactor." This is precisely the motivation in the souls of the Gentiles who have inherited this land. This longing now creates so many of our current political problems. "Take care of us, rule over us...rule with a strong hand. Take away things from us that we shouldn't have. Curtail our liberties and show us the right way." Oddly many of you can look at the government's present abuses and detect that something is very much amiss. But you look at your own religious structure and you're entirely oblivious to it. Governmental paternalism is deeply offensive to some of you. Yet you see church paternalism as good, and right, and righteous, and holy, and wonderful! They dispense nonsense, children's fables, vacuous and insipid sermons and the response is: "I just thought it was so special - the things that they said." You measure their dross with a micrometer seeking anything to praise, but disregard truth when it is give you in full measure, pressed down and flowing over. You always mistake a false prophet for a true one. "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 these had to hide themselves „in deserts and dens, and caves of the earth"(see Hebrews 11: 38), and though the most honorable men of the earth, they banished them from their society as vagabonds, whilst they cherished, honored and supported knaves, vagabonds, hypocrites, impostors, and the basest of men." (DHC, Vol. 4, p. 574; also TPJS, p. 206.)

Turn to 2 Nephi 10:11 and remember the warning given there: *"And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations. And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God. For he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish, for I, the Lord, the king of heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them forever, that hear my words."* (2 Ne. 10: 11-14.)

Those who will establish Zion must reject even the idea of a king. I know that embedded in the doctrine of the Restoration is the notion that we're going to become "Kings and Queens, Priests and Priestesses." I want to suggest to you that when Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world," (John 18: 36), and he gird himself with a towel and he knelt down and he washed the feet of those that he was ministering to, implicit within that act is the kind of conduct of our real King. (John 13:4-16.) Those who are His kings and priests will do likewise. They too will kneel and serve. They will not be "Strongmen." They will be meekservants to the Gentile's way of reckoning. If He says, "My kingdom is not of this world," and He came merely to be a servant, how much more gratefully should we look at the opportunity to kneel and to serve, rather than to say, "I want the chief seats," (Matt. 23: 6) rather than say, "I want to be upheld and sustained and lauded and praised." We are not here to be flattered and extolled. We are here to serve in any way we can.

Christ is our only King, and His kingdom is not of this world. John 13: 14-16: *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord;"*

The twin of kingship is priestcraft. In 2 Nephi 26: 29, (the denunciation of kingship came from the same prophet who also denounced priestcraft) he condemns priestcraft: *"He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion."*

Just so you know - no one is subsidizing anything that is going on in the series of talks. We lose money every time we offer one of these. My wife and I estimated what we thought the crowd would be in this venue, we paid for it, and rented it from our own pocket as we've done in the other venues. I don't charge anyone to attend these things. I don't ask anyone to help me pay for them. I don't charge you an admission fee. I don't try to sell you anything.

[Doug is recording this stuff. He pays his own way. He does what he has to do in order to create a record, and then he sells the recordings he makes to defray his costs. All of the recordings are going to be turned into a downloadable MP3. The only way I can get it into a form that preserves it so that I can give it away is if Doug spends the money in order to make the record. He charges you, and he collects from you, and I don't see one penny of it. When there was enough and to spare from prior sales, he used that money to help some missionaries. I got nothing. Just so you're clear on the concept. If anyone wants to go out and make themselves a big „popular speaker" like me, then you go and waste tens of thousands of dollars out of your own pocket in order to accomplish what I'm doing, which is to give away information. You really ought to be wary of anyone who is inviting you to come unto the Lord in exchange for an entrance fee.]

The twin of kingship is priestcraft, and the purpose of priestcraft is to “set themselves up... that they may get gain.” It's not merely that they set themselves up “for a light unto the world,” but they “set themselves up for a light into the world that they may get gain.” They want to make a profit from being a pseudo-prophet. It's not only the losses I suffer, but also the insults I endure. Now, you people attending this talk may have one attitude, but there are many others, who outnumber you, who have a different attitude. When I put up a comment about „stop praising me, stop quoting me, go to the content, go to the scriptures, go to the doctrine, leave me out of it, I'm not a big man, don't use my name to make you credible," in response I got a bunch of comments and emails that said, "I would never use your name because everyone I know hates you." Or, "Everyone I know thinks you're a lunatic and an exploiter, and sooner or later, you're going to have your own church" and “you're going to be driving a red Escalade with \$54,000 in cash in the back" (or some such nonsense).

I want to be perfectly clear right now about something which has not, and will not ever change about me. I am unwilling to give you commandments. When have I ever commanded you? I am unwilling to lead. When have I ever said, “Follow me?” I am unwilling to organize you. When have I ever said, “I want to lead an organization?” I am unwilling to accept money. When have I ever said, “Pay me?” We have enough Gentile leaders. We have good enough churches already. When those churches err, they suffer the consequences. We do not need another church or churches. We do not need a king. We do not need more priestcraft. We do not need a “Strongman.”

I read earlier from Doctrine and Covenants 76. *“They are they who are the church of the firstborn, they are they into whose hands the Father has given all things, they are they who are priests and kings who have received of His fullness and of His glory.”* If I could pray, if I could beg, if I could entreat for you to have one thing, it would be His fullness, it would be His glory, nothing from me, something from Him. He's the one who is mighty to save.

Changing the leader will not fix our problem. The problem is the people. The problem is that we need to rise up individually, and having risen up individually then we have the potential for having a gathering. But changing the leader will not accomplish a thing. It's just another delay, another stall, another perversion.

The coming change at the Lord's return is going to alter the Telestial condition of the world to a Terrestrial condition. To the extent any church tries to convert you to follow men, as I read you just a few moments ago, if you are of Paul, or of Peter, or of Spencer, or Ezra, or Howard, or Gordon, or Thomas; if you're of them, you will not survive the Lord's return. You will not survive the Lord's return, period. A revelation was given to Joseph Smith informing you of that. I am not, I never have been, and I never will be “of Thomas<sup>18</sup>,” or of any of those who will follow him and sit in that same chair. I would recommend you hesitate also.

I have to tell you though, and this is one of the ironies of the Second Coming. The Lord is big on irony. If you look at the description of those in the Terrestrial condition, from Doctrine and Covenants 76: 72, *“Behold, these are they who died without law; And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness.”*

So if you're in the world and blinded by the preaching of false ministers, but you live honorably according to that - but you don't follow them, you don't worship them, you simply do the best you can - you will survive the Lord's coming. If you are instead worshipping a man as your leader, to whom you look for your salvation, who holds “keys” to take you away from death and hell

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<sup>18</sup> Meaning Thomas S. Monson.

and put you on a throne somewhere in heaven - that group of people have gotten too close to the truth to be excused for their error. They are idolaters, blinded by the craftiness of men. Without idolatry, they are simply confused about the nature of God, which is different from approaching nigh unto it, and then following and idolizing a man. I don't know if you can create idolatry outside of a religion claiming "keys." That limits it to the Catholics and the Mormons. And various off-shoots of Mormonism.

Zion cannot come with "the minimum." Zion has to be at the forefront, and because Zion is required to be at the forefront, it must be the invitation from this earth for the Lord's return. Until the invitation exists, through Zion, there is no reason for His return.

Here is a description given through the Joseph Smith translation of Exodus 33 :20. And since it's the Joseph Smith translation, you are going to have to look there to find it. *"And he said unto Moses, // [this is the Lord speaking] 'thou canst not see my face at this time lest mine anger be kindled against thee also, and I destroy thee and thy people. For there shall no man among them see me at this time and live, for they are exceedingly*

*sinful. And no sinful man hath at any time, neither shall there be any sinful man at any time, that shall see my face and live."* You might catch a glimpse just before you ignite: "I think I saw Him!"

That's not Zion. In D&C 1: 31 the Lord says it again to us in this dispensation: *"For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance."* Contrast that with, "I cannot look at myself without the enormous latitude of allowance because I'm very forgiving of myself." You'd be better off saying, "I will recognize, I will admit, and I will hold myself to every failing I am prone to make. But as for all the rest of you, I don't see anything wrong with any of you. I cannot detect a flaw in the least, because I'm going to judge you by the standard with which I would like to be measured; which is, I take no offense, I freely forgive."

One of the greatest sins explained in a revelation given about the Law of Consecration is surprising to us. (The Law of Consecration is another notion that only rears its ugly head once anymore, and that's when you are making covenants in the temple.) Take a look at D&C 70:14. This is about our failure to live the Law of Consecration which brings us into condemnation. *"Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld. Now, this commandment I give unto my servants for their benefit while they remain, for a manifestation of my blessings upon their heads, and for a reward of their diligence and for their security; For food and for raiment; for an inheritance; for houses and for lands, in whatsoever circumstances I, the Lord, shall send them."* (D&C 70: 14-16.)

Separate and apart from the description of Zion, which tells us they are of one heart, there are no poor among them and they are one people, we find this commandment: "In your temporal things you're going to need to be equal, otherwise the abundance of the manifestation of the Spirit is going to be withheld."

In a section about Zion, the Lord has this to say: *"Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart; Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul. And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion."* (D&C 59: 18-20.)

Or in other words, "excess" meaning "wealth" and "extortion" meaning "to compel the poor." Compelling the poor is when we condition our charity on something in return. „I am willing to give unto you some charitable thing, if you will..." The poor are not to be extorted.

I see little difference between the extortion that was exerted upon the heroine Fantine in *Les Misérables* - she was reduced to prostitution to care for her child Cosette - and the exploitation that compels the single mother to take time away from her child in order to satisfy the demands of those who would extort her before giving aid. *"And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion. And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments."* (Id. vs. 20-21.)

It's all His and He gave it for our use, and our enjoyment, and our betterment, and our blessing. He did not give it to give me power over you. Consecration was given to remove or end poverty and it was given in 1832.

Let's go to D&C 78: 3. This is 1832 . *"For verily I say unto you, the time has come, and is now at hand; and behold, and lo, it must needs be that there be an organization of my people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for the poor of*

*my people, both in this place and in the land of Zion— For a permanent and everlasting establishment and order unto my church, to advance the cause, which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father who is in heaven; That you may be equal in the bonds of heavenly things, yea, and earthly things also, for the obtaining of heavenly things. For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things; For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you. And now, verily thus saith the Lord, it is expedient that all things be done unto my glory, by you who are joined together in this order;" (D&C 78: 3-8.)*

Moses 7:18 we read before: "one heart...one mind...dwell in righteousness...no poor among them." From 1832 to 2014 we have had 182 years. Where is your unity? Where is your equality? I know you're all very religious or you wouldn't be here. *"How can you say unto me, Lord, Lord, but do not the things which I say? Why do you call me Lord?"* (Luke 6: 46.) See, it's almost like Christ anticipated the Gentiles making such a mess of what He gave us. Now, if we are going to crawl back out of the mess, the only way to do it is carefully, incrementally and by small measures. The Lord has a way of bringing great things through small measures. Can you be "one" because you believe in the theory of equality? Can you be one if you believe in the theory of sharing with one another? Can you be one if you believe in the doctrine? Or must you act? James 2:14 *"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."* (James 2: 14-18.)

If the admonition of James was good enough to prime the well to get the Restoration started, I would suggest he is also good enough to give us advice about the practicalities of our present conundrum. There is an enormous gulf between the content of the material revealed in the Restoration and the religion you practice daily. That gulf is going to need to disappear. You think you're trapped because the FLDS Church, or the Community of Christ, or the RLDS Church, or the Church of the Firstborn<sup>19</sup> won't practice the revelations given to Joseph Smith. But you are not. You are free to practice the restored faith even if no one else joins you in doing so.

Getting from where we are to where we need to be it can't be done inside the institutions that have trapped our minds. I am not preaching against your faith. If you are some fundamentalist, some RLDS member, some Latter-day Saint, go ahead and honor your churches. But by degrees, you need to begin the process of "by your works" showing what your faith is. And that's the topic we will turn to next.

One of the things that happened when we failed to live the Law of Consecration was a replacement commandment requiring the payment of tithes. D&C 64:23 *"Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming."* (This is the statement that the cliché that tithing is "fire insurance" is drawn from because if you're tithed you won't be burned at his coming.) *"For after today cometh the burning—this is speaking after the manner of the Lord—for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon. Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today."* (D&C 64: 23-25.)

I want to encourage you to pay tithing. If you are satisfied in paying that tithing to whatever church or organization you belong to, then continue doing so. The act of giving tithing as an offering to the Lord does not require you to supervise what happens with it once you give it to your churches. I think they become accountable. For you it is an act of faith. For them who receive it from you it is a matter of accountability before God.

However, some of us are forbidden from paying tithing to our church of choice. Some of us simply refuse to pay tithing because they don't trust their church. Some refuse because they believe their church has neglected the poor. Some refuse to pay because the LDS Church refuses to be accountable and open with their donations.<sup>20</sup> Some refuse to pay tithing because church leaders of

<sup>19</sup> Now incorporating a church with the name Church of the Firstborn is quite interesting. There are some things, that to me are oxymoronic and this is one. I find deeply off-putting to incorporate an institution and call it the "Church of the Firstborn." It is like going to a Latter-day Saint nudist colony. Which if someone takes that idea and runs with it should be reserved for "endowed" members only.

<sup>20</sup> The Church no longer discloses anything about its financial affairs. The Auditor's Report read in General Conference only states, in relevant part: "contributions received, expenditures made, and assets of the Church for the year 2013 have been recorded and administered in accordance with approved Church budgets, policies, and accounting practices." This leaves unexplained what the



the LDS Church treat the return on the tithing as "investment income," and then use it to build shopping malls and buy landholdings. They treat the "investment income" as separate from tithing and use that categorization to deflect criticism of these vast commercial enterprises.

By the way, on that subject I believe the Lord anticipated the distinction of "investment income" adopted by the LDS Church leaders in one of the parables He taught. In Matthew 25:14 He says: *"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury."* (Matt. 25: 14-27.)

In other words, He owns it. He owns all of it. He owns the interest, He owns the investment, He owns it all and it is His tithing. In this parable there is no such thing as "investment income." As far as I know, the purpose of the Lord is not well served by importing Tiffany's to Salt Lake City, or Porsche Design, Restoration Hardware, or Rolex. If I took all this money I'm spending doing these lectures and put it together I could go shop at the new City Creek Mall for about one afternoon. That's about how long the burn rate is at those top-end places.

There is nothing divine in neglecting the poor. The primary purpose of collecting the tithes and the yield upon it is to bless and benefit the lives of those who are in need. So, given the fact that you are commanded to pay tithing, and some of you are unable or refuse to do so because of the particular circumstances that you see in your church of choice, and given the fact that the Lord has said, "Organize yourselves," I would suggest one small thing you could begin is to collect your own tithing in a group. You manage it among yourselves. You assist the poor among you. If you disagree with what your churches are doing but recognize the obligation to pay, then take control over the funds to do what you believe God would have done to help others. As groups of common believers, pay tithing into a common fund. Then by the voice of your own group, dispose of it by common consent so that everyone in your group knows everything that comes in and everything that goes out. Then you begin to have no poor among your group. You provide for those who need housing, food, clothing, healthcare, education, and transportation. Do it without a leader. Do it by the voice of your own common consent, by your own unanimous approval. Do it by united agreement. If you do that, you will not be paying a qualified 501(c 3) or 501(c 4) institution to earn for yourself, a tax deduction for doing so. Which is a terrible thing to some of you: you don't get a benefit! Of course the benefit was always intended to be to the poor and not those who give. On the matter of being taxed and having no benefit for your charitable contribution, Christ likewise had something to say:

*"Tell us what thinkest thou Christ. Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?" Jesus perceived their wickedness and said, "Why tempt me ye hypocrites! Show me the tribute money." And they brought him a penny. And he said unto them, "Whose is this image and superscription?" And they said unto him, "Caesar's." Then saith he, "Render therefore to Caesar the things which are Caesars, and unto God the things that are God's."* (Matt. 22:17-21.) Christ had no problem paying the tribute. Don't think that the purpose of paying tithing is to earn a deduction on your itemized deduction schedule. Render unto Caesar the things that are

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budgets, policies and accounting practices consist of, and whether they avoid conflicts of interest, nepotism, full competition to insure the lowest prices when funds are expended, and how the policies protect the donors' money. Do these policies favor church members' companies over non-church members? Do they further favor friends and families of the general authorities? The Church's leading Navuoo descendants supply essentially all of the First Presidency and Twelve. Do their families also own the construction companies that build chapels, Temples and other facilities? Do the "policies" permit this? Does inside information get leaked to those friends and family members in advance of construction site purchases? Do these insiders profit from selling to the Church? Do the "policies" permit this? Only an independent examination of the books with a public disclosure of the results would answer these questions.

Caesar's. It's almost as if the Lord anticipated the latter-day church practices in His parables and in His statements in the New Testament.

You might even have negative tax or regulatory consequences among you because the benefit of your united group, using your tithing to benefit someone, may disqualify them from government eligibility in some programs. Do it anyway. Become independent.

Now, if some of you who hear this decide to begin to do this, you will learn firsthand in a pragmatic lab experiment just how very difficult it is to become "one." You will learn how greatly this world opposes the idea of Zion. You will learn from the criticism of others how to suffer for your Lord's sake. You may even be deprived of fellowship with others who do not agree it is your obligation to care for the poor, but that the church you belong to owns that right to the exclusion of your opportunity to participate. You may lose a temple recommend, or a church calling, or even your church membership. And you will learn how much your churches care for money above all else.

You will also learn how weak we all are. You will learn exactly what the Lord said was the problem with the first effort to establish Zion in Joseph's day. In D&C 101:6 we see their problems in scripture: "there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them." If you want to know why the early Saints failed, make this attempt to organize yourselves. Even in a small group you will find challenges. You want to know how far away you are at this moment from Zion; this will tell you. If you want an accurate barometer of "what lack you yet?" then organize yourselves and you, unitedly in small groups, gather your tithing into the storehouse you maintain, and by your common consent take care of those who are poor among you. You will receive an education like none other in the reasons why men fail to have Zion.

The fact that men fail doesn't excuse you from your own failure. Rise up (and this is a very modest thing to begin with), you will learn so much so quickly. You will be astonished. You don't need or want a "Strongman," and the woman's voice should be equal with the man's. There should not be some "ruler" among you Gentiles saying, "It's this way! It's gotta be this way! I prayed about it! The Lord said I get the money. I prayed about it, and the Lord wanted me to have a new Porsche, and I've got the down payment but I don't have the monthlies. Therefore hear ye the word of the Lord: give Fred a Porsche!" If that's the way you conduct it, you are no better than the rest of the Gentiles. You may as well stay and pay in whatever organization you have at present. You may as well buy red Cadillac Escalades or shopping malls with your tithes. You may as well put your tithing where it does no good for the poor and let your chosen leaders manage your money, along with their organizations.

I know, I know, in each of your churches there are lots of people who get benefited in lots of ways. But that doesn't excuse the money that those "Strongmen" spend on themselves. The highest-paid clergies in the world manage the various denominations of the various Mormon movements. The top LDS Church leaders have access to private hunting preserves, fenced vacation compounds, a private jet, and, in comparison with poor Lazarus, "fare sumptuously." It's just the way it is. I hate to break it to you, but the institutions stemming from Joseph Smith's efforts are almost entirely led by rather well-paid professional clergy.

Take the money the Lord intended for the poor and administer it for the poor among you. If you try this experiment, there will be some among you who receive rather than give because they have not. Let me remind those who receive of another statement made in the revelations of this dispensation in D&C 42: 42. *"Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer."* If you're the beneficiary, not only should you be grateful, but do what you can in turn.

There is absolutely no reason "to gather in Zion" in order to fail again. We do not need another Jerusalem, Rome, or Antioch. We do not need another Kirtland, Jackson County, or Nauvoo. We certainly don't need another Salt Lake. We need Zion. And there's no reason to gather if the gathering is going to fail again. Stay home, serve in your callings and be happy. But if you rise up, then there may be reason to gather. Not everyone will be brought. Only "one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." (Jer. 3: 14.) Zion will be where the qualified meet. It will not be where many come to get qualified.

Christ invited everyone to the wedding feast through Joseph Smith. In Joseph's day there was an invitation to "come one, come all" to attend. But those who gathered were unqualified because of their jarring, envy, strife, lusts and covetousness. They would not attend. Therefore, the Lord's invited guests have refused. He now will gather from highways and byways, and invite you who are strangers and sojourners living outside the circle of those invited first. But beware about coming if you are not clothed with an appropriate "wedding garment" of charity to the poor, for the standards are no different in this invitation than in the earlier one. (See Matt. 22: 2-14.)

If you will rouse yourself to an experiment upon His words, you will find that it begins to grow within you. You will find that it begins to be delicious to you. (Compare Alma 32: 27-30.) It would be wonderful if at some point, out of the overwhelming majority of those who have been baptized and regarded nominally as Latter-day Saints, (still claimed members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but utterly inactive), were to revive their faith. If those roughly 9 to 11 million completely inactive Latter-day Saints were to find renewed life and vigor, by practicing the religion they once accepted, in this manner. If some were to do so, the day might come when the other active 3 to 4 million members of the Latter-day Saint Church would be able to have something better come of their organization. I do not even invite the active Latter-day Saints to think about these things. If they are content, I say leave them asleep in their happy condition. Let those 3 to 4 million people continue to actively support their organization. They feel themselves part of the 99 sheep who are safely within the fold. Let them believe so. I am interested in the strays. (See Matt. 18:11-14.) But the other inactive 9 to 11 million, as well as the disaffected RLDS, those straying from the Community of Christ, even the various fundamentalist Mormons, who have once accepted Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, these are who I invite to try this experiment.

I want to remind you however, that throughout the scriptures, when it comes to the establishment of Zion, there is no such thing as "hastening the work." It can't be done in haste. I'm just going to list a few (scriptures) for you. 3 Nephi 20: 42, Christ speaks about the final gathering: *"For ye shall not go out with haste nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel shall be your rearward."* This is the Lord speaking, He's quoting Isaiah, but it is the Lord speaking.

D&C 63: 24: *"This is the will of the Lord your God concerning his saints, that they should assemble themselves together unto the land of Zion, not in haste, lest there should be confusion, which bringeth pestilence."* The instruction given in 1831 will apply when the Lord decides to gather again. Not in haste. Just as it did before, haste will bring pestilence to the land of gathering.

D&C 101: 68, *"Nevertheless, as I have said unto you in a former commandment, let not your gathering be in haste, nor by flight; but let all things be prepared before you. And in order that all things be prepared before you, observe the commandment which I have given concerning these things—Which saith, or teacheth, to purchase all the lands with money, which can be purchased for money."* There will ultimately be an excess from your smaller gatherings in the beginnings of this work. As a result of that excess, there can be a place prepared, but not in haste. Whether there will be a place prepared for you depends entirely on what you now do.

Going back to 3 Nephi 21:29, *"And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward."* It cannot be done in haste.

But look at what gets done if it is done in the Lord's way. D&C 133:25 is the description of the results once there are people who prepare. *"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 an 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,"* [In this context, it is referring to an ordinance] *"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 tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows."* (D&C 133: 25-34.)

Ephraim the proud, Ephraim the headstrong, Ephraim the rebellious. This same Ephraim must come back, must heal, must at last allow the Lord to rule over him; Ephraim must also rise up in order for this to happen. Not in haste, never in haste. "Crowned with glory," or in other words, with intelligence, or in other words, light and truth, or the knowledge of God. (See D&C 93: 36.) So that no one need tell you "Know ye the Lord," because you're all going to know Him, from the least to the greatest. (Jer. 31: 34.)

Going back to 3 Nephi 21: 22, Christ confirms some few Gentiles will be included in His Zion: *"But if they will repent [after first failing to receive what He offered them through Joseph] and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them,[meaning His real church, not an earthly institution] and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, [meaning an actual covenant He will establish by His word, which will require it to be honored] unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance;"* If some few Gentiles will repent and return, then they can likewise become the inheritors of this land. They can likewise be numbered among the citizens of Zion.

They are the Gentiles. They are Ephraim. They are you, if you will repent and return. *"And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in their midst."* (3 Ne. 21: 24-25.)

As used in other places, the words "powers of heaven" are talking about the angels. I explained this in the Orem talk on *Priesthood*. In this verse, however, "the power of heaven" is singular. This is not only because these participants in this gathering will be "one," but also because among them, when this scripture is fulfilled, will be our Lord Himself. And where He is, there is the Power of Heaven, and He is singular for He is One. *"And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people."*

When you gather to Zion and hear "this Gospel," it is the final stage in the Father's great work. This proclamation of the Gospel requires the audience to be holy to even begin teaching. In this verse "this gospel" includes what 3 Nephi could not record because of its sacred nature. (See, e.g., 3 Ne.17: 16; 19: 34; 26: 8-10.) At the time when Zion is established the very same Gospel in its fullness will be taught: *"Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem. Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name. Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward."* (3 Ne. 21: 26-29.)

Again and again in scripture, the notion that this work can be hastened is denounced. Again and again, the scriptures explain there must first be people prepared and then a place prepared. Again and again, it suggests that before we can gather we must have that heart, that mind, and understanding which can make us one. If we succeed in this, turn back and look at the results we will receive, D&C 45: 65-71, *"And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you. And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion."* [They won't come to it because it will be like Acts chapter 5. You cannot endure that environment if you're abiding a Telestial law. You would be consumed.] *"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 nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy."*

Think about what it will take to transplant various populations, from various locations (not in haste), with everything prepared in advance. In our current fragmented society, unless you're willing to experiment with your own effort to live the Law of Tithing, by organizing yourselves and governing yourselves, miscellaneous organized religious denominations will never make it, but the people of God will.

Doctrine and Covenants 65:5-6: *"Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth. Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, that thine enemies may be subdued; for thine is the honor, power and glory, forever and ever. Amen."*

If you read that, you know the Lord is going to come to His kingdom. He cannot come there unless it exists. If it doesn't exist, He cannot come. If He cannot come, then He delays the day of His coming. Generation after generation may come and go, and never accomplish what the Lord invites us to do, what Lord invites us to be. He is everlasting. We are not. He has length of days, but we do not. We tend to think we must act in haste because we live short lives. However the window is now open, and He can come. It can be in your lifetime, if you prepare.

You do not understand the restoration as restored through Joseph Smith yet. That foundation has been neglected and replaced by false traditions that make you fear and doubt the truth when it is declared to you. You have difficulty even imagining that what I declare to you could be true. You debate among yourselves whether I am right or wrong, but do not grasp that I am only declaring what was once delivered through Joseph to a generation which failed in their day. Now you are captured by the

traditions that came out of that failure. If you cannot set aside the captivity you are now under in the traditions handed down to you, how shall anyone be able to declare to you what remains to be restored? How shall you ever accept the greater light that needs to be revealed? How can you endure the Lord's presence if you cannot abide hearing even that portion given through Joseph already?

Moses 7: 60-65. This is the Lord speaking to Enoch in a vision. The account is recorded by Moses through revelation, but the account is a restoration of what was once revealed to, and written by Enoch. In the conversation the speaker is the Lord: *"And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah;"*

This is the Lord's oath to Enoch. He is going to come to the earth in the last days. *"And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood,"*

This is something that is possible now merely by you sitting at a keyboard. Today you can cause the truth to flood the earth. *"...to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, [meaning that a gathering is to take place of the prepared - to happen first] that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, [in this context, the tabernacle to be built is His house - this is second] and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, [Enoch's city returns- this is third] and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other;"*

This is to be the second return of Enoch, as well. First His people gather, then His house is built, then Enoch and his people return, *"And there shall be mine abode, [meaning Christ will come to dwell among them] and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest. And it came to pass that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years;"*

Zion must exist before these things can happen. These things will be delayed if Zion does not exist, but they will not be prevented. The Lord has decreed, by covenant, they will happen. The fact the Lord covenanted it will happen is no guarantee we will see it. Because we will only see it if we abide the conditions required of us. He can accomplish His work with us or with other people. There is no reason for us to decline, as they did in Joseph's day. I suppose we could choose envy, strife, lusts, ambitions and jarring contention.

This is the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 9: 21-23: *"And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness and the earth shall tremble with joy. And the general assembly of the church of the first-born shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with my father Enoch."*

The covenant to bring Zion originally promised to Adam, then to Enoch, was made again by God with Noah. The covenant requires some generation at last to rise up and vindicate. Whether that is you or whether you go to the grave without realizing it, is entirely up to you.

Now I need to read you something. This is Ezekiel 33:25-34:31:

*"Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land? Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land? Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence. For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of*

*her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through. Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed. Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.*

*And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them. AND the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?*

*And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.*

*Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD."*

I was required to read that, but I am not required, and will not comment. You wouldn't want to hear my comments anyway. But you should apply these verses to us today.

Zion has been the promise of the Lord since the beginning. Adam foretold it at the great meeting at Adam-ondi-Ahman. I've spoken of that previously, and I referred to that in the talk on *Covenants* I gave in Centerville. Read D&C 107: 56: *"And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation."*

Enoch foresaw it, he prophesied concerning it. I've read that to you again today. Noah had it revealed to him by a covenant with God, I read that to you today from the Joseph Smith translation of Genesis chapter 9. Moses was shown it would be accomplished, I read that to you earlier today.

Now I want to change your view of one scripture if I might. I want to take you to Luke chapter 9. You all think that the Mount of Transfiguration had a whole lot to do with Elijah, Moses, keys, and the Kirtland Temple. It didn't have anything to do with that, of course. It had to do with dispensational transfer and the Lord's endowment of authority. The head of the prior dispensation, Moses, and the one who closed the prior dispensation, John the Baptist, appeared to Christ on the Mount, to hand off to Him for the new dispensation He was to establish. Even the Lord needed instruction to fulfill His ministry.

But this event had another purpose as well. It fulfilled the promise Christ made to His disciples concerning Zion. The Mount of Transfiguration is also about the last-days' Zion, as it turns out. And I can prove it from your scriptures.

Christ, in Luke 9: 27-31, prophesies: *"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."* That is the latter-day kingdom. That is the one Christ said was not of this world, but which He will come and inherit at the end. So He says some of you who are alive today will not die until you see Zion. The gymnastics that have gone into trying to explain that by Catholic and Mormon commentators is rather amusing. Let's keep reading. *"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."*

He said some of those living then are not going to die until they see the Kingdom of God to be established at last upon the earth. Then He took those three up the Mount, and they see things not yet fully revealed to mankind. Now turn to D&C 63:20-21: *"Nevertheless, he that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth when the day of transfiguration shall come; When the earth shall be transfigured, even according to the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fulness ye have not yet received."* He vindicated His prophecy by showing them the latter-day Zion with the earth's entire transfiguration. That is His Kingdom. Therefore, there were those standing in that generation who did not die until they first saw the latter-day triumph of the Kingdom of God. He fulfilled His own word. Luke put the Lord's promise in His gospel immediately before His account of the Mount of Transfiguration for that reason.

It will happen! But it requires an awakening, and it requires an arising. It does not require a "Strongman" leader. A servant may well be necessary, but not a "Strongman" leader. It does not require a President. It requires your common consent by your deeds, not only to say, but to do.

It will not be achieved by some "Strongman" in control of a subordinate group. It will not be achieved through coercion. It will not be achieved by force. It will not be achieved because there is some big "Strongman" among you talking to God for you, as in the days of Moses. It will only happen if each of you are strengthened in your faith and know the Lord. It will be achieved by humility. It will be achieved through meekness. It will be achieved by love which is unfeigned; the real thing.

I occasionally teach a graduate level class on leadership. Leadership is a well-studied, well- documented, well-understood topic. Leadership is distinguished from mere management by behavior. Leaders have a set of things they do. The leadership class is designed to equip those who are not leaders with the ability to mimic leadership. That way everyone familiar with the material can inspire the misapprehension in others they are looking at a leader, rather than someone merely skilled in the art. I teach this class, but it is rather an obscenity to me. It grieves my spirit to teach this stuff. I try (although they won't pass the course if I don't give them the material) to give a little bit of my own view about how repugnant this imitative conduct is to me. Because really what we talk about is the ability to use studies and social sciences to figure out what appeals to people. You determine how you can mislead an audience into thinking something that is inauthentic, is in fact authentic. It is really using behavior and conduct as a form of sheep's clothing in order to conceal what is either altogether missing (sheep's clothing on the empty suit), or

alternatively, something that is opposite (sheep's clothing on the wolf). Today we manufacture leaders. Today we produce them as a result of a skill set, and they will mimic it, and they will appear as though they are something they are not. So when I say "love unfeigned," it cannot be feigned. There cannot be anything about the establishment of Zion that is inauthentic, illegitimate, or insincere.

You have to be your own judge about who you are and what you are. To the extent you think you can behave, and imitate and get into Zion, all you would do is jeopardize your life. You have to be it, you cannot feign it. If it is only feigned, it will not satisfy either you or the Lord. In the condition to be established there, as we have seen in Acts chapter 5, you would not live long if you fail to abide the law there.

Some of you read my blog and saw a post I put up about a talk given by Elder Oaks in the last General Conference. It's important to talk about because of the dynamic on public display.

When Joseph Smith established the Relief Society, he established an independently functioning women's organization the women controlled and ran. They were an auxiliary to the church to be sure, but it was a women's organization. Today, we like to say that it's the longest lived, oldest women's organization on the earth. That was true at one point, but it is no longer true. Through the process of correlation, the Relief Society, which once had its own budget, its own checkbook, its own control, its own magazine, its own lessons, and it was a women's run organization, no longer exists. Through correlation, the women's organization was brought under the authority of the general and local priesthood which now runs everything. As a result, the women lost their budget, their magazine, and control over the curriculum. In short, the women lost the Relief Society. It became an appendage to the correlated priestly control. As a result of it becoming an appendage to the correlated priesthood control, it was just a matter of time before some woman, as a Relief Society President, knowing what needs to be done, will want to do what it is necessary. Then some priesthood local authority, Bishop or Stake President, is going to say "no." He will say "no" for not a very good reason. Before long, there will be an accumulation of incident after incident, problem after problem, disappointment and frustration after disappointment and frustration, to the point where, in the natural chain of events, there will be women who say, "We've got a problem." The solution to the problem in the correlated church consists in obtaining possession of the right to be the one who asserts control. The women will want to be the one with the thumb and not the one under the thumb.

Since they are not allowed to govern themselves, the solution to the women's problem is to get control over the government. Relief Society is now a man's organization, populated by women. So what do the women say? They want control back. The way to get control back, since it's a correlated organization, and that means priesthood, is to get for themselves the priesthood. This is the only way women can get control back in the correlated church. The oblivious correlators do not recognize the problem is correlation itself. Elder Oaks' talk is the proposed solution. The solution to the problem, proposed in our last general conference doubles down on correlation. It is now the position of the church that key holders can take out a key, touch the disgruntled little lady<sup>21</sup> and say, "There you go little lady, now you have the authority from the key holder!" Voilà, Elder Oaks' talk has brilliantly solved the problem! It preserves the correlated church while removing any need to ordain women.

The brilliance of this position, it is supposed, is that the women agitating for ordination are now empowered by the authority of the priesthood and can do all kinds of priestly things. That is what Elder Oak's talk was about: giving the women of the LDS Church the authority of the Priesthood, with which they can go out and perform a function as if they were a priesthood holder. But it misses the point. It went right over their heads. I would say it gave Elder Oaks a haircut, but he's like my friend Jon here, follically challenged. So there's no hair to cut.

But the problem went right over the heads of those who do not recognize the real underlying issue. The problem is correlation itself. The LDS Church can now allow women to exercise the authority of priesthood, but that's not what they want. They would like to get back their organization. And I don't blame them. Looking at the problem from the women's perspective, the only cure is to have women bishops, women stake presidents and omen apostles. Elder Oaks' talk would allow that, so long as there remained a "key holder" above them to delegate to them. But since President Thomas Monson is regarded as the fully equipped key holder, I suppose he wears a belt full of them and can use them to touch the little ladies of the LDS Church and give them authority indeed.

If anyone decides to experiment on the words we found in the scripture today, and decide to try together to collect your own tithes and administer to the poor among you, I would suggest that not only should women have an equal voice, but that Joseph

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<sup>21</sup> In using "little lady," I am making the effort to capture in a phrase the vantage point I think the correlators occupy. This is, therefore, my attempt to reflect their view, and not my own.



Smith was really onto something. Even after the existence of the Bishop's Storehouse, the Relief Society was a lively partner in the process. I would suggest when you are "one," and there is needed relief, the women have a great role to fill.

When you think of "love unfeigned" in a religious sense, the failure to love indeed is primarily male. Forget the nonsense about who is greater and who is lesser. Look among whatever group you participate and ask, who is more compassionate, and who loves more, and then listen to her. Listen to all of the "hers," because when it comes to the home and the hearth, the needs of children, there is a competency among the women that is innate. Love can be feigned by the presiding authorities, but women generally have a difficult time pulling that kind of nonsense off. Men can pretend to many things.

I saw Bill Clinton at a funeral, laughing and carrying on until he saw the camera, and then he was right back to grieving. [Impersonating Bill Clinton's voice:] "Oh, I feel so bad." I think he feigned so well, that's why women like him. "I care." (imitating Bill Clinton's voice) [laughter]"I care a lot!...Is that a D cup?" [laughter] We will have to edit this. [laughter]<sup>22</sup>

There are one or two other little trifling matters I want to mention. In my view, the word and the title of "Prophet," is something hallowed and sacred. Like the name of the Son of God, it is something that ought not to be repeated too often. And I don't think you can take the measure of a man until he finally lays his life down. How he lays his life down matters in the aggregate, as well. I don't think someone who fares sumptuously and receives accolades during his lifetime is ever much in a position to understand the rigors of obeying God and the difficulties of being thought as merely a wild man, or preposterous, or everything that you are not. Read Paul's description of the prophets:

*-And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were astoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.//* (Heb. 11: 36-38.) If Joseph suffered prison and was slain for the faith he worked to restore, it takes more than we generally give to have the same faith as the ancients.

This is why I spoke of *Faith* in Idaho Falls. The conditions are the same in every dispensation.

So when we use the term "Prophet" casually, to me, it seems to take something that ought to be spoken of with a great deal of care and turns it into something like a mere calling card. I find it offensive. I think it cheapens something, and it troubles me.

When I think of the word "beloved," I think of it exclusively in the context of our Savior. "*This is my Beloved Son.*" The One doing the loving in that context is the Father. This makes the term all the more something to be used with extraordinary delicacy and reserve.

When you take those two words and you couple them together ("Beloved Prophet"), my sensibilities are such at this point in my life, that when you use the terms in that manner you are not appealing to me. Instead, you are repulsing me. You are not persuading me, you are offending me. You are not converting me, you are driving me away.

I don't say this to be critical of anyone. I say this because despite everything that I would like to be able to tolerate, despite my best efforts to try and make allowances, there are some things which when I hear, I simply cannot control. My repugnance at the notion that there is one who walks among us, who ought to be called "Beloved Prophet," is something that I just cannot control. I don't invite you to join me in that, but I want you to understand that in some respects we talk across a gulf. I say it in part to try to influence those who use the term to be more circumspect. I think the general population would be more persuaded by our missionaries if the terms were used with more caution. I also think applying extraordinary titles are less impressive than having a man preach the truth. If the content of his sermon is prophetic, then everyone can decide for themselves the measure of the messenger.

I think I understand who our Lord is, and why He was called "Beloved." I think I understand what it is that He requires of someone when they will hear His voice and do what He says. And I can think of nothing more superfluous or offensive than praise. I can think of nothing that would offend the Lord more than a mere man, inviting adoration. It is wrong. Adoration should be reserved for Christ, not dispensed to mere servants.

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<sup>22</sup> I should have edited this out, but decided there have been too many copies of the recording let out already, so it won't do any good to remove it. Now even readers can see my irreverence.

I don't want anything but your criticism. Don't think you have to defend me. I would rather hear what critics have to say. Not because what they say is true, but because it gives me an opportunity to understand what they fear in me. Much of the criticism leveled at me is because they fear I am something that I am not. Messages matter. Perhaps only messages matter. Messages can be pure, filled with light, and from heaven itself, even if the one who delivers it can never match the purity of the things taught.

We have so many pretenders. There's some guy, out in some new iteration of Zion. He's on YouTube giving his "School the Prophets" lectures. If you look at him, he looks like a general authority. He dresses like a general authority. I've had enough general authorities for a lifetime. I've seen enough "Strongmen" come and go for a lifetime. I am not anyone's "Strongman." I will never be anyone's "Strongman," period. It is repulsive to me. It is morally corrupt. In this world, as soon as you create an institution, as soon as you have anything other than people voluntarily working together towards an end, as soon as you have anything other than an idea, you have corruption.

Other than our Lord, all men need redemption. As soon as you turn the Gospel into something tangible, corporate or institutional, all that is needed to destroy the power of the Gospel is to get control of the institution. It does not require corrupt men, only false traditions. Only ideas can remain pure and holy here.

We can share Celestial ideals. We may even live Terrestrial laws. But we are weak, prone to err, and need the Lord to save us from our sins. If each of us requires redemption, then how can any of us redeem another? Christ may condescend to help us, but we should put nothing between Him and us. To keep ideas pure, they cannot become subject to an hierarchy, controlled by an institution, or embedded inside any organization in this world.

I will leave no seat for another man to occupy. I will leave no institution for another man to compromise. You will not have another person that says, "I sit in his seat." I won't even explain to you what seat it is I occupy. I want you to occupy a seat with God, not as my equal, but as my better if I can help you.

I think that there are many people here, and have been at every one of these lectures, who are literally better people than I am. I don't say that to feign something. There are some of you people who have lived lives of devotion, goodness, and honesty.

I came to the missionary discussions drunk. I grew up in Idaho. We were bored. The stuff you do when you're a bored young man... Well, you know, there it is. It required the Atlantic Ocean for my baptism and not a drop less. So when I preach these things, it does not mean I model these things. There is so much about this that for me is an aspiration and not a reality. I live in constant fear of my own failure. I don't think I belong up here talking to you about this stuff. I don't think I am the most worthy in the room. I can tell you that the Lord forgives sins, and therefore makes allowances for those who are inadequate to fulfill the roles He has for us. It is perhaps because I recognize, (1) I am not well qualified, and (2) I fear my own failure more than anything else, that perhaps He trusts me. He knows I'm not going to go out and freelance, and I have not, and I do not, and I will not.

I don't need or want or even welcome your admiration or your praise. You're probably more admirable than am I. I'm not telling you these things because I can do these things, I'm telling you these things because this is what the Lord would have us do. He has told us what was on His mind, and here it is, it's laid out for us. The question is not, "who is great and noble and going to stroll in to Zion?" The question is, "who is meek, who is humble, who is appreciative of their inadequacies, and who is willing to say, 'When I count up all my foibles and failings, I don't think I have any ground upon which to criticize anyone else.'"

I hope none of you think I've been criticizing Elder Oaks today. I am not. I'm explaining the dilemma that the church has created for itself. I have corresponded with Professor Oaks. He was the Trust Professor when I was in law school. He was the President of Brigham Young University, but when he crossed the street to the law school he became "Professor Oaks." Our Dean of the Law School was Rex Lee. There was "Dean Lee" and "Professor Oaks" back then. I have been taught by him. I've sat in a moot court room with him. I've heard him speak on a number of occasions. They still invite me up to general conference to attend a reception on Saturday afternoon because I'm a graduate of the Law School. I don't go now, but I did on several occasions in the past and fellowshiped with Elder Oaks.

I can imagine the horror if I went today. I went down to the Marriott Center, and one of the 70 was down there and introduced himself. I shook his hand and told him I how glad I was to be there. I didn't want to put him to any discomfort by telling him my name.

I do think, that if we are going to have Zion, that someone must warn you of the "Strongmen" who are ready to exploit your hope. Beware of the "Strongman." Watch your wallet when you encounter one. If you're a lady, watch your zipper or your buttons. I'm telling you "Strongmen" have an insatiable appetite for self-aggrandizement, and that's not me. I don't want that, and I don't welcome that. I don't advocate that, and I warn you against it. If someone came up and hit me in the head with a hammer, and six months from now I'm organizing a church asking you to give me women, and pay me your tithing, you remember what I said today, before they hit me in the head with a hammer. I'm intact mentally today. I may be crazy then. It's wrong to do the things that have been done, and it's wrong to preach and practice the things that "Strongmen" preach and practice in the name of the Lord.

It is right to expect Zion, but it is only right to expect Zion upon the conditions that are laid out for Zion, and on no other basis. It is right to expect Zion on the terms the Lord has ordained, and none other. You won't be able to cheat your way in there, and a group of people will not be able to accomplish it apart from the conditions the Lord has ordained.

So this brings us to the subject for the final third of this talk which is: Where is Zion? I imagine you think you are going to go back to Independence, Missouri and find a location there to build yourself a Zion. I'm going to talk about the "where" of it all next.

The subject of where Zion will be located always involves a lot of eagerness and a lot of confusion. I want to talk about the location of Zion in a general way.

The last day's Zion is connected with the rights of the fathers. I talked about covenants and the preliminaries in Centerville. If you review that material again you will see it is relevant to this topic. From Adam to Noah, and then to Melchizedek, there was an unbroken chain of the priesthood on the one hand, and father to son descent on the other hand. There was literally "a family of God" that began with Adam as the son of God, and it descended, generation after generation, until Melchizedek in an unbroken chain. But then there was an apostasy from that order. As a result of the apostasy, the chain was broken. Because the chain was broken, as explained in Centerville, it was the hope of Abraham to reconnect the chain. *"I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; [that is, the rights of the fathers] 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..."* [This doesn't make much sense, unless you comprehend what he wanted. You need to be convinced he was seeking the original order that began with Adam. He desired 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 foundation of the earth, down 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."* (Abr. 1: 2-3.)

This is what Abraham sought. He understood once the connection to the fathers was broken, he needed to turn his heart to the fathers. Even Abraham would be smitten with the curse of apostasy and separation if the link was not restored. Therefore, he sought for the "blessings of the fathers." Now in this late moment in time we live in, I don't think we can aspire to be one of the fathers.

They were established long ago. Today we ought to be turning our hearts to the fathers, and seeking to become connected, not as a father, but as a descendent - as a son or daughter. When Abraham reconnected to the fathers, Abraham could be the father of many nations. We are too late in history for that now. Abraham was able to perpetuate an unbroken chain from himself to Isaac, and Isaac in turn to Jacob, and Jacob in turn to Joseph, and Joseph in turn to Ephraim, to whom passed the right of the fathers, or the right of the firstborn. Even though Isaac wasn't firstborn, Jacob wasn't firstborn, Joseph wasn't firstborn, and Ephraim wasn't firstborn, they were all given the right of the firstborn because they received the inheritance by right, and it was conferred upon them by right. Therefore, they were the firstborn, or in other words they had the right of succession given to them. Five generations wherein the pattern through the faith of father Abraham, returned and was established on the earth again. The order actually endured anew for five more generations because of the faith of father Abraham.

Jacob gave a blessing to Joseph we find in Genesis 49: 26, *"The blessings of thy 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, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."*

As a consequence of that blessing, the latter day Zion will be brought through Joseph's descendants. He's the one upon whom the blessings devolved. Interestingly enough, he passed that on to Ephraim, not to Manasseh. Also interestingly, Manasseh was the lineage through which Lehi's family came. The prophecy I read you, about the blessings being conferred in the last days are to

come through the hand of Ephraim is found in D&C 133: 32-34. There's something afoot in these days involving Zion, and it is going to come through Joseph at *"the utmost bound of the everlasting hills."*

I don't know how many of you have spent much in time in Missouri, but the hills there aren't everlasting. They are almost so diminutive as to be undetectable. If you happen to be in a cornfield or around some trees, they are altogether gone. That terrain is not the location described by the blessing given by father Jacob to father Joseph.

Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 2: 2-3, *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."* In this context, "all nations" is not about Russia, and China, and Ethiopia, and Pakistan. "All nations," in this context, is all the 12 tribes of Israel. The "nations" are the 12 tribes of Israel. That's it, period. That's who is going to flow unto it. So you won't need an international airport. Nor will you need to host the Olympics. *"The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."*

The paths of God lie in the heavens. Therefore if you are going to learn to walk in his paths you are going to have to learn to walk in the heavens.

*"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."* The ensign that is prophesied to be established (Isa. 5: 6), in the context of that day, had reference to a zodiacal, a constellation, or a depiction of the heavens themselves. So when God promises an ensign is going to be reared, it will be to tell you about how to walk in the paths of God, through the heavens back to God's presence. This is talking about something very, very different than what most of us today would envision.

Zion is going to be a connection between heaven and earth, and at that place you will learn of the God of Jacob's ways. You will walk in His paths. Heaven and earth will be connected. The stairway connecting the two will be opened. The heavens and the earth will be reunited again. This is going to happen in the top of the mountains.

In March of 1831, there was a revelation given now found in D&C 49: 24-25, *"But before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed."*

There it is again: "the mountains." These were the prophecies at the beginning, when the restoration was starting to roll forth.

Joseph Smith said this, *"Our Western tribe of Indians are descendents from that Joseph that was sold to Egypt, and that the land of America is a promised land unto them, and unto it, all the tribes of Israel will come with as many of the Gentiles as shall comply with the requirements of the new covenant."* That is in a letter Joseph Smith wrote to N.C. Saxton found in *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, compiled by Dean C. Jesse, on page 273. He's talking about the Western tribes of Indians. This will make more sense as we get into this material. But it really did mean out West.

D&C 133: 26-34 talks about Zion in the Western mountains, the descendents of Joseph being responsible to build it, and the other Israelites coming there to be crowned by Ephraim. We read that a little while ago. I don't think am going to read it to you again, but you can read it.

There was a revelation given to send the first group of missionaries out to convert others. Surprisingly, the target was not what you would expect. It was a nearly preposterous proposition in that day to target Native Americans by the first missionaries. That was, however, exactly the case. Joseph Smith was called to do something very, very different than what ultimately wound up happening in the restoration. When the church was founded, and the Book of Mormon came forth, there was only a small band of believers. Yet this small group sent the first mission to go "among the Lamanites." In the circumstances it was the most unlikely of targets to pursue. It didn't have anything to do with finding more Gentiles. It didn't have anything to do with England, or Europe, or the Eastern seaboard. It was instead out among the Lamanites.

Doctrine and Covenants 28: 8-9, *"And now, behold, I say unto you that you shall go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them; and inasmuch as they receive thy teachings thou shalt cause my church to be established among them; and thou shalt have revelations, but write them not by way of commandment. And now, behold, I say unto you that it is not revealed, and no*

*man knoweth where the city Zion shall be built, but it shall be given hereafter. Behold, I say unto you that it shall be on the borders by the Lamanites."*

I read that exactly as your current version says: "on the borders by the Lamanites." If you go to the *Joseph Smith Papers* and look at the original Revelation, it was revised. What Joseph Smith originally received as a Revelation says, "it shall be among the Lamanites." Then in the handwriting of Sidney Rigdon, "among" is eliminated, and "on the borders by" is inserted in its place. So the first missionaries were sent to be "among" the Lamanites where the city of Zion would be located. This was an odd priority indeed for a fledgling church Joseph Smith founded in upstate New York.

Unhappily along the way, they managed to convert an entire congregation in Kirtland, Ohio who already knew that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel were faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the holy ghost. This body of converts knew you needed to have a New Testament Church and God was all about restoring the New Testament church. For them, "restorationism" was the key of the day, and they had everything they needed, except for one missing ingredient. The one missing ingredient was priesthood. When the missionaries arrived, the congregation learned Joseph Smith could furnish them that. They sidled up to Joseph Smith to bring him aboard their restorationist movement. This allowed them to become a priestly congregation. One of their ministers, Sidney Rigdon, came aboard as one of Mormonism's early converts. He first went to upstate New York and inspected Joseph Smith in person, to make sure he was a suitable Prophet for Sidney to tolerate. And he was. Sidney came aboard, and sooner or later, an organization began to emerge which took on the contours of the New Testament church. As it did, Sidney Rigdon became number two to Joseph, as First Counselor in the Presidency. And the Second Elder of the Church, Oliver Cowdrey, became less and less. So the restoration was off to the races in Kirtland, and strange things happen to distract us from the original mission. Today the mission among the Lamanites is hardly mentioned anymore.

On their way out however, the first missionaries did not set out for Independence, Missouri. There's a report in the *Painesville Telegraph* on December 7, 1830. The missionaries said they were headed for, and this is a quote from Oliver Cowdrey who was leading them, *"some unknown region, where God will provide a place for refuge for his people called the New Jerusalem."* The missionary said that they were, *"bound for the regions beyond the Mississippi, where he contemplates founding a city of refuge for his followers in converting the Indians under his prophetic authority."* (The "he" they are referring to in the interview, is Oliver Cowdrey, Second Elder of the Church.) Another edition of the *Painesville Telegraph* reported, *"The four persons who were here, have proceeded on their mission to the Indians, or Lamanites as they term them, in the far West, where they say a Prophet is to be raised up whom the tribes will believe."* That's a report on November 30, 1830.

Now I want to back up a little bit, and set the stage for what was happening in 1830. Because when you look at the micro history of the Restoration, against the macro history of the continent, there's a fit between larger events and the church.

Joseph Smith was born in 1805. Two years earlier, in 1803, we have the Louisiana Purchase. We fought a war in 1812, and our enemies from Great Britain managed to co-opt the Indian tribes as their ally in the war of 1812. We fought Great Britain back in 1776, then again in 1812. In 1812 they managed to persuade the Indian tribes to come aboard with them and fight. So Americans were fighting Indians in addition to the Brits. We decided we can't have that.

On September 21, 1823, through the night to September 22, the angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith. By June of the next year (1824), the Rev. Isaac McCoy was in Washington D.C. lobbying for a new law to be adopted. He would stay, lobby, irritate, agitate, persuade and finally convince Congress there needed to be something done to prevent anything like the Indian alliance with a foreign power from ever threatening the United States again. We've learned by sad experience, that when Indians get a foreign power, as they are pleased to call it, they will immediately begin to excise Americans.

So Isaac McCoy made his case. In April 1830, the church was organized. Six weeks later, after the organization of the church, the Indian Removal Act was passed in May 1830. The work that the Rev. McCoy undertook had borne fruit. With the adoption of the Indian Removal Act, all Indians inside the borders of the United States (as it was then configured), were forcibly removed from the Eastern

United States and placed into part of the property purchased in the Louisiana Purchase. This area was given the name "the Indian Territory." All Indians were relocated west of Missouri, on a north-south line, that divided the United States from Indian territory.

Just as the mission among the Lamanites began, President Andrew Jackson, enforcing the law adopted in 1830, was forcibly moving all the Indians. Remember the Trail of Tears and all the rest of that? This was part of the Indian Relocation Act. Have you asked yourself why the Delaware wound up living in the Louisiana Purchase area?

President Andrew Jackson was relocating all Indians to just over the western border of the Missouri line. Therefore, at that moment in time, when the first four missionaries left on their mission, if they were going to locate any of the American Indians, they had to go to Missouri. That was where to encounter them. There was no other choice, you had to go there.

As it turned out, the location of Independence, Missouri was exactly in the middle of the areas allocated to the different Indian tribes. Independence was at the center of the land adjacent to the place the Indians were located. It also happened to be the trailhead for the only trail that came out West, the Santa Fe Trail. This was the only trail west from Missouri to the Pacific.

At the moment when the first missionaries went out, Independence was the center of the relocated Indians. As for the Delawares, we have a state on the East Coast named after their tribe. But the tribe was located at that time on the other side of Missouri, in the Louisiana Purchase property. Parley Pratt, as one of the first missionaries, went and preached to the Delawares. Have you ever scratched your head and wondered what it was the Delaware were doing on the other side of Missouri's Western boundary? Chief Anderson (that was his American name) Chief Anderson of the Delaware tribe was taught by Parley Pratt. Parley gave him a Book of Mormon. You've read about that in *The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*.

At the time the Indian agent was Richard W. Cummins. The Indian agent forced the missionaries to leave the Indian territory. In fact he threatened to take them to Fort Leavenworth and incarcerate them if they didn't leave the Indian territory.

Delilah McCoy Likens, was the daughter of the Rev. Isaac McCoy. This was the same Isaac McCoy who was responsible for the adoption of the Indian Relocation Act. Delilah was happy to inform her father in a letter she wrote on July 31, 1831 of the following. *"The Mormonites are about to take the country. They are preaching and baptizing through the country, and are trying to proceed West to find the new Jerusalem, which they say is toward the Rocky Mountains. The agent has driven them off this side of the line and forbids their crossing it."*

It was impossible because of the law, the agents, the circumstances, and the threat of arrest for "Mormonite" missionaries to get any closer to the Indians than Independence, Missouri. If they stepped across the boundary they would have been arrested and sent to Fort Leavenworth.

Rev. Isaac McCoy was quoted in the daily *Missouri Republican*, November 28, 1833 as saying: *"The Mormons as I suppose from information, came here so ignorant of laws regulating intercourse with the Indian tribes, that they expected to pass on into the Indian Territory, procure lands of the Indians, aid them and adopting habits of civilization, and attach them to their party. At the western line of Missouri they were arrested by the proper authorities of government."*

It becomes increasingly clear the original target of the first missionary effort had nothing to do with stopping at Independence, Missouri. It had a great deal to do with going into the western mountains, the Rocky Mountains, and establishing Zion. But the good Rev. Isaac McCoy, the father of the Indian Relocation Act, whose daughter was there on the scene married to a minister, combined to stop the missionaries. All these parties were motivated by false religious ideals. Of course, both then and now, the best way to oppose Zion is always to have false religious ideas. The required false religionists were right on the spot at the very moment when, at its incipient stage, under the guidance of Joseph Smith, the first effort began to establish the New Jerusalem. They couldn't accomplish it then.

Joseph was told that when they located in Kirtland that it would be temporary. When they went out and found the "center place," it too proved only temporary. Given all the legal entanglements and prohibitions, Independence became as close as you could get. They established a trading post, where they would trade with the Indians. Their idea, since they couldn't go into the Indian Territories to proselytize them, was to establish a trading post and trade fairly with the Indians who came over the border. Since the missionaries could not go to them, they would entice the Indians to come to be taught. They would visit the Mormonite trading post to get a fair price, be treated fairly, and be converted. As it turned out, not much could be done.

Later, in January 1841, in Nauvoo, another potential location for Zion was identified. The Lord required a Temple to be built. It was to be constructed in Nauvoo. Once again the Lord offered to establish a protected place for the Saints to gather. In the revelation about constructing the temple in Nauvoo, the Lord states: *"And ye shall build it on the place where you have contemplated building it, for that is the spot which I have chosen for you to build it. If ye labor with all your might, I will consecrate that spot that*

*it shall be made holy. And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place."* (D&C 124: 43-45.)

The Nauvoo temple was another chance to get what was lost before in Kirtland. It was a chance to get what was lost in Missouri. An offer from God to have a place where He would come to dwell with this people. It would become a place of refuge, preserved and protected by the power of God. This was another chance for the Saints. Essentially the Lord said, "Are you going to build the temple in Nauvoo? I'll command you to do that. If you build it, I'll give you sufficient time within which to do it. And if you do it, I'll consecrate that spot. And I will make that spot holy to you. And I will make it so that you cannot be moved out of that spot by your enemies. And I will come there and I will restore to you what has been lost: the fullness. I will give that to you, and I will do it in Nauvoo." But again, like the earlier opportunities, it didn't happen. Then the flow of events took over, the Saints were expelled again, and the church relocated to establish Salt Lake City.

I want to read to you from Joseph Smith's history, at the very end of his life on Saturday, June 22, 1844 five days before he would be slain. You can read this in *The Documented History of the Church*, volume 6, page 547. *"Hyrum came out of the mansion and gave his hand to Reynolds Cahoon, at the same time saying, 'The company of men are seeking to kill my brother Joseph, and the Lord has warned him to flee to the Rocky Mountains to save his life. Goodbye brother Cahoon, we shall see you again.' In a few minutes afterward Joseph came from his family, his tears were flowing fast. He held a handkerchief to his face, following Brother Hyrum without uttering a word."* So Joseph received a revelation on June 22, 1844 telling him to go to the Rocky Mountains. In June 1844 there were no more Indians in the area around Independence. They left. The location in 1831 was temporary, the circumstances were fluid, and by 1844 things had changed.

When we have an opportunity to accomplish something with the approval of the Lord, we need to do our part. The Lord is going to be the one who ultimately decides where the actual accomplishment will take place. When it takes place, it's going to be in the mountains, and you need not guess which mountains. The mountains are going to be out here in the West. It will be exactly where the first missionaries were sent. They were stopped by the confluence of the law, hostile society, and the management of the Indian tribes in 1831. When they tried to cross and go west, they were threatened with arrest. They decided if they couldn't go west to find the location for a New Jerusalem, they would do what they could as close to their target as they could get. They made the practical decision to take the local, relocated Indians, and establish Zion right there on that spot.

The Lord gave a series of Revelations in which He essentially said, "If you can do that, then do that. And that is acceptable to me and that will be Zion. Go to and have at it." When they failed He essentially said: "Here is why you didn't pull it off: your jarrings, your envies, your lusts, your contentions, that's why you didn't pull it off." But He has also said, in one of those extraordinarily clever things the Lord does throughout history: "Zion will not be moved out of its place."

So if Zion is not to be moved, where is it? Oh I know! I got the answer! The answer is - What is Independence, Missouri. That's a daily double, and Alex Trebek is telling me I'm wrong. I just lost everything on a bet.

Oh I know! It's Nauvoo, and it's Nauvoo because the Lord changed His mind, and said He would accept Nauvoo as a substitute Zion and not to move the Saints out of that place if they would do what He said. Wrong again!

"Zion will not be moved out of its place," which place you know not yet. But Joseph knew it was in the Rocky Mountains and he intend to go there. The Lord knew it was in the Rocky Mountains when He revealed it to Isaiah for his prophecy. And father Jacob knew it when he was prophesying and blessing his son Joseph.

Now let me give the Lord the latitude the Lord is entitled to have, because of the statement Joseph Smith made. Joseph said, *"You know there has been great discussion in relation to Zion—where it is, and where the gathering of the dispensation is, and which I am now going to tell you. The prophets have spoken and written upon it; but I will make a proclamation that will cover a broader ground. The whole of America is Zion itself from north to south, and is described by the Prophets, who declare that it is the Zion where the mountain of the Lord should be, and that it should be in the center of the land. When Elders shall take up and examine the old prophecies in the Bible, they will see it."* (TPJS, p. 362.)

So the Lord says, "Yes, you can build it in Missouri, that's copacetic. Go for it my son!" Time and time again, the location of Zion is approved by the Lord in different spots, precisely because the entirety of North and South America would be an acceptable place to build Zion. But within those general geographical parameters, it must be in the mountains. It must be among the natives who are originally here. It must be established under the guidance of someone who hails from both the tribe of Ephraim, and is a descendent of Jesse. You can read that in the Doctrine and Covenants. (D&C 133: 6.) It will surely come.

There is absolutely no reason for the Lord to tell you another place to go and pollute, if you don't rise up and bring within you the worthiness necessary, to turn at last, a place into the New Jerusalem.

To a place where the Lord can come and dwell among you. A place where you can be of one heart, where you can be of one mind, where there are no poor among you, and where you have all things in common. Where you meet the requirements to meet with Him. There is no reason to assemble you together at any spot until then. You can do everything that needs to be done preliminarily, wherever you dwell at present. You can prepare your hearts and you can prepare your minds and can begin now to understand the difficulties. Instead of judging the failures from before, you can start to walk in the path they attempted. Then instead of judging, you can empathize with their failures. You will come to some appreciation for the fact that it is not going to be any easier for you than it was for them. You can find out what they learned when they attempted it.

The fact of the matter is we all tend to want that "Strongman" We want that ruler, that presiding authority. We tend to want someone to take control, precisely because we don't want to go through the effort involved in common consent, and required for the common sense of governing ourselves. It is just so much easier to pay, and pray, and obey, than it is to go, do, and rise up, to be one with our Lord and our God.

Now we're out of time. There was one other thing I was going to do, but we could do that happily at any moment. I want to end this by bearing testimony to you. I use the scriptures because the scriptures are the standard by which you should judge the truth. I use the scriptures because they say the things the Lord would want to have said right now today. I don't need to appeal to having any authority, because I can read to you the scriptures and point you to the things that have already been revealed. I know these things are true. You would not believe me if I told you all I know. It is not necessary for you to do so. If the words I speak to not convince you, let the scriptures convince you. If the words in the scriptures don't convince you, then get on your knees and pray and ask God, who giveth to all men liberally. (James 1: 5.) Do the same thing Joseph did that started the ball rolling.

Zion will come. Whether it comes in your day or not is entirely dependent upon you. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





## Christ: The Prototype of the Saved Man

Denver Snuffer 6-28-14

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Lecture 7 Ephraim, Utah

The topic today is Christ. In the next talk we'll be addressing the subject of coming to Christ, but in this talk today, it is about Christ Himself. You know, very often it is easy to summon confidence in the Lord when something happens in your life to remind you. When some event gives you evidence He exists. For that moment you briefly feel close to Him. But as soon as the cares and troubles of this world interfere, the moment passes, and you begin wondering, "Is it all true? Am I just believing a myth?"

Jesus Christ came into the world unexpected, unannounced by men, unanticipated by His generation, but expected and announced by heaven. There were signs in heaven, but men were largely oblivious. When the shepherds keeping watch over the flocks by night were interrupted,<sup>23</sup> it was not by an earthly herald. There was none among men. It was from beyond the veil. The Savior crept into the world with heaven noticing, but precious few of us paying attention to what was afoot.

It is so easy to overlook Him because of the cares of the world. I want to assure you He is real. He exists. He was a man, every bit a man as any of us. He had flesh, He had blood, He dwelt among us. Don't doubt that. For the purposes of this talk, trust in Him, believe in Him, have confidence in His existence.

If I can help you better envision our Lord, let me describe His characteristics. Our Lord was and is, affable, but He is not gregarious. He was approachable, and He is approachable and is not aloof. He is patient. He is willing to guide and He is willing to teach. He is intelligent but He not overbearing. He is humble in His demeanor, even though His power is undeniable. He is therefore, both a Lamb and a Lion.

I want you to keep three truths about Him in your mind as we begin today. Those truths are:

- He is quick to forgive sin,
- He allows all to come unto Him,
- and He is no respecter of persons.

In most cases it is our disrespect for ourselves that impedes coming to Him. We tend to think we aren't good enough. However, because He is quick to forgive sins, it really doesn't matter if you are not good enough. One of the first orders of business when you come into His presence is that He forgives you. He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance,<sup>24</sup> but He has the capacity and the ability to forgive sin. Therefore although your sins may be as scarlet, He can, He will and He does, make you white as snow,<sup>25</sup> no longer accountable for your limitations. Therefore you needn't fear, but you can approach boldly, our Lord.<sup>26</sup> So with that prelude, let us begin:

It was a little over 40 years ago when I finally began to take seriously, the material offered by the missionaries. They were trying to convert me to this Mormon oddity. But I'd grown up near Mormons in Idaho, and knew their church was populated by 'nut jobs.' When I finally took them seriously, I did so hesitatingly. It required a lot for me to pray about whether or not this stuff I had been hearing was true. I spent about nine months before this getting visited, pamphleted, and filmstriped without taking it seriously. I had already heard a lot of the message the missionaries wanted to deliver while giving very little regard to the content. It didn't persuade me because I wasn't particularly interested. I was merely polite, but I had heard a lot.

When I finally got around to praying about it, I had in my possession the personal journal written by the fellow who first spoke up defending Mormonism in a night class.<sup>27</sup> He wanted me to read about his conversion because in his journal he wrote his testimony.

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<sup>23</sup> Luke 2: 8-14.

<sup>24</sup> D&C 1: 31.

<sup>25</sup> Isa. 1: 18.

<sup>26</sup> Heb. 4: 16.

<sup>27</sup> I have previously identified him as Steve Klaproth.

I was in the military at the time, and Steve's journal recorded how he was converted while serving in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. As I recall, he hadn't been in Vietnam proper, but in neighboring Cambodia. He had been in an outpost under fire at the time he got a testimony. It happened on the night of a firefight while he was on the perimeter praying to know if *the Book of Mormon* was true.

I had this journal, was alone in the military barracks at night, reading it. I felt again inclined to pray and ask if this stuff the Mormons were preaching was true. So I knelt, I prayed, and then I got up from the prayer hoping for an answer.

There was no pillar of fire,<sup>28</sup> and there was no conduit into heaven.<sup>29</sup> In fact it was uneventful at the moment. I sat on the bed and I thought about what the missionaries had taught. They claimed it was all true. I recalled the verses they encouraged me to read.

Back in those days, there were quite a few Bible verses used by the missionaries. If you haven't read *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* by LeGrand Richards, you should. He was at one time the Presiding Bishop of the Church, then later a member of the Quorum of the 12. His book, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* was developed while he was a mission president as a way to introduce and discuss systematically the Mormon faith. The missionary discussions in those days were derived from *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, the title of which is taken from a verse in Isaiah.<sup>30</sup> If you read *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, you essentially get the missionary program of the Church from those days, and you will see the format I was taught.

After praying and nothing happened, I sat and contemplated what the missionaries had taught. I first concluded Joseph Smith couldn't be a prophet, because there weren't going to be any more prophets. I mean such things were from the Bible-era! That is not the program today, that doesn't happen anymore.

As I thought about my conclusion a verse and a question came to mind. The verse was, "*By their fruits ye shall know them*," from the New Testament.<sup>31</sup> The question was, "Well, if there is a test to apply, in order to determine whether or not he was a prophet, the presence of the test suggests the possibility of a prophet." I thought that an interesting point. Why would you have a test if there is not going to be another prophet? So, "*By their fruits you shall know them*," suggests the possibility, that there will, in fact, be someone you better apply that test to, someone for whom the test will become both relevant and important. So I couldn't categorically dismiss Joseph Smith as a prophet for the reason there absolutely could never be more. Therefore, I needed to ask the next question: What are Joseph's fruits?

I had no universe to draw from to apply the test of Joseph Smith's fruits, other than the missionaries teaching me, and the families in whose houses I had been taught. You have to understand, at the time I was young, still a teenager. I sat in a barracks trying to figure this out. Therefore I had to apply the "fruits test" to what little sampling I had. Well, those missionaries were so earnest, and they were my age. They were giving up two years of their lives. I was serving in the military, but they were serving in a church organization without being paid.

They had the same military haircut I had. They had a disciplined life. They didn't smoke and they didn't drink, and I couldn't say that at the time about me, or my military associates. I could tell the difference between the lives of these young men, and the lives of those I served with and my own life. I also could see a difference between the families whose houses I had been taught in, and the families I knew while growing up.

While I had a wonderful family growing up, others I knew did not. I am the son of a man I regard as heroic. He was kind and intelligent, a good example his entire life. My father was really the exception, and not the rule, among my friends. My childhood friend's families included abusers and alcoholics, and a variety of other shortcomings. The rule was to expect poor parents and families in disorder, and the exception was my family. But I saw no problems in any of the Mormon families whose houses I had visited.

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<sup>28</sup> JS-H 1: 16.

<sup>29</sup> JS-H 1: 30, 43.

<sup>30</sup> Isa. 29: 14.

<sup>31</sup> Matt. 7: 15-16.

So my conclusion was that there is some good fruit from Joseph Smith. I had no idea how to apply the standard and measure "fruit," but there was some evidence I thought might qualify as fruit. It suggested Joseph Smith had a positive effect on people's lives.

Then I went on to think, Wait a minute! The last verse of the New Testament says you can't add to the Bible.<sup>32</sup> And Joseph Smith added a whole lot to the Bible. When the Mormons carry their Scriptures, they bring the Bible, and then they bring this other thing that's almost the same size! Joseph added that in violation of this warning, so there's something wrong with that.

I got the verse out, discovered it was two verses, looked at them and thought about it. What it became apparent to me was it does not say God can't add more scripture whenever God chooses to do so. It only says man is not supposed to do this. So if God, using Joseph, chose to add, then He certainly has an opening to do that.

I give an account of the evening I spent in the barracks in *The Second Comforter*, in vignettes at the start of several chapters.

I spent a little over two hours following the prayer sitting on the bed rehearsing my doubts, while each of them seemed to have an answer in the scriptures. I went through doubt and question, after doubt and question. But each time there was an answer in the scriptures for every doubt, every apprehension, every question.

My final question was, "How do I even know there is a God? I could be spending this whole wasted effort, and there isn't even any one up there!" As soon as I finished the thought, the response came to me: "Who do you think you've been talking to for the last two hours?" It was a startling idea and came with such clarity it took me by surprise.

This brings up a matter of weakness I need to confess. The account in *The Second Comforter* misquotes God. Because the question He posed, and I can still remember it distinctly, was "Who do you think you've been talking to for the last two hours?" I was so apprehensive and weak willed when I submitted the first book I'd ever written to a publisher that when they wanted to correct the English and change "to" to "with" I let them. It was better grammar. Therefore when you read the account in *The Second Comforter*, the question that comes into my mind is: "Who do you think you have been talking with these last two hours?"

The truth of that night shows God speaks to us in our own language, in our own tongue, according to our understanding. He doesn't use an editor. He talks to us the way we talk. If I ever do a third edition of *The Second Comforter*, I now have the confidence and the resignation to just tell the truth. I no longer fear what others think. I don't care if there is a modern Simons Ryder<sup>33</sup> who says, "Well it can't be God, because He would know better than to use incorrect grammar."

I don't care about that anymore. I am past the point where I fear what men think. I'm past the point where I worry about doubts. I'm simply willing to declare to you what I know to be true, and then leave it to you. Frankly, when I tell you the truth, you become accountable for your reaction.

But having confessed that weakness, and correcting the record of *The Second Comforter* account, let me return to that evening. The question posed the possibility I had received an answer from God. It was startling. That response meant God was even willing to talk to an obscure guy, sitting in a barracks in New Hampshire, a long way from where he grew up, on the question of whether Joseph Smith was a prophet, and therefore Mormonism was true.

Reflecting on the response I realized if I acted on it, becoming a Mormon would cost me every childhood friend I had, and every friend I had in the military at the time. About the only thing my friends and I had in common were beer and pizza. It was going to require my life to change. However, if I had not acted on the answer, I don't think any of the good that followed could have happened.

At the moment I had an answer from God, only the thinnest of threads existed for me to believe in the restoration of the Gospel, in *the Book of Mormon*, and in God's willingness to speak. It had all of the substance of a spider's web, easily broken. The only way I could hold onto that was to have faith and to trust it. And so I did.

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<sup>32</sup> Revelation 22: 18-19.

<sup>33</sup> He was the man whose name was misspelled in a revelation dictated by Joseph Smith. He lost faith in the restoration because of the misspelling.

But having faith and trusting this was an answer from God required me to act. I was going to have to follow through and do something because of the answer. I needed to be baptized. This, in turn, meant I was going to join a group of religious eccentrics I had grown up dismissing. I was going to have to become one of them, with all the insecurity of whether I could measure up to being like them.

With self-doubt about my own strength as a worthy convert to this new religion, I nevertheless had faith God had spoken, and that imposed an obligation; and so I acted. When I acted and was baptized, it was as if a light had suddenly been turned on in my life. Everything changed. From that moment until now, everything has been different.

It has not been a struggle for me to live the life of a Latter-day Saint. It has not been a struggle to be a disciple of Christ. My life has been easier as a disciple of the Lord than it had been as a godless Gentile. It has been more fun to live a life of faith than it was to hang with schlocks, getting drunk and behaving stupidly. I laugh as much now as I did then, except what I'm laughing at does not cause someone else pain. Now it is genuinely funny stuff. I do have a perverse sense of humor, I have to tell you that. I even find a great deal of humor in Mormonism. Not the faith, but in the various contortions of those who think they believe it.

So, after two hours of debating whether Mormonism was true I had my first encounter with God. Those first prayerful hours were spent going through answers from God found in the scriptures. Keep that always in mind.

On the day the Lord was resurrected, Luke tells us how He spent the better part of that day. Beginning at Luke 24: 13 we read He spent the day talking to two people while walking beside them to the village of Emmaus. These two were talking between themselves about the things they saw in the preceding days. While walking, *"Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"*

This is the Lord, and although they didn't recognize or apparently know Him, He surely knew them. He didn't want them to recognize Him, so they did not.

This incident tells a great deal about our Lord. He sidles up beside them, walks with them, and asks, "What are you talking about?" as if He didn't know. You see how gently He inserts Himself into the conversation. You see how unwilling He is to come and pontificate. You see how amenable, and how approachable, and how utterly unpretentious our Lord is.

He asks; *"What manner of communications are these?"* That produces almost a rebuke from Cleopas. *"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass therein these days?"* Are you utterly ignorant of what's been happening here? Are you inattentive? Or are you just a new stranger? He may have even bristled a little when He asked the question, as if, this guy who had been in this area, during these few days, had been so inattentive to the significance of the man who just died, that Cleopas took some umbrage.

Now read the Lord's mild reply. He asks, *"What things?"* as if He hadn't lived them, as if He hadn't accomplished them.

*"And they,"* notice now it is in the plural, it is no longer just Cleopas, but it is both of them who start explaining to Him about this *"Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."* So essentially they were acknowledging Him, as at least a prophet.

*"And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not."* So they thought Him a prophet, and hoped He was something more. They "trusted that it should have been Him who would redeem Israel." This was the day of His resurrection and they've heard rumors from women He was risen. But these were, first of all, merely rumors, and second of all, they were rumors attributable to women, and we all know that women are hysterical,<sup>34</sup> and therefore require

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<sup>34</sup> This is an example of my twisted sense of humor. I tend to see humor in cultural oddities like this and hope, by pointing them out in a funny way to persuade people to think about them more carefully. Some times we are serious about foolish things. Foolish things deserve to be laughed at.

hysterectomies in order to rein them in, and turn them into something credible and believable. I put a comment up on the blog a few days ago about women as witnesses, and this is a reflection of that same phenomenon. Doubt is easier when the source of the information is the testimony of a woman, even though it ought not be so.

Now ask yourself: if you trusted this was Him who should have redeemed Israel, did He? Did He redeem Israel? He came, He taught, He submitted, He was killed, and it was three days since. In that circumstance, even with the rumors from the women, could you see that He had redeemed Israel? If you were part of the population, in that group, on that day, sitting in that environment, how would you answer the question of whether He redeemed Israel? The Romans were still there, Annas and Caiaphas were still faring sumptuously, Christ was killed, His disciples had been scattered, so what evidence did they have He had redeemed Israel. There were many things to suggest the contrary. (Later, even after His disciples see Him, they would return to their everyday labor.) Did He redeem Israel? Could you have seen it then? When it was happening before the eyes of these disciples, they could not see it. They could not comprehend how it had taken place.

Because you sing on Sundays the hymn "*Redeemer of Israel*" you have confidence you know what Christ accomplished. He IS the Redeemer. You proclaim this as if it were so very apparent. It is no more apparent in this account in Luke that the redemption of Israel had been accomplished, than it is apparent to you what God is doing now, today. You do not even hear what is now sounding in your own ears.

He came and He redeemed Israel, and all the world missed it! Even His closest disciples doubted what had happened. It would be hundreds of years before the world would come around to acknowledge Him. By the time the world would come around to acknowledge Him, what was then left was inadequate to still redeem.

The day of salvation appears tenuously, almost as gossamer as a spider web, and if you don't lay hold of it, it is lost. Then generations can come and go while singing hymns to the pride of their ancestry and the greatness of their religion, while they all go to hell. Because when the Lord sets His hand, He sets it exactly the same way every time. It always requires faith to come aboard, and requires faith to even see it is underway. The Lord does not work except by faith.<sup>35</sup>

*"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"* They and you do not understand. You do not understand because the prophets have said this is exactly what our Lord would do.

Should not Christ have suffered? Should not He have come in apparent weakness and vulnerability? Should not He have come in the very manner in which He appeared, and then to have suffered just as the prophecies foretold? Is not the pattern always the same? Does not God manifest Himself to the world through the weak things first?<sup>36</sup>

*"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."* Right here is the pattern followed in the New Testament Gospels framework. Christ explained how to understand His ministry. You use the scriptures and the prophets to understand how the mundane events fit the foretold glory. He uses such small means they are unseen except through faith. Only when the small means accomplish what God foretold are they mighty to save. Only the scriptures are able to define what matters and how God's hand is moving to fulfill His promises.

It was this framework later used by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John when composing their testimonies of Christ. They also wove into their record how Christ fulfilled the prophecies. In each of the Four Gospels there is a format that mirrors what the Lord did as He spoke on the road to Emmaus with these two disciples. He proved Christ came and suffered as He ought to have done, because all the prophets were fulfilled in Him. Therefore He opened unto them Scriptures that they might understand.

Our Lord could have testified of Himself by revealing 10,000 new truths! Our Lord could have disclosed and preached and delivered practically any new content He chose to deliver! But instead our Lord expounded the scriptures concerning Him! That should tell you something about how He prefers for us to learn the truth.

When the Lord first spoke to me, He expounded the scriptures about the Restoration. When He appeared on the day of His resurrection, His visit with everyone that day but these two on the Road to Emmaus, was brief, even perfunctory, and included only a small amount of information. Essentially, He proved He had risen. But here we read of the Lord taking hours, walking and

<sup>35</sup> See Ether 12: 10-12.

<sup>36</sup> D&C 1: 18-19.

talking, opening up in a discourse in which *"he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."* They did not recognize who He was, but they were moved by the content of His sermon.

When they arrived at Emmaus, He came in because they asked Him to stay. If they had not asked, He would have passed by. That also tells you something important about our Lord. He does not force Himself upon you. You must invite.

Well, you can read the rest of the account in Luke's chapter. But at the end of this encounter, *"they said to one another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"* It was the exposition of the scriptures that let them know.

I do not believe it is necessary to reveal any new thing in order to be able to teach in a way that opens eyes to everything the Lord has, and is doing, apart from expounding the Scriptures. He didn't think it was necessary either.

Look at the Lord's first appearance to Joseph Smith. Go to verse 19 of the Joseph Smith History and read the words the Lord speaks to Joseph. He quotes or paraphrases Isaiah, Jeremiah and Paul. In just one short run-on sentence, the Lord talks about the doctrines being taught for commandments were the doctrines of men, *"they have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof, they draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me."* You see, once again when He appears to Joseph in the First Vision, our Lord is expounding the scriptures.

He picks out from the language of His prophets phrasing to tell Joseph: This is the condition in which you find yourself. This is what the prophets were speaking about. This is when mankind would search the earth and not find the word of God.<sup>37</sup>

When Moroni came to visit with Joseph Smith, what did he do with Joseph? Remember this was to train Joseph for the ministry he was about to begin. Moroni quoted prophecies from Malachi, Isaiah, Peter, and Joel.

It took a long time for me to recognize the pattern. But now I know the pattern in which the Lord reveals and discusses new truth is the same in every generation.<sup>38</sup> So when He came in answer to prayer and spoke to me sitting in the barracks, despite the fact there were no fireworks, no pillar of fire, no shining man in a robe, He used the scriptures and expounded them to increase my understanding. I grew to understand the Lord is indeed the same yesterday, today and forever. His path is straight and His course is one eternal round.<sup>39</sup> Therefore today I want to use scriptures and the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith to bear testimony of who our Lord is, and how significant His example is for us. I've told you previously in Idaho Falls that *The Lectures on Faith* are scripture. They were adopted as scripture by the church, and we covered that before. This is from the 7th Lecture on Faith, paragraph 9, about Christ:

*"Where shall we find a saved being? for if we can find a saved being, we may ascertain without much difficulty what all others must be in order to be saved. We think that it will not be a matter of dispute, that two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved; for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the salvation of every creature which will be saved; and if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be, or else not be saved. We ask, then, where is the prototype? or where is the saved being? We conclude, as to the answer of this question, there will be no dispute among those who believe the bible, that it is Christ: all will agree in this, that he is the prototype or standard of salvation; or, in other words, that he is a saved being. And if we should continue our interrogation, and ask how it is that he is saved? the answer would be—because he is a just and holy being; and if he were anything different from what he is he would not be saved; for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else; for if it were possible for him to change, in the least degree, so sure he would fail of salvation and lose all his dominion, power, authority and glory, which constitute salvation; for salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possesses and in nothing else; and no being can possess it but himself or one like him."*

When you read this language do not succumb to the temptation to gloss over it. Do not think salvation consists of Christ magically applying 'fairy dust' to make us like Him. If Christ could "make" us like Him that would be Luciferian.<sup>40</sup> It would abrogate free

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<sup>37</sup> Amos 8: 11-12.

<sup>38</sup> See also 3 Ne. 23: 14.

<sup>39</sup> Alma 37: 12.

<sup>40</sup> Moses 4: 1.

will. It would save without respecting agency.<sup>41</sup> We have the freedom to choose because without that we would not exist.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, to preserve our existence there cannot be any magic elevation of man. Rather, man must ascend by degrees and through experience to become like God. And Jesus Christ is the prototype who has proven this ascent is possible.

This was taught by Joseph Smith in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. This is the material he spent his time editing and perfecting before its publication. His diary does not say he spent any time revising the revelations. That was entrusted to a committee responsible for getting those ready to publish. When the committee prepared the revelations they did some freelancing, embellishing and expanding. Some of the stuff they added to the revelations was remarkably more expansive than what Joseph had revealed. But the revelations are not where Joseph spent his time prior to publication of the 1835 D&C. He spent his time with *The Lectures on Faith*.

This was relatively early in his ministry. The church was incorporated in 1830. He would spend fourteen years as its leader. While Joseph presided the church was "true and living" because Joseph spoke with and for God.<sup>43</sup>

The *Lectures* were prepared five years into Joseph's church ministry. It is clear he wanted to make sure the doctrine was correct. This is the "doctrine" he prepared for that first publication of the "Doctrine" & Covenants. Yet, despite that, we tend to rarely read this, and when we do it is not taken seriously.

If you are going to be saved, you must be "exactly," you must be "precisely" what Christ is and "nothing else." You! At the moment when you are saved this is what you must be, "or else not be saved." Christ is the prototype and we must mirror Him. He proved God the Father's word by doing what the Father asked. This is how Christ identified Himself to the Nephites. He "suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning." (3 Ne. 11: 11.) Or, in other words, Christ was obedient before this world was, and this world started in its creation after Christ was first qualified to redeem it.

As a consequence of that doctrine, to speak of Christ is necessarily to speak of salvation. To understand Christ is to understand salvation. Your salvation is to be understood as requiring from you exactly what was required of Christ. You cannot be different from Christ and yet be saved, because your salvation depends upon you being precisely what He is and nothing else. Despite how plainly this has been put, we still stop short of comprehending this doctrine.

Joseph Smith publicly taught this topic again at the end of this ministry. April 1844 was the last General Conference of the Church Joseph would live to see. On April 7th of 1844, Joseph gave a talk that relied on this doctrine of the church found in the 7<sup>th</sup> Lecture on Faith.

I'm going to first read to you the version that appears in *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Then to make sure you realize how impressive the point was to those in attendance, I'm going to go back to the talk as recorded by those present that day. There is one important and curious matter picked up by every one of those diaries.

Joseph said: *I wish I was in a suitable place to tell it, and that I had the trump of an archangel, so that I could tell the story in such a manner that persecution would cease forever. What did Jesus say? (Mark it, Elder Rigdon!) The Scriptures inform us that Jesus said, As the Father hath power in Himself, even so hath the Son power--to do what? Why, what the Father did. The answer is obvious--in a manner to lay down His body and take it up again. Jesus, what are you going to do? To lay down my life as my Father did, and take it up again. Do we believe it? I you do not believe it, you do not believe the Bible. The Scriptures say it, and I defy all the learning and wisdom and all the combined powers of earth and hell together to refute it. Here, then, is eternal life--to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be*

*Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead..."*

Think carefully about those words: From "exaltation to exaltation." From "grace to grace." This is the process that lasts until you attain to "the resurrection of the dead." This is not what we generally take it to mean. We do not "attain" to this just by

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<sup>41</sup> Moses 4: 3.

<sup>42</sup> D&C 93: 30-31.

<sup>43</sup> D&C 1: 30.



coming out of the grave. Your rise from the dead will be because Christ, not you, attained to the resurrection of the dead. Christ said, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* You must be precisely what He is and nothing else.

You hear those who say, "The Church has all the keys but we do not yet have the keys of the resurrection."<sup>44</sup> That is true enough. That is because even when you are resurrected, you will still not have "attained to the resurrection of the dead" nor hold the keys of resurrection until you, like Christ, have gone from exaltation to exaltation, until you likewise attain to the power to resurrect all that depends upon you. John 5:19 says, *"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."* The Father went before, and the Son follows after.<sup>45</sup> If you think that you can at some point, like Him, attain to the status of godhood, then you are going to have to do precisely what it is that the Gods do. Therefore, to understand Christ is to understand the challenging destiny about which Joseph Smith is speaking in his last Conference talk in 1844. You too must progress, *"Until you attain to the resurrection of the dead and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power."*

Even what we envision as the highest heaven, is a condescension for those who sit enthroned, able to dwell in everlasting burnings. Else why in section 130 would you be given a white stone that reveals things that pertains to "a higher order of kingdoms,"<sup>46</sup> when you are in the Celestial Kingdom?<sup>47</sup> This is because where you are now, at this moment, in this meeting, hearing my voice in this room today, is about halfway to where you need to grow. It has been almost infinite in the time that has been required to get you here today. Much more will be required before you will arrive at the point at which you will be precisely as Christ became.

I might add where Christ has arisen to dwell in everlasting burnings is about halfway to where things ultimately can go in this "higher order of kingdoms" spoken of in Section 130. You say it's necessary in this condition to have a physical body in order to come down here and perform, and you say that rightly. But there are other places beyond this. There are places where, in everlasting glory, the personages dwelling there are of "spirit, glory, and power" like The Father.<sup>48</sup>

Joseph adds: *"And I want you to know that God, in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me."* We hear preaching and exhorting which is so vain it will not raise anyone. It cannot advance anyone in the least, because it has no power. The preachers have not been asked, and therefore cannot teach what must be said to bring a soul closer to God.

But *"to attain to the resurrection to the dead"* it means you have the power to resurrect, not only yourself, but those who are dependent upon you. This is what the prototype of the saved man did. This is who we worship. This is what we must precisely and exactly become, and nothing else. It is still some distance from where we are today.

Now Joseph said something remarkable about this idea in his discourse: *"These are the first principles of consolation. How consoling to the mourners when they are called to part with a husband, wife, father, mother, child, or dear relative, to know that, although the earthly tabernacle is laid down and dissolved, they shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die anymore; but they shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before. What did Jesus do? Why; I do the things I saw my Father do when worlds come rolling into existence. My Father worked out his kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same; and when I get my kingdom, I shall present it to my Father, so that he may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory. He*

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., President Spencer W. Kimball in General Conference, *Our Great Potential*, April 1977, quoting Brigham Young in the Journal of Discourses, "It is supposed by this people that we have all the ordinances in our possession for life and salvation, and exaltation, and that we are administering in those ordinances. This is not the case. We are in possession of all the ordinances that can be administered in the flesh; but there are other ordinances and administrations that must be administered beyond this world. I know you would like to ask what they are. I will mention one. We have not, neither can we receive here, the ordinance and the keys of the resurrection." (Citing JD 15: 137.)

<sup>45</sup> I have previously explained how Christ, as well as the "noble and great" were all embodied and therefore resurrected beings before this world. They were "souls." (Abraham 3: 23.) The definition of "soul" given through Joseph years prior to his translation of the Book of Abraham required both the "spirit and the body" together. (D&C 88: 15-17.) For more on this see my essay *The First Three Words*.

<sup>46</sup> D&C 130: 10.

<sup>47</sup> This is given to "each of those who come into the celestial kingdom." D&C 130: 11.

<sup>48</sup> See Lecture 5, ¶12.

*will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take his place, and thereby become exalted myself. So that Jesus treads in the tracks of his Father, and inherits what God did before; and God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all his children. It is plain beyond disputation, and you thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said."*

You heard that right. "*It is plain beyond disputation, and you thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said.*" No doubt you have heard all your life the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: faith, repentance, baptism and laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. We know that because Joseph wrote that in the *Wentworth Letter*. We lifted it out of there and we put in the back of *The Pearl of Great Price* and it's now *The Articles of Faith*, right? But here, near the end of his life, Joseph has just redefined the first principles of the Gospel.

He mentions the "first principles" as something about "*which so much hath been said.*" This must be put into context. There was a "restorationist" movement that began before Joseph's birth. This movement sought to "restore" a New Testament church. All the various congregations involved were talking about the first principles of the Gospel.

Long before Sidney Rigdon was baptized a member of the Church of Christ (which was the name of the church originally),<sup>49</sup> he was preaching the "first principles were faith, repentance, baptism" as a Campbellite minister.<sup>50</sup> Likewise Parley P. Pratt was a fellow Campbellite and believed in these "first principles of the Gospel" before converting to Mormonism. This "first principles of the Gospel" idea became a mantra among all the restorationist movement churches.

Before becoming Mormon Parley Pratt would have told you the same things as we find in Joseph Smith's much later *Wentworth Letter*. The "first principles of the Gospel" became a rallying cry for people who wanted to have a New Testament church return to life. They claimed the first principles of the Gospel could be found in the New Testament, and any restored church would practice them. The overwhelming majority of early Mormon converts were drawn out of the same restorationist religious landscape. They were all familiar with and talking about "the first principles of the Gospel." Joseph was conceding the point, and he used that as a reference to structure his own explanation of "the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel" as found in the *Wentworth Letter*.

But in this General Conference talk given April 1844, the restoration through Joseph Smith was then far along. Further, Joseph was speaking to an audience who had been converted to the restoration through him. At the time of this talk, Joseph was about 67 days away from his death. This was the end of his ministry, not the beginning. Further, the audience he was addressing had been aboard the church for a while. They had listened to his sermons, and they knew something more about God than John Wentworth and his readers.<sup>51</sup>

Joseph Smith's audience for this sermon had *the Book of Mormon*. His listeners were largely converted through *the Book of Mormon*. They had Joseph's revelations. Joseph had been their Prophet, and he had taught them a great deal before April 1844. So when he returned to the "*first principles about which so much hath been said*" he was speaking to those inside the church, not to the unconverted and untaught. He was able to tell them much more about what the Gospel really included. He opened up and declared they really are this:

- Attaining to the resurrection from the dead,
- becoming Gods, and
- walking in the same path as our Lord walked.

These are the real first principles of the Gospel! That's why he wished he had the trumpet of an archangel with which to declare it. He didn't have that. But I read his words as if they came from an archangel.

*"You thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said. When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel--you*

<sup>49</sup> It went from the "Church of Christ" (as commanded by 3 Ne. 27: 8) to the "Church of the Latter-day Saints" to "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (as permitted by D&C 115: 4).

<sup>50</sup> Thomas and Alexander Campbell were leaders in this movement, and Sidney Rigdon was originally a disciple-preacher in Alexander Campbell's

<sup>51</sup> He was the editor of the *Chicago Democrat* when Joseph Smith wrote to him.

*must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave."*

This is all from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. But this is an amalgamation of the various accounts written by those in the audience that day. One of those was Wilford Woodruff. He recorded the same talk. I am not going to read all of his notes, but only a few excerpts which confirm the substance of Joseph's sermon.

Reading the Wilford Woodruff account: *"You've got to learn how to make yourselves God, king and priest by going from a small capacity to a great capacity, to the resurrection of the dead, to dwelling in everlasting burnings. I want you to know the first principle of this law, how consoling it is to the mourner when they part with a friend to know that they lay down this body, it will rise and dwell in everlasting burnings to be an heir with God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ and join the same rise and exaltation and glory until you arrive at the station of a God. What did Jesus Christ do? The same thing as I see the Father do. See the Father do what? Work out a kingdom. When I do so too, I will give the Father which will add to His glory, He will take a higher exaltation and I will take His place, and I'm also exalted. These are the first principles of the Gospel. It will take a long time after the grave to understand the whole. If I should say anything but what was in the Bible, a cry of treason will be heard."* Again we see the same first principles of the Gospel:

- the resurrection,
- becoming gods, and
- walking in the same path as those who went before.

The Thomas Bullock report of the same sermon confirms: *"This is eternal life to know the only wise and true God. You have got to learn how to be Gods yourself, and be kings and priests to God, the same as all have done by going from a small capacity to another, grace to grace until the resurrection and sit in everlasting power as they who have gone before. And God in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming His name is not trifling with us. All earthly tabernacles should be dissolved, that they shall be heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ to inherit the same power and exaltation until you ascend the throne of eternal power the same as those who have gone before. You thus learn the first principles of the Gospel. When you climb a ladder you must begin at the bottom."* The same theme is recorded here.

These are the basics of the Gospel of Christ. This is the foundation upon which salvation itself rests. This is the way you must climb in order for you to be like Him. But it will be a great while after you leave this life before you will arrive there. No one will do this for you. You can go from exaltation to exaltation, and from grace to grace, but you will only arrive at the end when you have learned all you will need to know to be like Christ.

If you understand Christ, you understand salvation. He is the prototype, and therefore you must be like that prototype in order for you to be saved. Go to D&C Section 93 and you read something similar to Joseph's April 1844 General Conference talk. Section 93 beginning at verse seven restores a part of John's record. The fullness of the record is yet to be revealed.

Let me add that despite the fact this reads very much like John the Beloved, somehow the position was taken by a number of Church leaders (then ultimately declared to be so by Bruce R. McConkie), that this was the testimony of John the Baptist. This view maintains that John the Beloved was a disciple of John the Baptist and got his first lessons from him. Therefore when John the Beloved wrote his testimony he incorporated what he learned earlier from the Baptist. Therefore, the reasoning goes, when you read John the Baptist's testimony here you are reading the source from which John the Beloved would draw when he wrote his Gospel of John.

I did not take any issue with Bruce R. McConkie in one of the books I wrote earlier. It wasn't important to do so. I simply accepted the view that this was the testimony of John the Baptist. Once again, it's one of those things that I did and now later regret. I wish I hadn't done that. At the time I wrote earlier, and still today, I don't believe this is the testimony of John the Baptist.<sup>52</sup> I think it is the testimony of John the Beloved, and a restoration of part of John the Beloved's record. But be that as it may, it's the testimony of John.

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<sup>52</sup> Earlier I thought my obligation to support church leaders even extended to the obligation to avoid contradicting them, even when wrong. See, e.g., Dallin H. Oaks, *Criticism*, Ensign Magazine February 1987. I no longer have that obligation and therefore feel free to weigh the question independent of the LDS Church's preferences. I believe it is unhealthy to pretend there

*"And he bore record, saying: I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was; Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation—The light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men. The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him. And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us. And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace; And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first." (D&C 93:7-12)* This is the testimony of John bearing record of what he saw concerning our Lord before He entered this world.

This is a description of what Christ did before He became flesh to dwell among us. This is who He was before the world was. He went from grace to grace, until He was "called the Son of God." This is very important. Our Lord Jesus Christ advanced by degrees, from grace to grace, before He entered this world, long before He took upon Him mortal flesh here, He experienced a long period of development. He acquired through that development sufficient grace to be "called the Son of God." And this is the prototype of the saved man!

This is what you must be, or else not be saved. These are the first principles of the Gospel, on which we will now focus so that you can understand who it is that you worship, and how to worship Him.

As long as you are here in this mortal venue, clothed in mere flesh, you have the great endowment and capacity to offer a sacrifice to God. You are in the ideal condition to develop the ability to exercise faith in Him. You couldn't do it if you were continuously living in His presence. You will not return to His presence until you first develop that faith. Therefore you are in an ideal, even enviable place here.

You will be amazed at the grace it is possible to acquire, if you will only do so while in this dark place. You are here to accomplish great deal, and I hope by the time we are finished today you will be more fortified to accomplish it. This creation was designed as an opportunity to sharply contrast good and evil. It is a testing or proving ground. That is exactly why you are here. This is a glorious opportunity. You wanted it. You shouted for joy at the idea of coming here to experience this veil of flesh.<sup>53</sup> Therefore you should rejoice again now, because salvation is free<sup>54</sup> and offered to us all.

This description of "the prototype of the saved man" raises the question of the "saved woman." There have been differences between man and woman from the beginning.<sup>55</sup> There remain differences throughout the afterlife, as well. If I were to reduce the differences to one word, the role of the man is to become knowledge, so as to be able to fulfill a role that is eternal.

The role of the woman is to become wisdom, because creation will only move forward if guided by wise counsel and prudent adaptations. Only together do they become complete, and therefore "one." Alone they are sterile, but joined they are infinite because they continue. Knowledge alone may provide the spark of creation, but it is potentially dangerous when merely energetic. Creation must be wisely assisted to avoid peril. Wisdom alone is not an agent of action. Knowledge can initiate action, but wisdom is necessary to guide and counsel. The physical is a mirror of the spiritual. The seed of man provides the spark of life, but it is the womb of women in which life is developed to become viable. Likewise, the role of the woman in nurturing new life here is akin to the role of wisdom in eternity. Together these become whole, capable of both producing and then guiding creation. The woman sacrifices her blood to bring new life here. This physical world reflects the spiritual. This is the best I can think of to differentiate their eternal roles. In scripture wisdom is feminine.<sup>56</sup> In Hebrew it is called "chokmah" (phonetically khok-maw'), which is a feminine noun. In Greek it is "sophia" which is likewise a feminine noun.

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are no problems with church claims and teachings when they are false. Therefore I believe it is wrong to advance falsehoods as if they were true. It offends God.

<sup>53</sup> Job 38: 4-7.

<sup>54</sup> 2 Ne. 2: 4.

<sup>55</sup> The results of the Fall of Adam were different for Adam and Eve. See Gen. 3: 16-19.

<sup>56</sup> For example: "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city," (Pro. 9: 1-2); "for they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them!" (Mosiah 8: 20.)

Without stating something inappropriate, Christ could not have done what He did, if He had not had a woman to fulfill a role in relation to Him. She anointed Him preliminary to His death, burial and resurrection. She was the first one to greet Him when resurrected. It was not possible, under the process required for salvation of a God, for Him to accomplish all that was needed without the presence of the woman. There is no Father without a Mother. There is no God without a Divine Consort at His side. She has a distinct role to accomplish some needful things in connection with finishing the path to godhood.

If it were important for the details of those kinds of things to be available now, then the scriptures and temple rites would include them. Paul wrote of the Father and Son possessing "all riches" through what he calls "a mystery" by which both God the Father and Christ held "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."<sup>57</sup> Such things are best left vague in the present state of mankind.

Because of where this generation has sunk, none of that is germane to us. The challenges we face and the burdens we must bear to get from where we are to where we need to be are great enough. There is no reason to be distracted by what is far beyond this generation's present reach. Therefore the scriptures wisely allude to, but do not elaborate upon, these events in the Lord's life. And so far, those few who have been in a position to talk about it have never felt they had any right to do so.

Our Lord, before the world was, "*received not the fullness at first but received grace for grace.*" It is foolish to think "grace for grace" consists of merely choosing to obey some commandment to secure some blessing. There is, of course, something to that.<sup>58</sup> But this description of the process Christ followed to rise up involved far more. It is truer and more accurate to say, in connection with the long preparation that preceded the call of Christ to be "the Son of God," that His achievement of "grace for grace" was something involving the ladder Joseph said we must climb.

Christ was "called the Son of God," because He "received not the fullness at first." He was "called" to be the Son of God because that was not His status before achieving grace for grace. Therefore He had to first qualify to be "called" to be the Son of God. Therefore it is self-evident that He "received not the fullness at first."

*"And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son."<sup>59</sup> And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father; And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John. I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness. For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace." (D&C 93: 15-20)* This is testimony worthy of an archangel. Only a great light could have seen these things while mortal, having qualified to bear witness of such wonderful things.

Long before the Lord assumed the role and responsibility of descending here and being the Redeemer of this world, He was qualified by acquiring grace, through doing things to prove Himself, while He was behind the veil, just as you presently find yourselves situated. This is not the place for an experiment to learn whether mankind will be rescued from the grave. It must be certain before there is a Fall, that there will be an adequate atonement to rescue mankind. If man were not rescued, they would be eternally subject to captivity in the same condition as the devil.<sup>60</sup> This catastrophe could only be avoided by perfect foreknowledge.

Only by first proving He had the grace to overcome all through His obedience to the commandments of God could He be "called the Son of God." Even though it would be a great while before He, and now you, would rise up to that level, still He has lived His life with such grace that He qualified to receive more, and to develop and to move up. He became "the Word of God"<sup>61</sup> because He followed "every word [or instruction] which proceedeth out of the mouth of God."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Coloss. 2: 2-3.

<sup>58</sup> See D&C 130: 20-21.

<sup>59</sup> This happened at His baptism. (See Matt. 3: 13-17; Luke 3: 21-22; John 1: 32-34.) Since John the Baptist was there, this has led to some LDS leaders attributing the testimony to the Baptist.

<sup>60</sup> 2 Ne. 9: 8-9.

<sup>61</sup> D&C 93: 8.

<sup>62</sup> Matt. 4: 4. In this declaration Christ distinguished Himself from the devil, who was tempting

When you think of Christ as “the prototype of the saved man” you should also remember Christ “attained to the resurrection” by “breaking the bonds of death.”<sup>63</sup> Justice requires man to die.<sup>64</sup> When I die it will be deserved. The same is true for all mankind from Adam to the present.<sup>65</sup> However, when Christ died it was unjust. The “wages of sin” is death, but He did not earn those wages.<sup>66</sup> He never submitted to sin,<sup>67</sup> and therefore the law of justice was offended by His death.<sup>68</sup> Because of this, He was able to take His body up again, and the law of justice could not prevent it.<sup>69</sup>

Christ’s death was not only unjust, but it was an eternal offense. When the life of a man who should have lived forever has been taken, what He gave up was infinite.<sup>70</sup> Therefore the price He paid was infinite.<sup>71</sup> Whatever justice demanded had been satisfied, and He could then intercede for all mankind.<sup>72</sup>

Christ’s resurrection, therefore, came as a matter of right to Him because the grave could make no just claim upon His life.<sup>73</sup> In turn, this allows Him to make an infinite intercession and likewise bring us and together with all creation back into a restored state.<sup>74</sup> He paid the price to reverse Adam’s fall.<sup>75</sup> All of His creation benefits.

This is what Joseph was referring to as “attaining the resurrection” in his last talk in General Conference. This is the trek that every saved man must take to complete the process. Hence Joseph’s saying, “it will be a great while after the grave before” we will rise up to be gods ourselves. Do not sleep away this life. Awake and arise! There is a great deal to be done.

There is no magic to this process. There is only progression and refinement. It will be required for each of us, just as has been required of all who went before, that we “learn to be gods” by what we experience. Part of that learning must eventually

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Him. The course these two had taken determined their respective destinies. One rebelled, the other submitted. Therefore Christ’s declaration to live by every word of His Father clearly distinguishes between Him, and His tempter on the one essential requirement to acquire grace.

<sup>63</sup> “And thus God breatheth the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—” Mosiah 15: 8.

<sup>64</sup> “And thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence.” Alma 42:15. “[B]ut it was appointed unto men that they must die; and after death, they must come to judgment[.]” Alma 12:27.

<sup>65</sup> “[A]ll mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer.” 1 Ne. 10: 6.

<sup>66</sup> Romans 6: 23.

<sup>67</sup> Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Heb. 4: 15. “He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them.” D&C 20: 22.

<sup>68</sup> “Yea, behold, this death bringeth to pass the resurrection, and redeemeth all mankind from the first death—that spiritual death; for all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual.” Helaman 14:16.

<sup>69</sup> “For the atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all those who have not the law given to them, that they are delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment; and they are restored to that God who gave them breath, which is the Holy One of Israel.” 2 Ne. 9:26.

<sup>70</sup> “Wherefore it must needs be an infinite atonement.” 2 Ne. 9:7.

<sup>71</sup> “[F]or it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice.” Alma 34:10.

<sup>72</sup> “And thus, God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.” Mosiah 15: 8-9.

<sup>73</sup> “[H]aving redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.” Mosiah 15: 9.

<sup>74</sup> “Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law[.]” 2 Ne. 2:7.

<sup>75</sup> “[A]s in Adam, or by nature, they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins.” Mosiah 3:16. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” 1 Cor. 15:22.

include the ability to break the bonds of death, as Christ did.<sup>76</sup> But we develop during mortality, and receive *from* this life exactly what we develop into while mortal.<sup>77</sup>

God's patience for us is infinite. It will require going "from exaltation to exaltation" before we ascent to the place of Christ, "the prototype of the saved man." But we have all eternity to work out our salvation.

Those who think it is enough to merely "get into heaven" are really talking about "the deaths"<sup>78</sup> and not what God offers His children. God offers eternal lives.<sup>79</sup> Those who will endure to the end,<sup>80</sup> worlds without end,<sup>81</sup> will receive eternal life and obtain the resurrection.

We must be exactly and precisely like Christ to receive all power in heaven and earth, including the power of the resurrection. It was only after His resurrection Christ claimed this power.<sup>82</sup>

Turning to Alma chapter 13, we learn more about the process. This helps define what it takes to move from grace to grace. Beginning in chapter 13 of Alma, verse one. *"I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people. 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. And this is the manner after which they were ordained— being called and prepared from the foundation of the world"*

Did you get that? We're talking about priests. Notice it is repeated three times: *"his Son...his Son...his Son."* We think there are a great deal more priests "after the order of his Son" than there are or ever have been. This kind of priest belonging to this holy order is infrequent in the world. On the few occasions when they appear, they are here so that you may understand who *"his Son"* is. They are not here to control others or profit from religion. They kneel and serve, but do not preside and conduct. The imposters always occupy those seats and only the proud seek for them. Our Lord descended below all things here, and let others exercise authority over Him.

These are those few who became qualified *"before the foundation of the world."* They qualified because of what they did before coming into this life. But they certainly did not and could not have qualified unless they had been "proven" by what they experienced and how they responded. They are sent to teach in a manner that will make others look forward to Christ coming. Whether before His birth in Bethlehem or before His final triumphant return, they teach in a manner that will cause others to look forward to God's Son for redemption.

They were called before the foundation of this world, just like His Son was called before the foundation of the world, to point to "his Son" who likewise came into the world. This qualification process was before the world where we presently live. This has been done so you can understand and have faith in the Son.

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<sup>76</sup> "But behold, the bands of death shall be broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead." Mosiah 15: 20.

<sup>77</sup> When we rise from the dead, "they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still[.]" 2 Ne. 9: 16. "[T]he spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow." Alma 40: 12.

<sup>78</sup> See D&C 132: 25: "Broad is the gate and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths; and many there are that go in thereat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law."

<sup>79</sup> "For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me. But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and also receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also. And this is eternal lives—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent." D&C 132: 22-24.

<sup>80</sup> "And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal." 2 Ne. 33: 4.

<sup>81</sup> Those who will not rise up and mirror "the prototype of the saved man" will not be able to be like Him. "And they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end." D&C 76: 112.

<sup>82</sup> "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28: 18.

*"Being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God,"* Why does God have foreknowledge of these things? Why does God know that, if He gives His trust to such persons they will be true to it? Why does God know these are the very people who will not break His trust in them?<sup>83</sup> Why does God have such foreknowledge? His foreknowledge is not based upon conjecture but proof. It is not based upon merely hope, it is based upon God's knowledge of them. He will never ask soft lead to do what He knows will require iron to endure. Therefore He chooses a suitable instrument based upon His foreknowledge that has been *"prepared from the foundation of the world."*

And what does God foreknow about them? He knows this: *"On account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place."* That is, He knows they exercised exceeding faith and based on that performed good works before the foundation of this world. This was in the first place. This was long ago on some other rung of the ladder of progression. It was long ago, a great while in the past, when they were previously "proven."

*"In the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly 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."* Did you get that? They have already been the beneficiaries of a "preparatory redemption" given to them before. They were redeemed before this, so they could be reclaimed for this ministry. They had chosen good rather than evil, and exercised great faith. They qualified to become something greater and minister to others so they, too, could look forward to their redemption by the "Son of God." But now we find ourselves here, in this cycle of creation, and once again the game's afoot. Once again we are left to choose between good and evil. Once again we are asked to exercise great faith and to rise up. We are once again in a position in which it is possible to qualify here and now for what will come after. You have the opportunity before you today. Choose good.

At this moment you have the opportunity to exercise exceeding faith. Choose faith.

You have the opportunity at this moment, in this dark place where we presently reside, to be identified by your good works, to become proven to God. Then, for the next cycle of creation, His foreknowledge of you will include the record of your exceeding faith and good works from here.

Do not think this is a peculiar doctrine. This is part of the Gospel and set out in the scriptures. Creation is cyclical.

*"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 have had as great privilege as their brethren."*

Don't have a hard heart. Don't be blinded by the lies, the half-truths, and the incomplete things that you are taught by those who are trifling with your souls. You may disagree with me, and you are entitled to do so, but I declare the things He has declared to me. The truth matters while I do not. God cares about your salvation and offers it to you. But you must rise up to become like Him, and have no time to idle away with foolish cares. You have no time to waste participating in false, vain and foolish religion.

I know there are arguments against me. There are also reviews written about the things that I have said. There is no criticism made against me, no scriptural exegesis an orthodox member of the Church can advance that I did not advance in argument with the Lord. I have made better scriptural arguments against doing what I've done than those that have been leveled at me. I had more scriptural proof to discourage the Lord from asking that I do any of this stuff. I argued with Him! And the Lord has explained to me, using the scriptures, the things I now declare to you. I'm not here on my own errand. If I were doing what I wanted to do today, it wouldn't include any of you! Well, I guess it would include my wife and she is here.

I was a careful and devoted student of the LDS Church. I trusted Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie. I was a disciple of the Brethren. I could quote them, because I was converted to follow them. There was nothing written by Bruce R. McConkie I didn't own and hadn't studied. When he came to BYU to criticize Brother Pace, I was in attendance at the devotional. I felt bad for George Pace, but I believed Elder McConkie.

In my faith I was the strictest of true believing Latter-day Saints. Therefore when the Lord appeared to me, He appeared to a faithful, devoted member of the LDS Church. At first I believed He did so *because* I was a faithful Latter-day Saint! But the Lord

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<sup>83</sup> See Helaman 10: 4-5 to see what is required to qualify.



knows more than do I. I've never won an argument with Him. I labored to reconcile all I knew with all that was asked of me, and found it impossible to please both Christ and the LDS Church. I made my choice. None of you are more devoted to the Brethren today than I once was. You say you are in "the Lord's true church" and I say unless you know Him, no institution or gathering will substitute. Life eternal comes from knowing Him, not another man. Even if a man is sent to declare Him to you, focus should be on the Lord, not on His messenger. Only a false messenger, who seeks approval, and who hopes for gain, will divert attention from the Lord to himself.<sup>84</sup> A true messenger would not dare do so.

I am not explaining these scriptures to you because I think they *might* fit together in this way. Like Paul I can declare, "*Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*" (Acts 17: 23.) I have read all of the accounts Joseph Smith left behind of his visits with the Lord. If you add them all together, still the Lord has spent more time with me than with Joseph. I attribute that my poor understanding, the harness of my mind, my inadequacy as a pupil, my stubbornness and my stupidity. I defended the Church to the Lord. I was a latter-day "Pharisee," like Paul. I explained to Him why He needed to honor the Church, and asked that He let me do so also. He told me that they, not I, would sever the relationship. He told me they, and not I, would be accountable for that. And He told me that was in His heart for a long time beforehand to let the scriptures be fulfilled. I was His instrument to accomplish His purpose, which He has now done.

Therefore when people shake their head and say, "What a shame! What a shame! He fell off the rails. He went his own way. He's filled with pride." Look, growing up in Idaho I would have said that's utter bullshit. Here, I will say it is bovine feces. There is nothing at all true to that. That is not who I am. That is not what is in my heart. It has never been what's in my heart. I was as faithful a Latte-day Saint as any who ever belonged to the LDS Church. I dare not depart from what the Lord requires, even when I find it painful to do His will. Someone must.

And I know what I'm talking about. I don't care about your theories to the contrary, because He who is "more intelligent than them all"<sup>85</sup> has declared to me the truth of these things. Resist it if you want, reject it if you want, but you can read right here what the consequences are:

*"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 have had as great privilege as their brethren. Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren;"* That is, before they ever got here, the first place, long ago far away, they were on the same standing with their brethren. The exact same place proved some worthy of priesthood after the holy order of the Son of God, while others were faithless, hard hearted and blind. They continue along worlds without end, to all eternity, never rising up to lay claim on the same privilege.

*"This holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, 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, 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."* It has been underway a long time. This process has been underway a long time. It was through this means God obtained the knowledge necessary to identify who would have faith and choose to do good. These experiences happened before this cycle of creation. Therefore in the present world it is called "foreknowledge" because it was learned before *this* creation where we presently live.

*"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."* You say a man must be ordained by someone here, while in the flesh, and have a line-of-authority and I say that may be true enough. But if he was not ordained before this at some point in eternity—that is "without beginning"—then you might as well ordain a sack of flour. Because if the priest is not one of the holy order, who qualified some place in eternity "without beginning or end," it is inadequate. Something conferred only in this world cannot handle or confer eternal things. Anything subject to time will be destroyed by time. You can only handle eternal things if your authority reckons from eternity.

You say you want to obtain an "expectation" here that will follow you into the next life.<sup>86</sup> I say if the authority to seal this did not first exist and was not handed down from before the world was, then it will not last in the afterlife.

<sup>84</sup> This is priestcraft. See 2 Ne. 26: 29.

<sup>85</sup> Abraham 3: 19.

Joseph held up a ring and said, There is no beginning and there is no end, it is one eternal round.<sup>87</sup> I'm telling you, you're only on part of the cycle here. But, you *are* on part of this endless cycle, here. Now. Today matters a great deal. Therefore what you do here matters, infinitely, eternally, everlastingly. It matters! You have your doubts, but you should weigh them in the balance. Why not exercise faith? Why not change your eternal destiny? Why not choose good today?

The Gospel is delicious. Get rid of that stale wretched stuff you consume as part of an organized and stifled herd, and go on to find the Life, the Light, and the vigor contained in the words of scripture. The doctrine in our scriptures is delicious! Stop putting barriers around the scriptures. Stop forcing them to mean what you have been told they *must* mean. Let them tell you what they say without your preconceptions distorting their meaning. There is no rigid "orthodoxy" that governs or correlates their meaning. You will discover they are filled with a new religion altogether. In that religion God is speaking to you directly. He is alive, and He is involved in your life. If you will partake of it and prepare yourself, you can improve this estate in a way that will reflect credit into the next estate. Don't forfeit the opportunity.

*"Thus they become high priests forever."* They become high priests, and when they have exercised faith and shown good works that status lasts forever. They qualified before the foundation of this world. They come here, into this cycle, and they have authority here. But their authority began before the foundation of this world, and they can confer blessings that will continue into the next life. Therefore they can bless and you are blessed indeed.

*"Thus they become high priests forever, 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. 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."* Do you see what is before you?

You say you want to be baptized and to be cleansed from all sin? I say have at it! But in addition, the "prototype of the saved man" requires you do something more. You may only achieve a limited amount of grace in this life, but to that limited amount of grace you must hold fast. You cannot receive more if you will not receive what is offered to you now. But if you will receive what is offered now, you will be added upon forever and forever.<sup>88</sup> Or, in other words, you move up the ladder by how you conduct yourself in this cycle of creation, and in the next cycle you will have so much the advantage.<sup>89</sup> You can choose to move upward and be added upon, or you can choose instead to remain as you are, worlds without end. The scriptures speak of things that happened "before the foundation of the world" or "in the first place" or "from the foundation of the world." These statements make it clear what went on before this creation mattered and affected who you now are. In like manner what you achieve in this life through your heed and diligence will affect what comes after. The course we are on has been ordained by God and is "one eternal round."<sup>90</sup>

God has been at this a long time. Christ has, likewise, been involved for many repeated cycles of creation. Moses was told: *"by the word of my power have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten."*<sup>91</sup> It is endless and it is cyclical. *"For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them."*<sup>92</sup> This is God's great work. It has been going through cycles of creation, fall, redemption, judgment and re-creation forever. It is endless.

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<sup>86</sup> See D&C 132: 7.

<sup>87</sup> *TPJS*, p. 354.

<sup>88</sup> Abraham 3: 26.

<sup>89</sup> D&C 130: 18-19.

<sup>90</sup> See Alma 7: 20; Alma 37: 12; D&C 3: 2 and 35: 1, among other places.

<sup>91</sup> Moses 1: 32-33.

<sup>92</sup> *Id.* v. 35.

The Lord told Moses just how vast this process has grown: *“The heavens, they 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 to my words.”*<sup>93</sup> This is a continual, endless cycle, worlds without end.

Man falls into the cold realm of the temporal, but is returned again to the spiritual. The process allows development to occur in increments as we choose for our development. When a cycle begins, man is spirit. When it is underway, man is temporal and physical. But when a cycle ends, man is spirit again. We are nearing another turn of the wheel when wickedness ends. As modern revelation describes it, *“For the hour is nigh and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe; and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth. ...For I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand.”*<sup>94</sup>

Then, *“when the thousand years are ended, and men again begin to deny their God, then will I spare the earth for but a little season; And the end shall come, and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth.”*<sup>95</sup> As one ends, another begins. The cycle repeats, but nothing is lost. The old passes away, but everything is kept to be used again, *“both men and beasts, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea; And not one hair, neither mote, shall be lost, for it is the workmanship of mine hand.”*<sup>96</sup> It all continues on in one eternal round, worlds without end.

When men are judged and condemned they are sent away into *“everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”* They go away and cannot ascend to God’s presence, because where God is *“they cannot come, for they have no power.”* But, God cautions us, *“remember that all my judgments are not given unto men; and as the words have gone forth out of my mouth even so shall they be fulfilled, that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first, in all things whatsoever I have created by the world of my power, which is the power of my Spirit.”*<sup>97</sup>

God set out how this cycle begins and ends: *“For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal—First spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work; and again, first temporal, and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work—Speaking unto you that you may naturally understand; but unto myself my works have no end, neither beginning; but it is given unto you that ye may understand, because ye have asked it of me and are agreed.”*<sup>98</sup>

So, in the first place before this world was organized from an already existing and previously used prior creation, the condition was “spiritual.” But it fell and became the temporal place where we presently reside; though patterned after the earlier world where we used to live while in its spiritual state. Its present condition will be destroyed and returned again to a spiritual state. It will be “quickened” and no longer the cold place it is today.

Have you ever noticed how the descriptions of the pre-earth organization and the Millennium seem alike? Have you ever wondered what “worlds without end” means? Have you ever considered how God’s work “never ends” and yet it has definite increments separating things from one cycle and the next?

God’s works do not end. You are the developmental work God has chosen as His greatest accomplishment. He intends to bring to pass your immortality and eventual eternal life.<sup>99</sup> How long that requires for any given individual depends upon how long it takes you to become like the prototype of the saved man. How long you will delay attaining to the resurrection is within your own control. I am hoping to awaken you to the great work lying before you.

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<sup>93</sup> Moses 1:37-38.

<sup>94</sup> D&C 29: 9, 11.

<sup>95</sup> Id. v. 22-23.

<sup>96</sup> Id. v. 24-25.

<sup>97</sup> Id. vs. 29-30

<sup>98</sup> Id. vs. 31-33.

<sup>99</sup> Moses 1: 39.

It was E.B. Grandin who printed the first copies of the Book of Mormon. He had an employee named John H. Gilbert the young man who did the typesetting for *the Book of Mormon*.<sup>100</sup> You can see a picture of him in the *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents Vol. 1: July 1828-June 1831*, p. 87. The picture was taken in 1890, over six decades later. John Gilbert took the handwritten printer's manuscript of the *Book of Mormon* and, as he set the type, he was forced to punctuate it. Today we still look at his punctuation. The commas in the text are primarily the creation of this man. Therefore I do not believe the punctuation was or is necessarily inspired. I'm going to suggest another way to read a few verses. I want to lift out his commas, and throw them on the floor. I'm not going to use them anymore. I'm going to read you a description of Christ in 2 Nephi 25:12. I will give two different ways to read the passage. First Gilbert's then mine.

Gilbert's:

*"The Only Begotten of the Father, yea, even the Father of heaven and of earth."*

Now mine:

*"The Only Begotten of the Father yea even the Father of heaven and of earth."*

Gilbert's suggests Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father and that Christ is the Father of heaven and of earth.

Mine suggests Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father. The Father is both Christ's and also heaven and earth's Father.

There are questions we cannot answer today. The Nephite authors used the learning of the Hebrews and the language of the Egyptians<sup>101</sup> to compose the plates Joseph Smith translated. We do not know if that means the sentence construction reflected Hebrew grammar, or if it reflected Egyptian grammar, or was some hybrid of the two, or something else which was entirely of Nephite development. If I were translating from German into English the common phrase we understand as "How are you doing?"<sup>102</sup> a literal translation of the German would be "How goes it you?" If I am translating this into English I can either render it literally or according to its message using a substitute phrase. What did Joseph Smith do? We don't know.

We also don't know the rules for this hybrid language. We do not know if modifiers are before or after the subject. In Hebrew there are only two tenses: perfect and imperfect. In Greek there are four moods (indicative, imperative, subjunctive and optative) and three voices (active, middle, and passive) as well as three persons (first, second and third) and three numbers (singular, dual and plural) which affect word structures. What, exactly, did the Reformed Egyptian language have and how exactly did the writer intend the description given in the Book of Mormon plates to be divided into phrasing?

Left to his own, John Gilbert would undoubtedly have drawn on his own background at the time. He, like anyone then or now who considered himself Christian, would believe in a Trinitarian God. Therefore the punctuation would follow a Trinitarian format. As a result, we should expect "Trinitarian comas"<sup>103</sup> in the *Book of Mormon*.

If you throw out the comas and replace them with another alternative way to punctuate that removes Trinitarian fingerprints, the result undermines the arguments of those who want to claim Mormon theology was originally Trinitarian.

Throw out the commas. Then 2 Nephi 25:12 tells us Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father. He was and is the Only Begotten of the Father. His Father is the Father of heaven and of the earth.

We can do the same with Mosiah 3:8. *"And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary."*

These comas suggest Christ is both the Son of the Father and Christ is also the Father of heaven and earth.

<sup>100</sup> John H. Gilbert was born April 13, 1802 and would have been twenty-six when he set the type for the Book of Mormon. He had five years experience in typesetting before working on the project.

<sup>101</sup> 1 Ne. 1: 2.

<sup>102</sup> In German: Wie geht es Ihnen? (In slang it is reduced to: Wie ghets, literally "how goes?")

<sup>103</sup> This is a term I have coined to try to make this problem apparent in a short-hand way.

But if we move the commas around we can instead say: *"And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of heaven and earth the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary."*

This suggests Christ is the Son of God the Father. And God the Father is the Father of heaven and earth, and the creator of all things from the beginning.

In the first layout, we are forced to view the content of these verses as essentially Trinitarian, because Christ is both the Father and the Son. In the second, instead we have two personages, one of whom was the Father of heaven and earth and the other who is His Son. This is consistent with the *Lectures on Faith*, which defines the Godhead as "the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."<sup>104</sup> The Father is a personage of "spirit, glory, and power." The Son is "a personage of tabernacle made or fashioned like unto man."<sup>105</sup> The Holy Spirit, the third member of "the Godhead" being "the mind of the Father and Son."<sup>105</sup> Therefore it is clear there are two: both the Father and another who was "called the Son" as we saw in D&C 93: 14.

In the declaration of Abinadi he uses language that also tends to make Christ the same person as God the Father. Here is Abinadi's statement:

*"Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth. And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people."* (Mosiah 15: 2-5.)

Abinadi likewise says Christ will be "called the Son of God." He qualified to be "called" because He "subjected the flesh to the will of the Father." You cannot be the Son of God the Father unless you reflect Him. You are His "Son" when you are like Him. To be like Him you must subject your will to the will of the Father. This is how Christ defined Himself.<sup>106</sup>

When Christ subjected Himself entirely to the will of the Father, He was in every deed, thought and action "the Father" even though He was flesh and blood and living among us. They were "one."<sup>107</sup> If you beheld Christ, you would behold the image of His Father.<sup>108</sup>

Christ subjected Himself to the Holy Spirit, or "mind of the Father" which made His will swallowed up in the will of the Father. He models what He asked us to likewise do. He prayed that we would allow the Spirit to make us "one" with them, so we become "perfect" as They are perfect.<sup>109</sup> Each week the two sacrament prayers ask God the Father to send His (Christ's) Spirit to be with those who take the bread and wine in remembrance of Christ's body and blood.<sup>110</sup> If you have His (Christ's) Spirit then you have also the Father's Spirit; or according to the *Lectures on Faith*, you have the Holy Spirit to be with you. This Holy Spirit is "a personage of Spirit"<sup>111</sup> which dwells within you. Or, in other words, when you receive the "mind of the Father and the Son" by listening to the Holy Spirit, you become sanctified by Their presence in you. You become "one" with them. You gain access to *"the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment."* (Moses 6: 61.)

We have looked at the language in *The Lectures on Faith*. We have looked at Joseph's sermon in the April 1844 General Conference, and we have looked at D&C section 93. All of them speak of the Father coming to "dwell in Christ." Every week

<sup>104</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Lecture ¶2.

<sup>105</sup> Id.

<sup>106</sup> See 3 Ne. 11: 11.

<sup>107</sup> John 10: 30.

<sup>108</sup> John 14: 9.

<sup>109</sup> See John 17: 20-26.

<sup>110</sup> See D&C 20: 77, 79 and Moroni 4: 3; 5:2.

<sup>111</sup> D&C 130: 22.

you hear the sacrament prayers petitioning for God the Eternal Father to send Christ's Spirit come and dwell in you.<sup>112</sup> The Spirit that came to dwell in Christ was the Spirit of the Father. Christ's Spirit is to dwell in you. Who's Spirit dwells in Christ? And so we all become one.

Go to Helaman 14:12 and you see the same thing: *"And also that ye might know of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and that ye might know of the signs of his coming, to the intent that ye might believe on his name."*

Again, what if we changed the commas?

*"And also that ye might know of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and that ye might know of the signs of his coming."* I try to read these scriptures in a way that makes sense.

This mind of God, this Holy Spirit that emanates from Them fills the immensity of space.<sup>113</sup> It is part of God. It is as accessible to you, if you will receive it, as it was accessible to Christ, which is how you can become one with Them. *"Father I pray for these whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as thou and I are one."*<sup>114</sup> They may be "one" just as we may be "one" because They share the same mind. And you likewise can do so.

Christ said of Himself in Ether chapter 3 verse 14: *"Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters."* This is the way in which you also might become a son of God. As the One who redeems you becomes your Father, so that He who is the Only Begotten of the Father, in turn begets many sons and daughters Himself.<sup>115</sup>

If you will receive it, faith in Him comes by hearing the word of God.<sup>116</sup> Not by a pretender, not by someone guessing, not by someone offering up their theory of how the scriptures ought to be understood. Faith does not come by hearkening to someone citing you a bibliography. Faith comes only by hearing the word of God delivered as He would have it delivered, by whomever it is that He may choose to deliver it.<sup>117</sup>

If you receive God's word sent by someone He sends, then you might have faith, and that too in the Son of God. Then you also might receive Him. But if you will not, if you will harden your hearts, if you will blind your minds, if you will not receive what He offers from His mouth in your day, then you do not have faith in Him. You will fall short of that faith required to become His son and His daughter.

It is that way, it has always been that way, it will always be that way. There is no other test.

Therefore, either I am a liar and you ought to forget everything I've said, or I have been sent by someone greater than I am. If I have been sent and you reject and quibble over the things I declare to you, it is at your peril!

It ought to be that way. I ought to be damned if I'm a pretender, and I ought to be damned and rejected by God if I'm saying things about which I know nothing! But I bear witness to you I know what I'm talking about. I have no reason to lie to you. I have no reason to pay to reserve a place to speak to you, and ask nothing of you but to listen. It requires a sacrifice to do what I am doing. I have no other reason to do this than to tell you the truth. Joseph Smith testified to these things and I am come as a second witness. Therefore you now have two proclaiming the same doctrine.

He (Christ) was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. Why did the world not know Him? The world did not know Him for the same reason people would not know a messenger when one is sent today.

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<sup>112</sup> See D&C 20: 73-79

<sup>113</sup> D&C 88: 11-13.

<sup>114</sup> John 17: 21-23.

<sup>115</sup> See Heb. 2: 10; 1 John 3: 1-3.

<sup>116</sup> Romans 10: 17.

<sup>117</sup> Romans 10: 14-17.

Our Lord was so very ordinary in His time. He seemed for all the world to be just another itinerant preacher. There had been so many pretenders in the days before the Maccabean rebellion. The family of David had fallen into great disrepute by the time the Lord arrived. When the census was taken and everybody had to go to their own city,<sup>118</sup> His mother Mary and Joseph went to the city of David to be enumerated, there was no room for them in the inn.<sup>119</sup> It was in His days just as it is in ours. If you want to find the Lord look for Him among the outcast, for it is only there you will find Him at work.

*"The Lord Omnipotent who reigns, who was and is from all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay."* Father is a tabernacle of Spirit and Glory, the Son descended to be among us in the tabernacle of clay. The only way you could have distinguished between the Lord and other men was He declared things filled with light.

How was the Lord able to accomplish all He did? In Abraham 3:19 the Lord explains: *"I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all."*

Why is the Lord qualified to say He is more intelligent than they all? Because our Lord went from grace to grace to the point He understood all things, because He had been through all things, He had descended below all things, and He had risen above all things, therefore He comprehends all things. He is more intelligent than us all because He is more experienced than us all. He has arrived at a state in which He is worthy, holy, and sanctified. Having been left to choose between good and evil He has chosen the good. He declared who He was when He introduced Himself to the Nephites and He said, He suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

From what beginning? For you, why cannot that be a beginning starting now? For you, why can you not from this beginning, at this moment, in this place, go forward saying you will follow the will of the Father in all things, from this beginning? Why will you refuse to rise up and receive grace for grace?

This is how you worship who you worship,<sup>120</sup> because He was the Word of God, the embodiment of the Father's will. The Father declares what is right and true and the Son obeys. Thus the Son became the Word of God, because He did what the Father asked Him. Would you also want to be a son or daughter of God? Do what He bids you do. This is how the Son lived. This is who the Son is. This is what you must do to worship Him.

*"I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all."* This leads in turn to D&C 93:36: *"The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth."*

The light shines in darkness and the darkness comprehends it not,<sup>121</sup> because in the darkness there are things that are forgotten, but in the light there are things that are exposed and seen. Light and Truth; because you see things as they really are,<sup>122</sup> because you judge things as they really are, not after the manner of men, but according to the light God shines upon it. So that you can see and you can feel that the heart that is speaking to you is pure. You can comprehend that the words spoken are given by the grace of God. You will realize it does not matter how flawed a vessel the Lord chooses, He can cleanse any of us every whit. He has such power that He can take what is broken and mend it. He can take what is unclean, even scarlet in color, and make it white as snow by His word,<sup>123</sup> which is the word of the Father, because the two of Them are One.

Then we come to these sobering verses in D&C 130:18-19: *"Whatever principle of intelligence..."*

Remember, *"I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all."* *"The glory of God is intelligence or another words light and truth."*

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<sup>118</sup> Luke 2: 1-4.

<sup>119</sup> Luke 2: 7.

<sup>120</sup> D&C 93: 19.

<sup>121</sup> D&C 10: 58.

<sup>122</sup> Jacob 4: 13.

<sup>123</sup> Isa. 1: 18.

So now: *"Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come."*

How can you gain intelligence? How will you gain knowledge? It says right here, you gain knowledge and intelligence by your "diligence and obedience." The words from the Lord spoken to you are always intended to cause you to act. When that answer came to me in the barracks, if I had done nothing, my life would have continued as it began. There would have been no difference the next day. Today I would be in a far different place than I am at this moment.

Hearing the Lord's word without giving heed, diligence and obedience to what God asks of you yields nothing. What good does it do you to know more about the scriptures than another, if it does not affect your behavior? What good does awareness alone give you, if your understanding is not employed to bring you and others who hear closer to the Lord? Knowledge can be used for the sake of vanity. It can be used to make you seem bigger, better, brighter. It can be a point of pride. It is power, and wielded in the wrong hands, it abuses, it subjugates, it humiliates.

The Lord is not like that. He lifts, He raises, He elevates, He endows you. He blesses your lives. If you receive truth from Him and act upon it, it can bless you. If you will soften your heart, if you will allow His Spirit to enter in, if you will receive the light that comes from Him, you will receive grace. You will become a great deal more like Him. You will be more gracious and patient with others. You will view them in their fallen state and you will hope for them better. To the extent that you are able to do so, you will offer them better.

Joseph Smith, in *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* says: *"Knowledge saves a man; and in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge."* (TPJS p. 357) *"So it is with the principles of the Gospel--you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation."* (TPJS p. 348) *"A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power."* (TPJS p. 217) I read those to you on the very first day we began this series of talks in Boise, Idaho. Now that we've come to the subject of our Lord, we get back to the topic of intelligence: *"A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge,"* but knowledge requires you to act, because it doesn't become part of you until you have lived it. Therefore, unless you're willing to live it, you can't receive it.

Our religion is centered in Christ, therefore our religion is centered in intelligence. It is not enough to know what Christ knows, we must also be loving or charitable as He is. He not only created this world, He also suffered to save it.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 53 and let's look at some familiar verses. This is Isaiah, writing long before the event, but the context is almost an echo of the quizzical nature of Christ on the road to Emmaus saying, "What you talking about?" And they said: "Are you dumb? Are you ignorant? Are you oblivious to what's been happening?" Likewise Isaiah 53: *"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"*

You see it is always delivered in a manner to make it possible to dismiss. For truth to be spoken here, there will need to be an entire chorus of people yelling in opposition. There needs to be smooth arguments. There needs to be dignified opponents. There needs to be institutional opposition. There needs to be rejection. There needs to be an entire army of skeptics, opposed to whatever the Lord is doing, to make the test always be equal. Who is going to believe the report? Who is going to see the arm of the Lord? Certainly not those who sat in the seats of authority during His life. Christ was a threat to them. They knew He was a threat to their craft.

For Christ was going to grow up before God *"as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."* I really dislike the way in which that has been translated. Those meanings are possible with those words, but that is not how I would render them.

Almost the entire Hebrew vocabulary is based upon a three-letter root. The root of the word translated as "beauty" is talking about something to be coveted, desired, or some kind of precious thing you want. I looked to see how Avraham Gileadi translated this verse in the *Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah*. Gileadi wrote: *"He had no distinguished appearance that we should notice him no pleasing aspect that we should find him attractive."* I would render it differently still. There was something more social, cultural and religious at play in this prophecy.



I would say, "*He had no bona fide authority that we should submit to it.*" Or perhaps, "*He had no standing, credibility, bona fides, he had no position that we should acknowledge him.*" You can examine carefully the words of the Hebrew text, and look at the third, fourth, fifth and sixth definition of the words. There are many alternatives and you can consider. However, you should not miss the fact this a description of Christ. It talks of Him growing up in a desolate place. This desolation is not merely that the ground is dry. The landscape is mankind. That generation is barren, devoid of the knowledge of God. We are told of Him coming to those in this barren wasteland. In Him will be a new "shoot" or "branch" or "tender plant" because He brings life again. In the presence of death, He is life. Those who see Him will ask, "Why should we believe you?" They do not want what He offers. Then you can consider the alternative definitions that let you use "authority, majesty or desirable thing."

What does society covet more than position, rank and authority? Christ did not come with such things. He came "beneath all things" and therefore society would have no regard for His authority. He came as someone considered a renegade, an outsider. He was easy to dismiss. He was easy to consider and say, "I'm having none of it. It's too great a risk to believe this stuff."

This is the seventh of ten talks I will give. In these I bear testimony as a witness to the truth. I would not blame you for thinking I am doing this to get noticed. That is not true, but it is the obvious thing to accuse. Unless, of course, what I declare to you is Truth and is Light. If I am telling the truth, then how you respond is important. I would ask you, for your own sake, to not falsely accuse me.

You do not need to respond to me. You do not need to like me. You do not ever need to mention my name again. But if what I am saying is the truth, you need to respond to it. This is between you and God, not you and me.

You need to choose how you will live your life from this day forward. The Lord is coming to judge the quick and the dead. You need to get right with Him. I am not going to be your leader. I am not going to form a church. I am not going to do that because it would not work anyway. But you can be healed, you can come to the Lord, and you can live your life differently. Look at the same scriptures in a new light and let His Spirit fill you and make a difference in the lives of others.

I do not trust myself to innovate. I will only say what I have been told. I fear my weakness, and my inadequacy. I fear offering up my own ideas. I do not want you to rely on me. Do not do that, when I am asking you not to do so. You rely on Him.

Just remember, when He speaks, I have described how He came! He is not going to do it differently. He is not going to make it easy for you. He is not going to tell you: "I'm going to put my thumb print on this, and here's the hall pass. Who wants the hall pass?" Nor is He going to declare about some leader: "He's got the hall pass! Follow him! He can never lead you astray! And were he to do so, I will remove him!" These are lies and false doctrine offered by institutions who to claim to possess keys of salvation. They claim God has finished His work, given His authority to men, and therefore they have the power to redeem you.<sup>124</sup>

I offer to save you using no such pretended keys. I only offer you the Lord. I ask you to give heed to Him. I will tell you no man can be trusted for all men are weak.<sup>125</sup> Even Peter, the night of the Lord's trial,<sup>126</sup> was a broken reed. If you put your weight on that, it would pierce your hand.<sup>127</sup> That is what men are, but not who our Lord is, for His course is straight. He does not even cast a shadow to the right or left, for His course is true.<sup>128</sup>

He was "*despised and rejected of men*," and that will always be true of both Him and His word! That will be true of whoever follows Him! They, like their Lord, will be despised and rejected of men.

He was "*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*." It was necessary for Him to be so, that He might know how to understand us. He grieved because He knew what He offered mankind, and none were (or are) willing to receive it. It was necessary for Him to experience sorrow and be acquainted with grief.

"*We hid as it were our faces from Him*," that is, we turned from Him. We will not give heed to what He offers. We prefer vanity to truth, pride to humility and we refuse to repent and return to Him.

<sup>124</sup> See 2 Ne. 28: 4-5.

<sup>125</sup> Ether 12: 27.

<sup>126</sup> See Luke 22: 54-62.

<sup>127</sup> A metaphor, taken from Isa. 36: 6, to warn against an unreliable source for support.

<sup>128</sup> Alma 7: 20.

"He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." The only person who has ever lived who deserved respect, and we "esteem him not." Still today we do not value what He offers to us. We prefer worldly success and proof that "Zion prospers" to satisfy our pride. We think only the respectable and prosperous can be true. Therefore we have no regard for what He offers.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." See He was, "smitten of God," because He was cast out of the synagogue. They were looking to stone Him. Why would they have expected God would honor a man who had been cast out of their synagogue? How could they know when He departed salvation likewise departed from them?

"Smitten of God and afflicted, But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Do not think you can follow that Master and be spared His path. He will let you understand what it means to follow Him. That understanding will come through experiences to help you relate to, and understand our Lord. You will endure affliction to know Him. If you are comfortable, He will make you uncomfortable. Then come to comfort you. If you are certain, He will make you uncertain. If you think you have it all figured out, He will offer up a contradiction, and leave you to struggle. Then when you can bear the contradiction no more, in the agony and anguish of your uncertainty He will delay the answer a little further still. He will delay until your heart is finally soft enough to come to Him in meekness. Then He will speak to you the words you need to hear. Sometimes, only just in time.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." All those variances we have taken off of the correct path, He paid the price to forgive.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him;"

Notice the astonishing statement, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him." Can you imagine! This seems so surprising at first. However, it is not.

In the account of Enoch account, this topic is explained from the viewpoint of heaven. Enoch was in heaven looking at the events of the earth. He was shown in vision the events to follow his time. Enoch saw the destruction of the wicked and spoke in the bitterness of his heart. We read in Moses chapter 7 verse 44: "Enoch saw this, he had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens: I will refuse to be comforted; but the Lord said unto Enoch: Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look. And it came to pass that Enoch looked; and from Noah, he beheld all the families of the earth; and he cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the Righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified and have eternal life? And the Lord said: It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance. And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his soul rejoiced, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain."

Enoch was weeping in the bitterness of his heart. "I will refuse to be comforted." All this loss, all this waste, all this death, all this wickedness! So much reason to mourn, "I will refuse to be comforted." He beheld men killing one another until God ended the bloodshed by destroying the wicked. It was so awful a scene Enoch determined nothing could possibly comfort him about the ruin of mankind.

But then the Lord says to Enoch, in effect, "No, no, no! Be happy! See! The Lamb is slaughtered!" This suffering and death of the Lamb will undo the destruction. Where there was now death before Enoch, the scene is transformed by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Through that sacrifice, hope is provided.

This is why Isaiah declared; "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." Is there no other way? No, there's no other way. God must offer Himself as a sacrifice.

Isaiah explained; *"He hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."* (Isaiah 53:10-11)

Christ gained the knowledge by which redemption comes to man by what He suffered. This is because through suffering for sin Christ found the path back from sin. As far as He was cast out, that is how far He knows the path back. There is no burden you bear He does not know how to carry. There is no dilemma you will confront He has not already found the way to resolve. From whatever distant place you fall away from God, He knows how to bring you back to peace with God.

Read the chapter on "Gethsemane" in *Come Let Us Adore Him*, and you will read an eyewitness account of how our Lord was smitten and afflicted, even beyond what man can endure. Each time He was able to find peace and reconciliation through love. There are only two great emotions: fear and love. Despite what He was put through, He overcame through love. Mankind allows their fears to control them. This is why we began in Boise speaking of courage and valiance.

This is the Son of God about whom the scriptures speak. This is the Lord who is asking you to come to Him. He is not aloof and He is not distant. If He will speak to someone in the military barracks, He will speak to you, every one of you. What He has to say to you is far more important than anything I can say. But I can bear testimony of Him, and I can assure you He will not leave your petitions unanswered. I can also assure you today is once again a day of salvation, and He has set His hand again.

No matter how unlikely it may appear, no matter how much reason there is to be skeptical, no matter how many more signs you think may need to be fulfilled, I'm telling you He has set His hand again. The heavens are opened for business, and the question is whether you are interested in becoming a customer or not.

Christ's suffering was redemptive. It lifted the Creation as a result of what He was able to do. If you think about it in physical terms, using a fulcrum to lift an object it is necessary to put the fulcrum underneath the whole thing. You cannot lift unless you put the fulcrum beneath. Christ is, in effect, the fulcrum that lifted the entirety of Creation. In order to lifting the entirety of the Creation, Christ needed to be bonded to all of creation. Therefore to lift all of you Christ likewise needs to be part of you.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 88. This is a marvelous transcript. It has a description you should keep in mind when trying to understand our Lord. Beginning in verse six we read:

*"He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. Now, verily I say unto you, that through the redemption which is made for you is brought to pass the resurrection from the dead. And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul. And the redemption of the soul is through him that quickeneth all things, in whose bosom it is decreed that the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it."*

Verse 6 and verse 13 are bookends. The statement Christ is "in all things" appears seven times. It appears throughout. Christ is in all things. Everything in this creation is sustained by the Light of Christ. He occupies it all by His light. He brings the light into it that powers all of this creation. He is more intelligent than all of it. He keeps it organized by the Light emanating from Him. This is why redemption is possible through Him. When He descended below it all, including death, He had the power to bring it all back to life with Him. He is the fulcrum. He is the one who must permeate all things, in order for Him to be able to lay hold upon all things, and in order therefore to bring back you back from the grave. This means at this very moment, you are in contact with Him through His Spirit. He is giving you the life you are presently living.

He is not a distant God. He is an immediate and an intimate God. You say He knows your thoughts, and that is true enough! That is because He is giving you the ability and the freedom to think. Therefore He knows how to judge you, because everything you have done, has used His power. He lends you life and light. We have only the illusion of privacy. We have the freedom to act and choose, our "agency," but our agency operates inside a creation powered by and dependent upon Him.

The scriptures make it clear this is the case. Mosiah chapter 2 verse 21: *"I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants."*

Therefore the energy powering your life is borrowed from Him. Your life comes from Him. It is His light you use to think. It is His light, His truth, and His intelligence that powers this present creation. He is sustaining you from moment to moment.

Verse 25 poses this question to us: *"And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you."*

So this mortal body you temporarily occupy, belongs to Him. Ultimately He will take it back, convert it to dust, and use the dust to reform something else. Nothing is lost. He will continue to do something else with all of this creation's material. Then someday He will resurrect your discarded body. But when He powers that, it will remain His still, because it will be a long time before you also "attain to the resurrection of the dead." Until then you will only borrow from Him, or someone like Him, for some time yet. The cycle will continue for so long as is needed for you to finally attain to the resurrection, as Christ has now done. He is the prototype and we are to follow Him.

Look at Alma chapter 7 beginning at verse 11. This declares He descended below all things. *"And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities. Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me. Now I say unto you that ye must repent, and be born again; for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness."*

He did this so that whatever is infirm in you and I can be repaired. He can, indeed has, overcome it all. Whatever you need for succor He can provide. He is the remedy for all this estate's limitations and infirmities. He has the knowledge now to do all that.

He is not experimenting as He deals with us. He knows what He to do and how to do it. He descended below it all in order to acquire the capacity to lift it all. The things He intends to lift back and repair include all of us. He intends to save everything. By saving everything, He will allow it to continue on in its course of development.

Those who are willing to receive less will continue in their lesser course. Those who are willing to receive more will continue on in their greater course. But all will continue on, freely using what God freely gives to both the righteous and the wicked. He makes the sun to shine on the righteous and the wicked, He makes the rain to fall on both the righteous and the wicked.<sup>129</sup> He only asks you to repent and turn to Him. He does not compel obedience. He offers you, if you will obey, grace for grace, that you too might receive more of Him in you. This is for your good. He wants us to be animated by a higher source than our own selfishness. He offers to have us become "one" with Him and His Father. No matter how you have developed at present, He continuously offers to you still more.

Now we return to Abinadi. I said a few moments ago he knew what spoke about. Let me read you just how very much Abinadi knew. This is Mosiah chapter 15 verse eight: *"And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice. And now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? Behold, I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed. And now what say ye? And who shall be his seed? Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that*

<sup>129</sup> Matt. 5: 45.

*all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God."*

In the talk given about Priesthood in Orem I read a quote from Joseph Smith about what is needed for the kingdom of God. Joseph said, "Whenever men can find out the will of God and find an administrator legally authorized from God, there is the kingdom of God; but where these are not, the kingdom of God is not."<sup>130</sup> If you can find anyone sent by God, there is the kingdom of God.<sup>131</sup> It was good doctrine when Joseph declared it. It is good doctrine when Abinadi declared it in the Book of Mosiah. It is still good doctrine when I declare it.

Any of you who will hear, and then hearken to their words will become His seed. Someone must be sent. Then you must hear it. Even then it does you no good if you will not hearken to it by acting in faith. It is by hearkening you obtain faith, and faith permits you to meet God. You will find redemption, you will hear His voice, and you will become a holy vessel because His word will reside in you.

You will have no doubt about your salvation because you will hear Him declare it in His own voice. You will know He is no respecter of persons. You will know that you, like any other person, can come and look to Him and Him alone for your salvation. You needn't be dependent upon any other person or system for salvation. You too can join in singing the song of redeeming love.

We will discuss more of this as the discussion moves along. For today it is only necessary to introduce the fact Christ is the redemption of all things. When this His religion is here on the earth, it is the same in every age. Men receive only as much as they will tolerate, and we learn only what is kept in incomplete records. But the religion of Christ is always the same, yesterday, today and forever. Turn to Mormon chapter 9 and begin at verse seven: *"And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healing, nor speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so, he does not understand them. For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing? And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles. But behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. Behold, he created Adam, and by Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man. And because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord."*

It is true this will happen as the Lord resurrects you, but I want to pause on that. *"Because of the redemption of man which came by Jesus Christ they are bought back presence of the Lord, yea this is wherein all men are redeemed."* If I were punctuating it, I would put a period there and I'd start a new thought in a new verse.

*"Now is the day of redemption. Because of the redemption of man which came by Jesus Christ they are brought back into the presence of the Lord, yea this is wherein all men are redeemed."* What was the Fall of man? It was to be cast out from the presence of God. What is the redemption of man? It is to be brought back into the presence of God. Today is the day of redemption. Today is the day of salvation, if you come back into His presence.

Look at Ether chapter 3 beginning at verse 13: *"When he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you."* This is the gospel of Christ. What is it you must know to have eternal life? You must know Him. *"And this is life eternal that you might know Him."* This passage in Ether affirms that because the Brother of Jared knew these things, Christ came to him. Christ returned him to His presence. Christ redeemed him from the Fall *"Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall."* This is Christ speaking in the first person. He is defining what it means to be redeemed. Who is better qualified to define what it means to be redeemed than the Redeemer? Reconciliation comes through Christ. Reconciliation comes with Christ. Reconciliation is by Christ. And Christ has the power to redeem you all.

<sup>130</sup> TPJS, p. 274.

<sup>131</sup> See TPJS, p. 272-273 where Joseph explains that since John the Baptist was sent by God, "the Kingdom of God for a season seemed to rest with John alone."

I want to look at how the return of the Lord has been foretold by the prophets. Read about His return in the Doctrine and Covenants. We will pick out only a couple of these to consider.

In D&C 45 verse 16 He says: *"And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh, and spake unto them, saying: As ye have asked of me concerning the signs of my coming, in the day when I shall come in my glory in the clouds of heaven, to fulfil the promises that I have made unto your fathers."* This is how He intends to return. He will come "in His glory in the clouds" to fulfill the promises.

Go to D&C 49 beginning at verse 22: *"And again, verily I say unto you, that the Son of Man cometh not in the form of a woman, neither of a man traveling on the earth. Wherefore, be not deceived, but continue in steadfastness, looking forth for the heavens to be shaken, and the earth to tremble and to reel to and fro as a drunken man, and for the valleys to be exalted, and for the mountains to be made low, and for the rough places to become smooth—and all this when the angel shall sound his trumpet."* This is how He promises to come. It will not be as a man traveling on the earth. In His present state of ascent that would be problematic. He has "attained to the resurrection" and therefore any further descent into mortality is no longer possible.

He may send messengers walking as men on the earth. He may send people to say something from Him. But when He returns He will do so in glory.

In Section 133, beginning at 46 we read: *"And it shall be said: Who is this that cometh down from God in heaven with dyed garments; yea, from the regions which are not known, clothed in his glorious apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? And he shall say: I am he who spake in righteousness, mighty to save. And the Lord shall be red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine—vat."*

I should add parenthetically, that His apparel is red, period. He will be clothed in red, period. I do not correct other people's "prophecies" because I have not been asked to do so. Therefore I remain silent. But I can tell you that if someone tell you of a vision that varies from this description, I will add my voice to Joseph's. When He appears, His apparel will be red.

*"And so great shall be the glory of his presence that the sun shall hide his face in shame, and the moon shall withhold its light, and the stars shall be hurled from their places."* This does not sound to me like an event to take place in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. They would never rent it out for that purpose anyway. But you are free to hearken to whatever voice you choose. Chase every tempting tale you hear.

As for me, the Lord has expounded to me the scriptures. I have no interest in telling you all the things I have been shown. I am interested in letting Him show you, too. He's the Keeper of the Gate.<sup>132</sup> He is the One who is Mighty to Save.<sup>133</sup> He can tell you what you need to know, as He has told me what I need to know.

There will always be 10,000 voices that rise up in opposition to say, "lo here and lo there," and "come and hearken to my precept." I don't ask you to hearken to anything other than what is in the scriptures. You should ask yourself the same question that Malachi posed, *"Who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall stand when he appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like a fullers soap, and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."* Yes, who shall stand? *"The day comes that shall burn them up so that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."* And who shall abide that day?

Well, we have an answer to that question. *The Book of Mormon* was designed as the scripture, as the foundation, the keystone for our day. Go to chapter 9 of third Nephi and read what is said there. This is the Lord speaking. 3 Nephi 9: 12-13: *"And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and their abominations. O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?"*

The people who survived the destruction preceding His appearance to the Nephites were more righteous. We must be likewise. The Book of Mormon is the great prophecy for our day. We should look at it as warning us, not merely as history of a fallen people. It was intended as a warning to us based on their history, and not merely as history.

<sup>132</sup> 2 Ne. 9: 41.

<sup>133</sup> Alma 34: 18.

The “more righteous” survived then, and will likewise survive His Second Coming. The “more righteous” were not sin free. They were more righteous because they hearkened to what the Lord told them.

This did not mean they weren't a work-in-process with weaknesses and frailties. They were willing to hear His voice in the messengers He sent, and to respond to Him. These were the few people spared. They were “more righteous” because they received His message from an authorized messenger. They had faith in the word declared to them.

Go to chapter 10 and read verse 12: *"And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared."* Please notice the criteria. This is the definition of “more righteous.” That was how they, and in turn you, get spared from destruction. This is how you become “His seed” (to use Abinadi’s description): *"They who received the prophets and stoned them not."* Please understand this is Christ speaking.

Keep in mind the timeframe He spoke. Read 3 Nephi chapter 9 verse 22 to fix the timing: *"Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved."*

The Lord had achieved His triumph of the resurrection by the time He spoke these words. In that triumphant state He destroyed the wicked. I repeated Joseph Smith’s words a little previously in this paper. Read his words again: *"I want you to know that God in his last days while certain individuals are proclaiming his name is not trifling with you or me."* We all need to take seriously the Lord’s warning to us.

Christ is coming again to judge the world. There will be those who refuse to listen to His message. They will pay this same price. He has told us all how to be the more righteous and therefore spared.

Do not think for one moment, Christ's coming judgment will not be terrible. Do not think its scope will not be cosmic. Do not think all things will continue as they always have been. Do not be misled by thinking you can hearken to just any principle, listen to any false or incomplete gospel proclaimed by any pretender, and survive the day of His coming. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. The word of God comes only when He is the author of it.

Remember not to look for a Messiah to come who has already come, and *"the Son of Man cometh not in the form of a woman, neither a man traveling on the earth."* (D&C 49: 22.) He is going to *"come down in heaven from the presence of God and consume the wicked with unquenchable fire."* (D&C 63: 34.)

Religion is, or ought to be, deeply personal. Religion is not something at its most intimate level can even be shared.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 76. The closing verses in the Vision beginning at verse 114 tell us: *"But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass 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 man 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 Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him; To whom he grants this 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."* There are things both unlawful and impossible to make known. But they are neither unlawful nor impossible for God to make known. You are invited to receive them “while in the flesh” or, in other words, now, in mortality. This is not kept from us until the afterlife. This is what God offers now.

I have been in that world of glory. I have abided in His presence. I know things not lawful to be uttered. But everything I have said today is lawful, is contained in scripture and is the Lord's invitation to you. You need to realize this language in Section 76 is your invitation. God did not say, “There are people I do not love.” He loves us all. The difficulty is that we do not love Him.

He says He can bestow this knowledge on any who love Him. The question isn't His love of us because that is a given. Those few of you who are sitting in this room with a hard heart, rejecting what I have to say, He loves you every bit as much as those of you whose hearts are soft, opened and believing.

It is not that God loves one more than another, it is that some of you love Him and others do not. By this He knows whether you love Him: It is whether your heart is soft and willing to receive, or you deliberately choose to be blinded by the false traditions handed down to you, to which you hold fast because you have no faith.

Religion is intended to be between you and God, deeply personal and individually redemptive. Christ is as accessible to you as He was to Moses on the mount. And what was Moses' ambition? It was to bring everyone up on the mount to likewise see God. What did the children of Israel say? "No, you go talk to Him. We don't want to." And today why don't we want to see God? Because instead of us meeting Him it is easier to have pride, to study the subject of God, and not change your heart. You can become a respected authority without ever knowing Him. You can expound history, can parse through the vocabulary of the Restoration, can pretend to prove what God is going to do next, without ever knowing Him. All this is vanity.

I will tell you what God is going to do next. You may find it hard to believe and that is your right. But what God is doing next is what is going on right now, today in Ephraim, Utah.

In the pride of your heart, blindness of your mind, and in the hardness of your soul, some of you will not receive God. But God is saying to each of you, "Ignore the man with a microphone and come to Me." Although I speak as He has asked today, I am not important. The message is, because it is not mine. Joseph bore testimony of God. I bear testimony of Joseph. If Joseph was one witness, I am a second. I have used Joseph's revelations and sermons to teach today. Believe in them, for they are true.

Some of you refuse to say, "Perhaps the words of scripture means something different and more intensely personal than I have ever taken them to mean before." They do. They are for you. God wants you to respond to them.

I recognize that I am not the best messenger. I wish I had the voice of an archangel. I wish I could do something to soften the hearts of you all. Some of you will never respond to the Lord because you cannot overcome your preoccupation with me. That saddens me and I regret that deeply. But that is your choice, and you can choose differently.

Christ is in fact holy, and I am deeply aware of the fact that I am not. I can't redeem any of you, but He can. I can testify of Him, but when it comes down to it, you should be able to feel faith. You should be able to feel something important was communicated by God today. Some of you know that. In the Doctrine and Covenants you are warned it can be taken from you. The wicked one comes, and he takes away the light from you. He does this through your disobedience. What is the source of your disobedience? *"That wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers."* (D&C 93:39.)

My voice will fall silent in your ears in a few moments. You are going to leave and go on. There are going to be a thousand voices and traditions galloping to intervene and take away your attention. Come the morrow, you are going to attend meetings in which you hear a lot of things expounded that just aren't true. Their traditions will take over, and your families are going urge upon you the tradition they have handed down. You will sing about blessed noble pioneer ancestors, and the cacophony of voices will arise and the critics will chirp up. Through all these the wicked one will come and take away Light and Truth.

I cannot be with you always, and if I were, it would only cripple you. And I'm not here to cripple you. You must study these things. You must ask God.

I hate the fact these 10 talks will all be given by me. I wish they were 10 talks given by 10 different people. That way you would not say, "Well, he is something important." I am nothing. I am keenly aware of my own limitations. But I am also keenly aware of our Lord. When I have had discussions with Him, they have invariably involved parsing through the scriptures and Him explaining things to me. When I have inquired and gotten answers, it is because there are things in the scriptures I did not understand.

I bear witness of Christ. I have seen Him! I know He lives! I know He is coming in judgment, and I know that before His coming, He has wanted some things to be declared. I have been as faithful as I can be in declaring the things asked of me. I sense keenly my own inadequacy. I beg you to overlook all that and not let me become a stumbling block. Look at the scriptures, look at the words of Christ, look at the explanations we got from Joseph, look at the things that are true, and go to Him in faith believing.



I began with a description of Him. I want to repeat that. The Lord is affable, but He is not gregarious. He is approachable. He is not aloof. He is patient and He is willing to guide and willing to teach. He is intelligent, but He not overbearing. He is humble and approachable in His demeanor, even though His power is absolutely undeniable. Therefore, He is both a Lamb and a Lion. If you come to Him in the day He offers redemption to you, you will be coming to the Lamb. But if you wait for His coming in judgment, you are waiting on the Lion, and you will not like what you will see.

I asked you to remember He is quick to forgive sin. He allows all to come to Him. He is no respecter of persons. I said that when I began, I'm saying it again as we end today.

He is real! He lives! His work of redemption continues right now, just as it continued throughout His mortal life, just as it continued as He hung on the cross, just as it continued in His resurrection in Palestine, and as He came to visit with the Nephites. He ministered to other sheep, and He has called other people. There are, in fact, holy men who ye know not of who still remain on earth.

If there was anything more I could do or say that I thought would convince or persuade you to believe in Him, I would do it or I would say it. But despite it all, I realize some of you are going to walk out of here thinking that I'm just another one of these latter-day blowhards. That is all good and well. Please however, give heed to the scriptures I've read, the words of Joseph I quoted, and the fact I do have a witness that Christ is approachable. He is every bit as much alive today as when He was when He walked on the road to Emmaus. He is every bit as willing to come and redeemed you from the Fall as He was willing to redeem others before. His work and His glory culminates with your redemption. His success is redeeming you. You think the scriptures give you hope of eternal life. That is true. I have used them today to show you how great things the Lord has done. The scriptures testify what I am saying is true.

If you think, "Well, He is aloof and He is distant, and this is an impossible high thing to achieve." The fact of the matter is, it is a greater achievement on His end to redeem you, than your end to be redeemed. There is more anxiety, more desire, and more rejoicing in heaven when He redeems someone from the Fall than there is here.

He came, He suffered, He lived, He died, He did what He did in order to lift all of Creation, and you are inextricably connected to Him. Therefore, trust that. Receive Him. It may start very slow, very small, very distant. Act on that, hearken to that, it gets louder. You will never wind up in the company of Gods and angels, if you are not willing to have faith in those preliminary things you first receive. Ask. Then go and do what He asks.

When I first got an answer to prayer sitting in a barracks in New Hampshire, if I hadn't acted on that I would never have beheld the Lord, much less been taught by Him. But I did, and I do. Whatever He still asks of me, I do. It does not matter how unpleasant I find it, or how reluctant I may be. I go and I do. You need to do likewise. It may not even make much sense to you when you're going and doing. You may think you are offending when you absolutely do not intend to do so. You may find the people you love rejecting you.

I lost friends and was rejected when I converted to Mormonism. Then I found a new family in the faith I accepted as a nineteen year old. After forty years I was rejected by that new family. I have laid everything on the line for the Lord twice now in a single lifetime. I cannot tell you what sacrifices He may ask of you, but whatever He asks of you, that do you.

Let me end by bearing testimony and witness to you, that the things I've been saying, beginning in Boise and going on through Phoenix, the beginning date, the ending date, the content, the fact that there are 10 of them, the timeframe in which they are being delivered, the fact He wanted us to begin on the first day of the 40th year, and He wanted us to end on the last day of the 40th year, those things are not my doing. He is the author of this all.

Hearken to the word of the Lord. End your days on this barren treadmill and rise up. There is no reason to fail when the Lord offers you His word, and even His presence, today. He will not leave you here comfortless, but He will come and take up His abode with you. The idea this is only to happen "in your heart" is an old sectarian notion, and is false. Joseph Smith declared that, and I declare he spoke the truth.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.





## A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit

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I want to remind you that when we were in Orem we talked about priesthood. I'd like you to keep in mind the material addressed in Orem as we proceed today.

Doctrine and Covenants section 84 has a description of events at the time of Moses, beginning at verse 19. *"And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest."* [By the way, I should add as a parenthetical thought, "the ordinances thereof," is far more expansive than simply a set of rites or rituals, because when the higher priesthood is present on the earth, everything done by the higher priesthood is an ordinance. Once it is been ordained by God to take place, and God's hand is behind what takes place, those events under the direction of that priesthood is all an ordinance, and therefore in them you find the power of godliness.]

*"And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. 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 while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory."* [We have talked about this before, "the glory of God is intelligence, or another words Light and Truth,"<sup>134</sup> therefore, "His rest" is to be filled with His glory. In other words, to be filled with Light and Truth, or to comprehend things you do not at present comprehend. The purpose of the glory of God is to reveal hidden things and bring greater understanding.<sup>135</sup>]

*"Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also."* [At that point ancient Israel's expectation ended anciently. For them, there was no possibility for Zion.]

I want you to think about what comes next. This is a topic we will revisit today. These words mean a great deal: *"therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness."* [And He did this in "His wrath." We think of God as very loving and benign, after the sacrifice of Christ. These words seem to be "Old Testament like" and not "New Testament like." Today, hopefully, when we get through the discussion, we will all know more about the nature of God's ire and God's approval. Likewise, His disapproval feels terrible.]

In a prior talk we looked at Mormon 9: 2-5. We considered the reaction people will have in the last day of judgment. Those verses describe what it will be like to stand in the presence of a just and holy being while unprepared. They will feel awful, even condemned. However, I pointed out in that passage God does nothing other than exist. The disappointment in the mind of man is so exquisite that Joseph Smith compares it to a lake of fire and brimstone.<sup>136</sup>

Therefore, God "in His wrath" simply withdrew from ancient Israel. He took a step back because the people Moses led were not suited to be in His presence. Therefore, God withdrawing is how His "wrath" manifests itself. If He withdraws from you, that should be felt keenly as an absence and rejection.

The incident referred to in modern revelation about Israel's rejection (section 84), is set out in Exodus chapter 20, beginning at verse 18: *"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was."*

The Israelites Moses led did not want to encounter Him. This was not because God's presence is so terrible it drives men from Him. That cannot be true because Moses approached Him, Joseph, Abraham, Isaiah all approached Him. However, God's presence

<sup>134</sup> D&C 93: 36.

<sup>135</sup> Alma 12: 9-10.

<sup>136</sup> See TPJS p. 357.

makes every man evaluate who and what they are. Although we can lie to ourselves about how good we are, when the measuring stick used is God, we are unable to deceive ourselves. When the comparison is to God, all of us come short. Even when the Lord testifies to you that your sins are forgiven, you still recognize you fall short. To the extent a man has confidence in the presence of the Lord it is wholly derived from Him. He must strengthen you, because if He does not, we would all retire in shame.

Doctrine and Covenants Section 124 is a revelation given in January 1841. In it the Lord offered to the Saints a return of "the fullness" which had been lost. Beginning at verse 28, the Lord said through Joseph: "*For there is not a place found on earth that he [He" being the Lord] may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.*"

Skipping to verse 31: "*But I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me...*" [See, this commandment was unto everyone who at that point, who claimed to be a Saint. All of them, every one of them, was put under the equal burden: "*to build a house unto me.*" ]

*"...and I grant unto you [all of "you" meaning all those claiming to be Saints] a sufficient time to build a house unto me; and during this time your baptisms shall be acceptable unto me. But behold, at the end of this appointment your baptisms for your dead shall not be acceptable unto me; and if you do not these things at the end of the appointment ye shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God."* [It's interesting that in verse 31 it says "*your baptisms,*" but in verse 32 it says instead "*your baptisms for your dead.*" This suggests that after verse 31, if we fail in verse 32, that our baptisms will continue to be acceptable, but our vicarious work would not, and the Church would then be rejected.]

If you skip to 34, talking about this proposed temple required to be constructed: "*For therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory.*" ["Honor" being the promise from God which would follow us into the afterlife. It comprises what you can expect to receive from God because of His oath and covenant. The word "glory" refers to intelligence, or knowledge and understanding. Glory is Light and Truth. It includes those things not presently understood, but which God offered to the Saints, at that point.]

Well, He gives to us in this same revelation a way in which we can determine if those Saints met the requirement the Lord has set. Here is the measurement, beginning in verse 43: "*And ye shall build it on the place where you have contemplated building it, for that is the spot which I have chosen for you to build it.*" [So they contemplated a place to build it, the Lord approved the place they chose, and this would become the spot God would consecrate.] "*If ye labor with all your might, I will consecrate that spot that it shall be made holy. And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.*" ["They" being both the people, as well as "they" being also those chosen to lead them. "They" who had been chosen included both the Prophet Joseph Smith, and his brother, Hyrum. Hyrum was the one appointed in this same revelation to receive priesthood and be appointed to hold the sealing power.<sup>137</sup> Hyrum Smith was the one designated to be the successor to Joseph Smith in the event of Joseph's death.<sup>138</sup> However the one the Lord would take first was the successor, Hyrum. Joseph died knowing his successor had first fallen.]

*"If, then they shall not be moved out of their place. But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest, because they pollute mine holy grounds, and mine holy ordinances, and charters, and my holy words which I give unto them. And it shall come to pass that if you build a house unto my name, and do not do the things that I say, I will not perform the oath which I make unto you, neither fulfil the promises which ye expect at my hands, saith the Lord. For instead of blessings, ye, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments upon your own heads, by your follies, and by all your abominations, which you practise before me, saith the Lord."* [Examine the history of the events between January 1841 and the death of Joseph on June 27 of 1844. Ask yourself whether or not the Saints used every effort to build the House they were commanded to build. Following the revelation did the Saints apply the required effort in the timeframe allowed by God for the House of the Lord to be completed. Look into the history of Nauvoo and see if you can find when the Lord came to the temple there. He was required to come, according to the January 1841 revelation, because He alone could restore what had been lost.<sup>139</sup> It was Him who was required to come to return the glory to the House of the Lord. It was Him who would bestow upon the Saints the lost fullness of the priesthood. It was the Lord Himself that required a place at which He could meet with His people. Once Joseph and Hiram were killed what happened to the Saints in Nauvoo? Were they "blessed" following the martyrdom? Were they protected and not moved out of their place? Was the

<sup>137</sup> See D&C 124: 124.

<sup>138</sup> See D&C 28:7; 124: 94-95

<sup>139</sup> D&C 124: 28.

place consecrated for their sake? Or did they experience, in the ordeals that drove them out of Nauvoo and into the wilderness, suffering? Do the events reveal the Saints suffered cursings, wrath, indignations, and judgments upon their heads? Read the events and you reach a considered conclusion about whether we, in our day, mirror what happened at the time of Moses. Did we not in our day, just as in the day of Moses, elected to say, "you, Joseph and Hiram, you go talk to the Lord for us" because we will not do what was asked of us? When in our day the Saints counted the cost and considered the glory of the House of the Lord, it was no more desired by then it was for those ancient Israelites to climb up the mountain where there were thunderings, lightnings and earthquakes underway.]

I'm going to make some assumptions for purposes of trying to get us back, able and open to consider some things about our present plight. I know some of you think the LDS Church has never denied the idea of continuing revelation for even lay members of the Church. I also know there is some reason to draw a contrast between the ancient Israelites and ourselves, precisely because we claim to believe we can receive revelation. But let me read you a quote, a quote that has been used in criticism of me with some regularity. It is from Joseph Fielding Smith: *"When revelation comes for the guidance of this people, you may be sure that it will not be presented in some mysterious manner, contrary to the order of the Church. It will go forth in such form that the people will understand that it comes from those who are in authority. It will not spring up in some distant part of the Church and be in the hands of some obscure individual without authority."*

This quote is used to challenge my authority, to preach, teach, exhort and expound. If you want to lawyer this, as some of those, even who preside over the Church want to do, then I would remind all of those who hear or read this that, in the Church, the First Presidency has a quorum which is equal in authority with the First Presidency, and that is the Quorum of the 12.<sup>140</sup> And there is a Quorum of 70, which likewise forms a quorum equal in authority with the 12.<sup>141</sup> And then there is the High Council that is established as a group equal in authority with the Quorum of the 12 and the First Presidency.<sup>142</sup> All of these separate groups are considered to be equal in holding the authority of the church, which is the definition of the keys of the kingdom.<sup>143</sup> God in His wisdom saw fit before I was excommunicated from the LDS Church to call me into a quorum equal in authority with the First Presidency, the Quorum of the 12, and the 70. Unlike these others who dismissed me from the church, I did not exercise control, dominion and authority over others. The priesthood I hold cannot be regarded as having come to an end, if I was excommunicated without just cause. "Amen" to the priesthood or the authority of those that exercise unrighteous dominion.<sup>144</sup> So if you want to lawyer this, I can tell you, I hold the keys of the kingdom. But I don't want or need to lawyer it. It is not necessary for me to make such a claim. I do not intend to preside over anyone. I do not intend to claim the right to control any other man, nor to direct them. You, on the other hand, get subjected to this kind of claim and this kind of treatment regularly. For me, it has thankfully ended.

I have one and only one desire, to try to persuade you to believe in the Restoration through Joseph Smith. It is not and has never been completed. It is a work yet before us. It is a work largely neglected since the time of Joseph and Hyrum took their last breath. The prophecies that were delivered to Joseph Smith, both by Christ in the First Vision and by Moroni on the night of the first visit, (which we began this with, in Boise, Idaho) should be a rallying cry for us to rise up and lay hold upon things. It's a rallying cry, a prophecy that does not fulfill itself. It will only be fulfilled by what you do. Whether or not you fulfill those prophecies is dependent upon whether you, like the ancient Israelites, elect not to go up into God's presence. Or whether you, like Moses, like Joseph, like Hyrum, choose instead to forsake your sins and move forward even in the face of your own weakness and unworthiness. There isn't one of us in this room that should not kneel before the presence of a just and holy being. There isn't one of us who, if instructed to stand before Him, would not keenly feel the inadequacy of doing so. Not one of us. But there are some here who have been in His presence, myself included.

You don't read my email and that's probably a good thing, because if you did, you'd be overwhelmed at the many insults that come in. But among all those emails, some are filled with gratitude. I can tell you there are a number who have borne testimony that since reading the book, *The Second Comforter*, and since taking seriously the promises made through Joseph and in the Scriptures, there are a number who like me, have a witness of our resurrected Lord. It can and it does happen. And hopefully as we get to this material today you will have confidence in your own ability to rise up.

<sup>140</sup> D&C 107: 24.

<sup>141</sup> D&C 107: 26.

<sup>142</sup> D&C 107: 37.

<sup>143</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, *The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood*, April 2014 General Conference,

stated in relevant part: "Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood [holders] to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on earth." (Quoting from M. Russell Ballard, *Men and Women in the Work of the Lord*, New Era, Apr. 2014, 4.)

<sup>144</sup> D&C 121: 37.

Let's make some assumptions for our purposes today. First, let's assume that we are like ancient Israel. Let's assume we were also left outside of God's presence when He offered to come and dwell generally among the Saints back in Nauvoo. Let's assume this was not what God wanted for us.

Let's assume that these things have, just like they did anciently, "kindled God's anger" as we read about in D&C 84:24. Let's assume we have now, as a body of believers, generally been left with something lesser, which is just like what was described in D&C 84: 26. Therefore, under these assumptions, only the lesser priesthood, which includes within it the ministering of angels, was left for us just like ancient Israel.

Well, assuming all of that, what shall we do? Turn to Alma chapter 12, a great chapter by the way. Alma 12: 9-11 that talks about if you harden your hearts you get less. But if you're heart is soft and open, you get more:

*"And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: 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 he 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."*

You are the regulator that determines whether on the one hand you get more, or on other hand if you get less. Some of those who have come today with a hard heart are going to find themselves being condemned in the day of judgment, because you are given an opportunity to have a soft heart and you elected knowingly not to do so. Can you imagine your shame when you, in a council that will include those present today, come back from this experience and confess, "Yes, I was there, but I didn't believe. Yes, I was there, but I wouldn't accept it." None of us would vote to sustain you in the coming eons, in the coming experiences after this probation, none of us will want you to be a minister to bring salvation to pass for others. None of us will then have confidence in you. Soften your heart now. Today is the day of salvation. This is the moment you came down here to face. The test is underway, the challenges are in front of you. You better have ears to hear. God will judge you, but more importantly, you will judge yourself.

Well, skipping to verse 28. *"And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man, behold, then he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them."* [He wants us to know! The glory of God is intelligence, or another words, Light and Truth, which is knowledge of things. He wants us to know these things.] *"Therefore [because this is God's desire] he sent angels to converse with them, who [this is referring to the angels] caused men to behold of his [God's] glory."* [So the office held by angels includes the duty to educate and to prepare, and then to cause man, who receive and entertain the angels, to then behold the glory of God.]

The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words Light and Truth.<sup>145</sup> Ultimately the greatest truth is God Himself. If you entertain angels, and the angels instruct you, and if you have been in their presence, you acquire from them the strength, fortification, knowledge, or in other words the ordination, making it possible for you to go on and pass by them. They surely are sentinels which can bar entry. You must pass them by to enter into the glory of the Lord.<sup>146</sup> And so, if you will follow this process, it really should not matter if we are in a dispensation in which priesthood authority is limited to the ministering of angels. Ministering angels are sufficient to bring you into the glory of God, if you will receive and give heed to them. That's the office of their ministry, that's what they're responsible to do. *"And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men."* [As part of the title to the first book I wrote the phrase, *Conversing with the Lord Through the Veil*, was included. That is the objective, that is what the "lesser priesthood" can equip you to accomplish. Even if the remaining priesthood left behind is nothing but a remnant of what was offered us.]

What did Joseph say about all the prophets of the Old Testament? He said they all held Melchizedek priesthood, and were all ordained by God Himself.<sup>147</sup> They ministered in a society that was deficient, limited, excluded from the presence of God. But those who received and entertained angels were brought up to where they needed to be for redemption. God Himself

<sup>145</sup> D&C 93: 36.

<sup>146</sup> D&C 132: 19.

<sup>147</sup> TPJS, p. 180-181.

ordained them. Should you not likewise have this same hope? Should you not rise up above the level of those who are content to have less? Should you not be willing to mount up on that fiery mountain? Despite the thunderings and lightnings, despite the earthquake; despite the fact you may not believe yourself to be worthy, you're still capable of coming aboard.

Look at Moroni chapter 7 beginning at verse 29: "*And because he hath done this, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased? Behold I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they [the angels] are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father...*" [Because when you move from repentance you grow into covenants. This is why we spoke about that subject in Centerville. These subjects flow into one another. This is why these talks are given during the last year, unfolding how you get back into the presence of God. Because it surely is necessary for there to be a rescue mission, and the rescue mission is designed to raise you, to elevate you, to redeem you.]

"...to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men." [In a word, those who receive and entertain angels have an obligation then, to declare the words so that others might likewise have faith in Him. That word having been declared unto you, gives you the hope, the faith and confidence, that you likewise can do so. This is so that the covenants made by the Father will be brought to pass. Fortunately, Aaronic priesthood is exceptionally durable. Fortunately, unlike Melchizedek priesthood (which can only be exercised with extraordinary care and delicacy), Aaronic priesthood endures weaknesses and abuse. The purpose of Melchizedek priesthood, as I talked about in Orem, is to bless. The purpose of Aaronic priesthood is to condemn and to judge, and to set a law by which men can condemn themselves. Having the authority to do that to yourself is remarkably durable, and unfortunately used with great regularity to do just that. Those that have it generally abide by so lesser a law, that they wind up judging and condemning one another, and parading before God as a march of fools, yelling and yammering, pointing and blaming, complaining and bitching, about what everyone else's inadequacies are. The purpose of Melchizedek priesthood is to sound the signal: "Know ye the Lord." And eventually, that sermon will be heard by enough, that there will be none left who need to be told, "Know ye the Lord," for they shall all know Him.<sup>148</sup> Then everyone will take up with Him their concerns, and not with one another.] Track 7

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 93 and look at verse 1. I've treated this at some length in what I've written, but I want to read it because it outlines what is required: "*VERILY, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am.*"

Knowing the Lord! "*This is life eternal to know thee, the only wise and true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*"<sup>149</sup> [Knowledge of the things of God—in this context knowledge is salvation,<sup>150</sup> this knowledge is the fullness of the Gospel. Forsake your sins, come to Christ, call on His name, obey His voice, and keep His commandments. Obeying His voice in your situation, may be very different than obeying His voice in mine. Your circumstances are entirely peculiar to you. You are living your life and I am living mine. You are asked to minister in your family, to minister in your neighborhood, to function among your friends, to deal with people that you know. I, on the other hand, am required not only to do that in my circumstances, but also to come and talk to you good people. Whether you believe me sincere or not, I would much rather not have been asked to do this. But apparently, in the economy of God, no one else was willing to do it.]

Go to Ether chapter 3. I want to define what the promise made in Section 93 is of "know that I am." You need to know "the I am." Verse 13 of Ether chapter 3: "*And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; [that is the definition, that is what redemption is] therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters.*"

<sup>148</sup> Heb. 8: 11.

<sup>149</sup> John 17: 3.

<sup>150</sup> "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge..." TPJS, p. 217.



This is the definition, this is the what the promise means. Then look at what happens in verse 18: *"And he ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man might know that he was God, because of the many great works which the Lord had showed unto him."* [This is the definition of the glory of God. This is the definition of Light and Truth, to know these things, to know these things about God.] *"And because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw the finger of Jesus, which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he knew that it was the finger of the Lord; and he had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting."* [He had faith yet in things he was commanded to do, because they had not yet happened. But he no longer had faith in the existence of Christ, because that had been replaced by knowledge of Him. Knowledge supplants faith.]

We looked at John's testimony in Doctrine and Covenants section 93, and we need to look at that again to remind you before we get to the next point. Between section 93 verse 7 and verse 20, he describes the process by which Christ was called to be the Son of God. I want to skip to verse 12.

*"And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace; And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first. And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son. And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father; And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John. I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness. For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace."* [That is what you do to worship! That is how you are to worship! We grow in grace as we exhibit the grace that is given unto us. We do so in order for us to obtain, likewise, the fullness.]

Now here's a sober moment that I want to remind you about, which need not continue. Go to Ether chapter 12. This is Moroni as he is completing the translation of the Jaredite record his father said would be included as part of his father's book, *the Book of Mormon*. But his father did not translate that record. So Moroni translated it and included within *the Book of Mormon*. And as he is wrapping up his translation he includes a dialogue between himself and Christ. It is a very sobering dialogue in Ether chapter 12 beginning verse 36: *"And it came to pass that I [this is I Moroni, the translator, this isn't Ether, this is Moroni's interlude] prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father. And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles."*

Do you see what happened in the exchange? Moroni begged the Lord to give unto the Gentiles, grace. And the Lord says, "It doesn't matter to you if I do not give the Gentiles grace." Christ did not give Moroni what he asked for! He would not promise that the Gentiles would receive grace! The Lord could not do that, because it would abrogate both the law (grace for grace), and our agency, because we are free to choose. Therefore, the Gentiles inherited the Restoration with no promise from Christ to Moroni, that those who would receive this record would receive grace of God. That is dependent upon you.]

*"And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood. And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things."* [This is that Lord who, when you pass through the thunderings and lightnings, you will speak with. He talks in plain humility. It is not His position to cause fear in your heart, but to bring to you comfort. His purpose is not to leave you comfortless, but to come and comfort you.<sup>151</sup> It's you that imposes the barrier. It's you that brings the fear. That is rightly so, because we ought to fear. But what we should fear is our own weakness and our own sins. Our greatest sin is our ignorance.]

*"And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing. And now, I would commend you...[this is Moroni commending us, the Gentiles, who are going to receive this book] ...I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of*

<sup>151</sup> See John 14:18.

*them, may be and abide in you forever.*" [He first asked for grace to be given. God cannot give it and therefore would not promise it. Then he turned to us and he asks, "You Gentiles, please, seek for His grace, it cannot otherwise be given you." *The Book of Mormon's* assessment of us is sober indeed. The foolish arrogance with which we read that book blinds us to our predicament.]

The plea from Moroni to us is to, "seek for grace." It is through grace we obtain charity. It is through charity we are able to bless others. Because the fact of the matter is you cannot bless anyone or hold that priesthood primarily designed to minister blessings and not cursings, unless you have charity for others. This is never given unless you are willing to do things you would rather not do, thereby offering a sacrifice to God. You do not get trusted by God to hold this honor unless you are willing to subordinate your will to the will of the Father. It is the purpose of the Father, and the purpose behind His higher priesthood, to bless all of His offspring. Therefore, it is only through grace you can acquire what you need to be of use to God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

God will make a general appearance to judge the world. You should seek Him beforehand so that you can rejoice at His appearing. In Doctrine and Covenants section 38 beginning at verse 7 He promises His general appearing: "*But behold, verily, verily, I say unto you that mine eyes are upon you. I am in your midst and ye cannot see me; But the day soon cometh that ye shall see me, and know that I am; for the veil of darkness shall soon be rent, and he that is not purified shall not abide the day.*" [We all will see Him, and some will survive, but some others will not abide the day, but all will know Him. He is coming. You will see Him, but you must be prepared in order to do so.]

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 67 beginning at verse 10: "*And again, verily I say unto you that it is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears...*" [See, on the one hand are "jealousies," because we hate it when someone has anything more than we have. We ought not be envious, we ought to rejoice in whatever good thing someone else has been given by the Spirit. We tend to be contentions, even in the blessings given by God. We have to strip ourselves from that. And "fears," because there really are in the end only two emotions: one is love and other is fear. Everything derived from fear is negative, ultimately devolving into hatred. But the foundation of hatred is fear. On the other hand there is love. If you look at God's Plan and the fight it led to in the preexistence, it was fear that motivated the rebellion. It was fear that motivated the adversary to become the accuser of the brethren. It was fear behind his opposition to this whole process now underway. It is jealousy behind opposition to the success anyone achieves in this life. We see jealousy aimed against anyone who repents. Because the adversary seeks the misery of all mankind,<sup>152</sup> that they might be like unto him. Strip yourselves of jealousies and fears. Here in the greater Las Vegas area, they do strip themselves, but it's not of their jealousies and fears.]

*"...and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble* [We are going to have to look at this very carefully in the verses that we consider after this because you're not sufficiently humble] *the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am—not with the carnal neither natural mind, but with the spiritual. For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God. Neither can any natural man abide the presence of God, neither after the carnal mind. Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected. Let not your minds turn back; and when ye are worthy, in mine own due time, ye shall see and know that which was conferred upon you by the hands of my servant Joseph Smith.*"

Joseph Smith may have left, and he may have taken authority with him, but he laid hands upon people and conferred upon them the blessings of the priesthood. He could not fully give them the priesthood he held, but he could confer upon them the blessings of the priesthood. He could, after all, seal others. He was, in that sense, ordained by God as the Holy Spirit of Promise.<sup>153</sup>

Therefore Joseph's blessings given to others persisted for some considerable time even after we lost Joseph.

The Aaronic priesthood, of course, could and did get passed along. The Aaronic priesthood functions needed to remain, and they have. The Aaronic priesthood is around, at least until man's rebellion ends it.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>152</sup> 2 Ne 9:9

<sup>153</sup> See D&C 132:7

<sup>154</sup> Even if lost by an organization, when it was restored it was destined to remain until still

future events occur. See JS-H 1: 69, also footnote of Oliver Cowdery. Therefore some individuals will retain this power, even if all organizations rebel against God.

On the other hand, Melchizedek priesthood is something by order of magnitude much greater. It cannot be controlled or handled except in righteousness.<sup>155</sup>

"No man has seen God at any time in the flesh except quickened by the Spirit," is further explained in the Book of Moses chapter 1 verses 14 and 15: *"For behold, I could not look upon God, except his glory should come upon me, and I were transfigured before him. But I can look upon thee in the natural man. Is it not so, surely? Blessed be the name of my God, for his Spirit hath not altogether withdrawn from me, or else where is thy glory, for it is darkness unto me? And I can judge between thee and God; for God said unto me: Worship God, for him only shalt thou serve."*

Lucifer may pretend to be an angel of light.<sup>156</sup> He can deceive by this pretense.<sup>157</sup> But when he appears making this pretense<sup>158</sup> he can be seen by man in our present, mortal state. We do not need to be overshadowed by the glory of God to protect and transfigure us when the deceiver appears. One of the keys to be able to distinguish between an appearance of the Lord, and the appearance of the adversary, is that the adversary may come clothed in white, and may appear to be an angel, but it does not require transfiguration to be in his presence. On the other hand, in order to be in the presence of God, it requires an alteration in the natural man. This is why when Paul saw God he wrote, "whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know."<sup>159</sup> It is as real, it is as physical and as tangible as this podium. However, the alteration of the man makes what was physical cease to be the same as it was before. Despite the change, because it is "physical" to the one experiencing it, Moses declared God's glory was upon him and he was "transfigured by God."

Do what God asks: Strip yourselves of jealousies and fears, humble yourselves before God, you are not sufficiently humble! Let's learn from their failure! Let's not repeat it! Why do we need to keep plowing the same line over and over, through the same rocky soil, when no fruit has ever come from that barren ground? Strip yourselves! Don't envy those who sit in the chief seats. They are rather to be pitied. Gain your own grace with God as Moroni asked you to do. God alone decides when, where and how He will reveal Himself to you.

Look at D&C 88 verse 68. *"Therefore, sanctify yourselves..."* [You have to rise up to accomplish that. Sanctify yourselves by your stripping of jealousies and envies; by your humility before Him. Offer what He asks: a broken heart and contrite spirit.<sup>160</sup> That sanctifies you because you disconnect from this place and connect to heaven.]

*"... that your minds become single to God..."* ["Single to God" means He occupies a place of priority, He is central to you. It does not mean you neglect your family, you can't do that.<sup>161</sup> Nor should you neglect your labors, you can't do that.<sup>162</sup> When we talk about marriage and families in St. George tomorrow, you will find out just how central all of this is to the Gospel. We needed to lay all this out before we finally get to the topic of family and marriage. If you've not noticed, these lectures come in incremental levels of holiness. Therefore, marriage gets left until we get further down. Coming to know the Lord, and becoming a suitable spouse are interrelated subjects.]

*"Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will."* [He is in charge. We don't dictate this. We prepare and then we wait. We prepare and we do everything we know to get ready for it, but He surely will come when He determines it is right. When He comes, He comes suddenly to His temple,<sup>163</sup> which temple ye are.<sup>164</sup> He will come to you. Have faith! Be believing! Seek for Him! This is that day in which these things need to happen.]

So that we cover everything, we need to go to the Gospel of John, chapter 14 verse 18 where the Lord says: *"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."* [This is Christ talking to the Apostles about what He intends to do on the other side of his death, burial and resurrection. He says, I'm not going to leave you comfortless, I will come to you!] And then verse 23: *"Jesus answered*

<sup>155</sup> D&C 121:36.

<sup>156</sup> 1 Ne 9:9.

<sup>157</sup> D&C 128:20.

<sup>158</sup> 2 Cor 11:14.

<sup>159</sup> See 2 Cor 12:2-4.

<sup>160</sup> 3 Ne. 9: 20; 12: 19; Ether 4:15 and Moroni 6:2.

<sup>161</sup> D&C 83:4.

<sup>162</sup> D&C 83:2.

<sup>163</sup> Mal. 3: 1.

<sup>164</sup> 1 Cor. 3: 16.

*and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."* [Christ is saying that is His intention.]

Now go to Doctrine and Covenants section 130 verse 3 where it discusses this verse: *"John 14:23—The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse, is a personal appearance; and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false."* [Christ's promise will actually happen.]

This is why Doctrine and Covenants section 93 verse 1 makes the promise you will see Christ's face. This is the fullness of the Gospel. You can take all your rights and ordinances, take all your deep mysteries, and all your rules, they testify to one thing: Redemption comes by knowing God.

We have infantile "mysteries" we banter about. I've heard speculation about the typography of Kolob, for example. By the way, that whole thing about Kolob is mangled! Kolob was the name of a star Abraham could identify. Kolob was a star within sight from the vantage point of the earth. The entire astronomy revealed to father Abraham was geocentric. It was entirely earth-based, looking upward. From the vantage point of the earth, looking upward in Abraham's day, the astronomy oriented Abraham. In our day, because the precession of the equinoxes, the alignments of stars have changed. Abraham already knew the name of the star. God said to Abraham, You see that star? From where you sit, looking there, the Throne of God is in that direction.<sup>165</sup> It was like saying, Okay, from where my thumb is, looking that way, Shay is sitting by my thumb. That doesn't mean Shay is on my thumb! He's some considerable distance from my thumb! Tim is in the direction of my index finger. He's not on my index finger! He's some considerable distance away from it, but that's the direction. Because it was "nigh" to God, it is located among what is called "unchanging" stars, because they never set. They are continually in view from the earth. Therefore they "govern" those below them.<sup>166</sup> They move "more slowly" because their revolutions and movements take thousands of years from our vantage point.<sup>167</sup>

Even if you know the typography of Kolob, you still don't know where God resides. Where He resides is in a place hidden in the North.<sup>168</sup> If I were identifying where the throne of God is located today, I would refer to a different star. In our day it has a different name. In our day it has a slightly different alignment because of the precession of equinoxes. The Throne of God is out there, but is in a place that is hidden in the North. It will require the heavens to be rolled like a scroll<sup>169</sup> before you finally see past the veils now in place. But by that time, if you are unprepared, it's too late. Because the glory will be such that you cannot abide it.<sup>170</sup>

When the Lord appears, preliminary to rolling together the heavenly scrolls, He will first appear in an unveiled opening. The glory of God will be visible around and behind Him, along with concourses of angels.<sup>171</sup>

Now if you can discover what that alignment is then you can figure out where the Throne of God is presently located. But that is up to you. I've been given no such obligation or permission. But I can tell you there is a specific location. God exists. Abraham was walked through the geography of heaven, reckoned from the vantage point or viewpoint of the earth. When you leave here, one of the obligations you have is to find your way back. In finding your way back, you need to be able to avoid those spirits who seek to bring you back into captivity.<sup>172</sup> If you're brought back into captivity, you may find yourself again in a Telestial kingdom, or, as the temple narrative puts it: "the world in which you presently reside." That's a rather unpleasant thing to think about. You may find yourself a casino in Las Vegas, talking about things that really matter, in a place in which such things are not at all treasured.

I should add, some of the people who are driven in desperation to try and improve their circumstances sitting downstairs, if ministered to in a kindly way, some of those people have a heart that is better prepared for receiving the truth, more tender and poignant because of the circumstances of their life, than are the hearts of many of us, who in are plenty. In our conceit about our

<sup>165</sup> Abr. 3: 3.

<sup>166</sup> Id.

<sup>167</sup> Abr. 3: 4.

<sup>168</sup> Lucifer's ambition was to return and triumph there, for that is where God resides. See 2 Ne. 24: 13

<sup>169</sup> D&C 88: 95; Rev. 6: 14; Isa. 34: 4.

<sup>170</sup> D&C 63: 34.

<sup>171</sup> See Jude 1: 14; Matt. 24: 30; D&C 76: 63.

<sup>172</sup> "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power." *TPJS*, p. 217.

own goodness, we mistakenly think ourselves better than them. When the truth of the matter is, more than anything else, it is humility that qualifies us before God. More than anything else, it is our sincere apprehension of just how weak, how vulnerable, and how easily distracted we are.

I want to remind you the account that we are reading in the record of Ether, occurred before Christ came. Christ was a future expectancy, not an historical figure from the past. The faith exhibited by the brother of Jared in this account is faith in an unfilled future expectancy. If you think you have a thin basis for your faith in Christ because you didn't live in His day, think about how difficult it would be to have confidence in a Redeemer whose life was still future. The details of the date and time of His birth were unknown. The circumstances of Him coming into mortality, the ministry and the sermons that He delivered, the sacrifices and the healings He gave during mortality, the temptations He faced, the dilemmas He confronted, all were unknown and unaccomplished. You know a great deal concerning Him now. None of that was known at the time the book of Ether was composed.

You have greater evidence. You have a greater testimony in front of you concerning Christ, than did this man. You have greater reason to believe in Christ, than did this man. You have far more witnesses and justification for having confidence in the promises of Christ. You unlike him, have the New Testament, you have *the Book of Mormon* including his record in front of you. You have Joseph Smith's revelations and Joseph Smith's testimony. You have the temple rites, with their ceremonial depiction of the return back into the presence of the Lord through the veil. You have restored again to you, partially, *the Book of Enoch in the Pearl of Great Price*. You have restored to you, a far more complete account of Abraham's testimony in *the Pearl of Great Price*. And you have a great deal more of the corrected account of Moses in *the Pearl of Great Price*. Therefore, when you read this third chapter of *the Book of Ether*, you should recognize you come to this challenge with a significantly greater collection of advantages, if you will receive them and use them, than the one who composed the record Moroni abridged here. Keep all of that in mind.

You should be able to muster like faith. Look at what it says will happen if you do that. Turn over to Ether chapter 4. This is a dialogue between Moroni and the Lord as he's doing his translation and abridgment of this record. Starting in verse 7: *"And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are."* [This does not promise you that you will receive the record of the brother of Jared. It promises, if you have the faith, then God will:] *"manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations"* [I should probably read this the way I would punctuate it, to be consistent with what I said last time: *saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of the heavens and of the earth."*]

We return to Ether chapter 3. Remarkably, the very first verse gives us something of interest. This is about halfway through the first verse of Ether chapter 3: The brother of Jared, *"did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass; and he did carry them in his hands upon the top of the mount, and cried again unto the Lord, saying:"*

I did an experiment yesterday. While we were walking, I picked up not 16 but 20 stones. I figured out what it would take in order to carry 20 small stones "in my hands to the top of the mountain." I was able to do it easily. I have 20 stones in my hand right now. Unlike the stones of the brother of Jared, I did not "molten" them. Instead I chose stones which were formed by a lava flow melting the soil to form these stones. They were "molten" by God.

Artists and fanciful folk who want to do such things, turn these into egg sized crystal balls. When is the last time you came in from the refrigerator of your garage to the kitchen carrying 16 eggs in your two hands? How would you get up the mountain with stones of that size in your hands? The "molten stones" were not behemoths, they were "small stones" according to the scriptures.

Even more interesting he took them to the top of the mountain and *"cried again unto the Lord."* This is the 10th time in the record of the brother of Jared, in which, he "cries" unto the Lord. Throughout the record of the brother of Jared, never once does the word "pray" or "prayer" appear as part of the record.

When the voice of Moroni enters into the narrative, the word "prayed" appears in Moroni's aside. But in the record of the brother of Jared, he does not ever use the word "pray" or "prayer," he "cried."

Consider for a moment, the difference between being someone who prays unto God, and someone who cries unto God. Consider the position in which the petitioner has voluntarily placed himself, when instead of coming in prayer, he comes crying out unto the Lord.

Keep that word in mind. Eleven times it is used in the *Book of Ether* to describe the brother of Jared. The only time the word "prayer" appears is in Moroni's interruption. That is the way you can know Moroni was abridging a record written by somebody else. Moroni does not use the same word as the person whose records he was abridging. He uses "prayer"—but only one time.

This is what he cried out: *"O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant..."*

Crying, asking Him not to be angry, reducing himself to be merely a servant, because of his *"weakness before thee."* What is this man's attitude? How is this man approaching the throne of God? How does he view himself? How does he regard God? Why does this man have such faith? Why does this man attract the attention of God? Why is God willing to speak to such a man, such a vessel as this? What is it about this attitude of this man that tells you his heart is right before God?

He was willing to receive. Some of you fear your own weakness. You are closer to God than those who are self-confident, proud of their understanding, and think themselves better than others.

*"...for we know that thou art holy. [This is the contrast, "my weakness," compared to "your holiness.] and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires."* [He said he was doing what God asked him to do. God commanded him. He did not think himself qualified, but was obeying what God told him to do. This is the attitude of the man. This is what the heart of the man reflects. These words explain why he "cries" to God.]

*"Behold, O Lord, thou hast smitten us because of our iniquity, and hast driven us forth, and for these many years we have been in the wilderness; nevertheless, thou hast been merciful unto us. O Lord, look upon me in pity, and turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth across this raging deep in darkness; but behold these things which I have molten out of the rock."*

There is no pride here. There is no resentment at being chastened. There is acceptance of the chastening hand of God. There is no proclamation by the man that he was worthy. It is quite the opposite, he declares he is unworthy. He has no resentment for having been punished. It is the opposite, he recognizes every stumble along the way is justified, is reasonable, is earned, and was appropriate. Because God, who cares for His children, upbraids and disciplines His children.

I have a daughter who has more energy than that she ought. After finishing her undergraduate as a Phi Beta Kappa, (again the product of her relentless energy), she came home and needed a project. There were not enough projects at home, so she became a foster parent for the Humane Society. She brought home a big homeless dog. We all suspected this fellow was pretty intelligent, but man, was that dog stubborn. He was a very likable, very pretty animal, but stubborn. He was adopted because he's photogenic.

Then she brought home a female dog, and this female dog was totally the opposite. I think we should have named her "Tasmanian Devil," but her name was Blue. She is a Blue Heeler, so she has all the attributes of a Blue Heeler. They herd cattle. It is a mistake to think they bite the heels of cattle. They are bred to herd cattle and they open their mouths, and hit with their teeth at the heels of the cattle to herd them.

Blue has all of the psychological makeup required to engage in that hazardous occupation. And this dog, bless her heart, is eager to please. Disciplining her was simple, you just had to indicate you weren't happy, and it about killed the poor animal. But she is so full of energy that she couldn't help but drag the mulch bag out into the middle of the lawn and reduce it to shreds. She also has engaged in a major excavation project to find out exactly how the sprinkler system is put together. She clearly questioned whether we really needed a valve at the location she found it. She also wondered what the valve tasted like?

When she found out we don't like that behavior, she was so apologetic. I could not bring myself to do anything, other than by the voice to say, What are you doing!?! She responded to the tone of voice and she fell onto her back, as if to cry: "You have to love me still! Please, you have to love me still! You do love me, right?"

That dog reminds me of the relationship which the brother of Jared recognized between even the best intentioned of us, and God. We don't know enough to be "good" in His sight. We aren't intelligent enough. We think that some pseudo-virtues that are part of out of our culture are good indeed. Some of that behavior, if displayed in the halls of heaven, would be deeply offensive.<sup>173</sup> Some of the things we think are offensive to God, are not at all. Not at all!<sup>174</sup> And so our righteousness at best is pseudo-righteousness. Much of what we feel guilty about was given to us in order to give us the humility to come to God. These weaknesses will not last past the resurrection.

Included within the experience of the brother of Jared as you read verse 3 of chapter 3, is the events that originally separated them from the fellow man at the tower of Babel. Mankind had been engaged in such inordinate wickedness they were punished. The record does distinguish between what Jared's people had done and the others driven away from the tower. I also want you to notice that nowhere in this verse 3 is there anything like the proud descendants of Nauvoo. There is nothing that claims they are chosen, or they are worthy of something other than chastening. There is none of that.

Turn back to Doctrine and Covenants section 121. This is a letter Joseph composed while in Liberty Jail. Mind you he was in Liberty Jail and had suffered through wintertime and it was now in the spring when the letter was composed.

Joseph had no release date in mind, or even if he would go free. He did not know if the original order for his execution would be carried out. He had been kept jailed for many months, in a state of suspension. In these circumstances, verses seven and eight were received by revelation: *"My son, [that alone ought to be reassuring to Joseph] My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes."* [Endure it well! Joseph, in the extremity of Liberty jail was told, "endure it well." You think you have challenges, difficulties, and you face the limits of what you can bear. Endure it well. Your adversity and your afflictions are going to be for a small moment, and then if you endure it well, something better is going to come.]

Then, as if it weren't enough reason to end self-pity, turn to 122 verse eight: *"The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?"*

If you think that your burdens that you carry are great, remember the burdens carried by the Son. He faced burdens inordinately greater than yours. All of us should be tested to our limit. All of us should be "proven" by the experiences we endure. The only way to test some things is to destroy them. The only way to test you through mortality is to cause mortality itself, with the eventual coming of death. That is the way this probation works.

Look at verse 4 of Ether chapter 3. *"And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we shall cross the sea. Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to show forth great power, which looks small unto the understanding of men."* [He was not asking for this to see a light show. He asked for this out of pity and concern, charity and intercession for others who would otherwise be left in the dark. He is trying to do something to bless and benefit others in a very practical way. He hopes to make the lives of others better. He was not doing this for himself. He was doing it on behalf of his people.]

Therein also lies something very important about the attitude of this man, that tells you why God had respect for this man.

Think about what it means to be given the power of God. Think about what it means for God to be able to do all things, including sustaining you from moment to moment by lending you breath. With that great power, God says to us, "You are free to choose to do whatever it is that you choose." Think of the patience of our God. Think of the meekness of our God. And think about the test you are presently taking to prove who and what you are. Ask whether or not, in the circumstances of this test, you are proving that you can be trusted to have the meekness, to have the patience, to endure in humility what must be done. Will you endure the abuses God allows to take place in order to permit His children to gain experience? Do you respect God's plan so that in the long run we can all ultimately know the difference between good and evil? Will we voluntarily choose to love the good and to stay away from the evil.

<sup>173</sup> Rising to honor a religious man is offensive to God.

<sup>174</sup> Taking God's name in vain does NOT involve "swear words" but instead cloaking a false message with the pretense of God's approval.

Think about that. And think about this record, and think about the test currently underway. Think about what it is you in your life should be choosing, doing, desiring and holding to your breast. What do you love?

*"And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger."* [Now I want to pause because the only thing that the brother of Jared ever sees at this point, is His finger. The Lord may stretch forth His hand, but the only thing seen is His finger.]

I really love LDS writer Catherine Thomas. I love her books, I own them, I've read them, and I like what she did with the brother of Jared at the veil.<sup>175</sup> However, it is simply based upon a fanciful connection between the dialogue at the veil in the temple ceremony and this incident here.

The hand of God never emerges, only His finger. You can read it in verse 6 and again in verse 9. The Lord asks him, "Did you see more than this?" "No," he answers, "just the finger." I put one of the stones I used in my experiment into my hand. Let's assume for the moment I have 8 in one hand and 8 in the other, as the brother of Jared. Let's assume someone else touches it in my hand. It is impossible to touch the stone in a man's hand without the one holding the stone feeling it has been touched.

We read this record, but we fail to notice what was really happening. They were in his hands, eight and eight, and the Lord touched them one by one with His finger. Now, there is nothing in this record that suggests that after the last stone gets touched, or after the stone the Lord was touching at the moment that the finger is seen, there were anymore stones remaining to be touched. They were touched. First one, then another, one by one. Sixteen times this was repeated. This record read fairly suggests to me that the brother of Jared stood there and witnessed 15 of the 16 stones, felt the touch on 15 of the 16 stones, before on the very last stone he saw the finger of the Lord. Think about that for a moment. Think about coming into contact, admittedly through a stone, but coming into contact with the Lord when He manifests Himself for the first time to man physically. Think about that.

*"And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood..."* [That is the way the Lord chose to manifest Himself in this incident. He appeared "like flesh and blood" because He came physically into contact with 16 stones.]

*"...and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear. And the Lord saw that the brother of Jared had fallen to the earth; and the Lord said unto him: Arise, why hast thou fallen? And he saith unto the Lord: I saw the finger of the Lord, and I feared lest he should smite me; for I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood."* [It frightened him to realize that the God who controls all things had flesh and blood. This was a great secret that ought not get out, and now he knows it. Knowing it frightened him. He thought he was intruding into space he shouldn't and he felt convicted that somehow, that was something he ought not know.]

*"And the Lord said unto him: Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood; and never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger. Sawest thou more than this? And he answered: Nay."* [He didn't see the hand, he saw the finger, and he didn't see more than this.]

*"Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me. And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak?"* [This is a necessary prerequisite, because what the Lord is about to speak to him will be covenantal. When it comes to prophecy, covenants, commitments by God, what He's about to do requires the brother of Jared to have faith in God's true nature. He needed to have a correct understanding of God's attributes. This was required before God could show him all things. This is an incident right out of the Lectures on Faith we discussed in Idaho Falls.]

*"And he answered: Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie. And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye*

<sup>175</sup>The article, titled *The brother of Jared at the Veil*, is included in *Selected Writings of M. Catherine Thomas*, Deseret Book, (Salt Lake City, 2000), beginning at p. 99. She begins with overly broad assertions about LDS temples.



*are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh. And now, as I, Moroni, said I could not make a full account of these things which are written, therefore it sufficeth me to say that Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites."*

What was the body Jesus showed Himself unto the Nephites in? What is the difference between water as a solid, water as a liquid, and water as a gas? The difference between that, if you want to take a scriptural word, is "quickened." In one condition it is quickened, in another condition it is less quick. In science the difference between the two is "temperature" or heat.

God dwells in everlasting burnings.<sup>176</sup> In order to be with or near Him, a man must be "quickened" to endure His presence. Does that mean that in a quickened state, it is impossible for a quickened being, to manifest itself in a solid form? Well, take a look at Doctrine and Covenants section 131 verse 7. *"There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter."*

Doctrine and Covenants section 77 verse two includes the statement: *"...that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal; and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual."*

D&C 88 verses 15 and 16: *"And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul."* [This definition was given by revelation to Joseph Smith in 1832. Three years later in 1835, Chandler came through and sold the mummies to Joseph Smith. He did not bother translating the end part of *the Book of Abraham* as we have it, until the 1840s in Nauvoo. By the time he translated in Nauvoo, he knew the definition of a "soul." It was the spirit *and the body*. When Joseph translated *the Book of Abraham*, in Abraham chapter 3 verse 23, speaking of those in the preexistence he rendered it: *"God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits."* They were souls, possessing therefore a spirit and a body. And they were spirits because they had not come down to this level as yet, in the beginning, to be in this condition. These are identified as "the noble and great" ones.

I talked before about the definition of "rulers" in the Gentile world, and that is someone who exercises authority over someone else.<sup>177</sup> In the vernacular of both *the Book of Mormon*, and in the vernacular found here, "rulers" in the house of God have nothing to do with dominion over someone else. A "ruler" is someone who teaches.<sup>178</sup> A ruler is someone who is able to give an accurate gauge by which to measure things. A ruler is someone who teaches the truth. If you want to be a ruler in the house of God, then you have to be someone who declares and teaches the truth.

Take a look at Alma chapter 13 because this is where it becomes very important for us. Alma chapter 13 beginning at verse 17: *"Now this Melchizedek was a king over the land of Salem; and his people had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination; yea, they had all gone astray; they were full of all manner of wickedness. [This was his audience.] 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."*

First he received this priesthood. Second, he preached repentance. But still nothing would have happened except for, third, the people who heard him did repent. Because of that Melchizedek was a prince of peace. His people were described as having waxed strong in iniquity. His people were captivated by abominations. His people had all gone astray, but turned out to be the very people who established this City of Peace. But they did it. They did it by repentance. This isn't something Melchizedek pulled off, this is something the people accomplished, and they accomplished it because of their repentance.

I want you to contrast that with another group. This group is described in Mosiah chapter 12, beginning halfway through verse 12. This was people reacting to the message Abinadi delivered to them. They accused Abinadi, saying, *"And he [Abinadi] pretendeth the Lord hath spoken it. And he saith all this shall come upon thee except thou repent, and this because of thine iniquities. And now, O king, what great evil hast thou done, or what great sins have thy people committed, that we should be condemned*

<sup>176</sup> See D&C 137:2-3.

<sup>177</sup> Luke 22:25.

<sup>178</sup> See 1 Ne. 2:22.

*of God or judged of this man? And now, O king, behold, we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore, this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain. And behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou shalt also prosper."*

Here is pride, vanity, and here is the very thing which, had the people to whom Melchizedek spoke, had they done this, there would have been no City of Peace, there would have been no Salem, there would have been no second Zion.

You generally hail from a tradition that assures you that you're in the right way. You generally come from a tradition that says you are better than others. You are able to look down your nose at other people who stumble about in the dark, because they don't have all the great truths you think you have. The fact of the matter is, you generally, not specifically, are not right before God. Of course, there are some to whom this absolutely does not apply, whose hearts are right before God, but there aren't many.

You have been handed this tradition. Understand, however, the wicked one cometh, and he takes away Light and Truth and he does it because of the false traditions you have been handed.<sup>179</sup> The greatest among us is wholly inadequate. The greatest among us cannot be trusted with the power of God, not yet anyway. The greatest among us is still in need of repentance. Every one of us should walk fearfully before God, not because God is not generous, but because what He offers can turn you into a devil. The only way to be prepared and not fall, is to realize the enormous peril you potentially present to the universe. Before you get in a position to enjoy the status God offers to us all, you need to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, exactly like Paul said.<sup>180</sup> You need to purge, remove, and reprove. This attitude we see in this man in this account (the brother of Jared), this is the man of God! Christ may be the prototype of the saved man, but I know of no record anywhere in all of scripture that exposes the heart of the real disciple of Christ as well as this chapter exposes the heart of this man. This is what we should become. This is why the Lord could open up to him. This is why this man became, in the history of the world, up to that moment, the one God revealed the most about Himself. This is despite the fact the Lord came to Adam in Adam-ondi-Ahman and administered comfort to Adam in the Valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman.<sup>181</sup> Here He came and showed Himself as He truly was, as a preexistent spirit, possessing a soul as tangible as man's. Christ ministered to him in a way, which, if you understood what it takes for a quickened being to condescend to show Himself as He does here, you would appreciate this was an enormous sacrifice by our Lord.

Ether chapter 3, verse 18: "*And he ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man might know that he was God, because of the many great works which the Lord had showed unto him.*" [This is how God is known: by His works. It is not the lightning show, nor the shaking on the mountain, but it is the great works that proceed forth from Him.]

Think about what He did when He appeared on to the Nephites. God introduced Him three times before the people who are there were finally able to listen with their ears and hear the introduction.<sup>182</sup> Then after the introduction was given, they still see Him descend dressed in white to stand before them. Despite the introduction, despite His descent, despite Him standing in front of them, all they conclude is, "This must be an angel."<sup>183</sup>

Clearly He arrived in a way that is extra-human. He manifested Himself as being able to use the law of gravity in a way we can't. He descended, stood before them, but none of them were overwhelmed. None of them fell down and worship Him. None of them do anything but look at Him. He was so plain, so ordinary, so commonplace in the appearance He made, that when they saw Him, they stood rather like tourists staring at this man dressed in white who appeared to them.<sup>184</sup> Then He spoke and told them who He was. He introduced Himself in 3 Nephi chapter 11 verse 11. Three times, in order for Him to tell who He is, He talks about obeying the will of the Father, suffering the will of the Father in all things, glorifying the Father by taking upon Himself the sins of the world.<sup>185</sup> Even standing in front of them, He bore testimony of someone greater than Him.

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<sup>179</sup> D&C 93:39.

<sup>180</sup> Philip. 2: 12.

<sup>181</sup> D&C 107: 54-55.

<sup>182</sup> See 3 Ne. 11:3-7.

<sup>183</sup> 3 Ne. 11:8.

<sup>184</sup> Id.

<sup>185</sup> He "drunk out of the bitter cup which the Father hath given" Him. He "glorified the Father in taking upon [Himself] the sins of the world." He "suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning." See 3 Ne. 11: 11. This is who He is: the obedient Son of the Father.

It was the humility of the individual standing in front of them, and His introduction in 3 Nephi, that brought them to their knees. They fall down at that point and worship Him.<sup>186</sup> Because when He opened His mouth and they understood what He was, and who He was, and what proceeded forth out of His heart, they knew they were listening and looking at God indeed. Then they fell down and they worship Him.

*"...because of the many great works which the Lord had showed unto him [This man knew he was God] And because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw the finger of Jesus, which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he knew that it was the finger of the Lord; and he had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting. Wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus; and he did minister unto him."*

God is known by his many works. Faith gives way to knowledge. He ministered to him. Notice that in verse 18, *"he ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites."* Verse 20: *"he did ministered unto him."* Christ has a ministry. His ministry is not yet complete. His ministry includes coming and bearing His testimony, for that is the testimony of Jesus we should receive while in the flesh.<sup>187</sup> That ministry continues.

Look at chapter 4 verse 7. *"And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are."* [This is the ministry of the Lord. This is the comfort He promises to bring us.]

This text in Ether chapter 3 is probably the best single text in existence to study about gaining the knowledge of God, and the process by which it is gained. Most importantly, it exposes the attitude possessed by the person who comes back to be redeemed. It tells you, not directly, it tells you indirectly by telling you what the brother of Jared did. Go thou and do likewise.

Everything that you have been put through, and every challenge that you have been given, and every weakness that you possess, have all been given to you in a studied way to bring you, hopefully, to your knees. To bring you, hopefully, to feel the chastening hand of God, so that you, in your day, in your circumstance, can look upon it all as a gift, because it surely is.

*"I give unto men weakness that they may come unto me, and if they humble themselves and come unto me, I'll make weak things strong."*<sup>188</sup> That is also in the book of Ether. It is an aside in which Moroni was complaining that the Gentiles were not going to believe his book. Moroni feared the Gentiles were not going to believe this record but would notice its weaknesses.

Ether chapter 12 verse 26: *"And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness; And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness."* [That's unavoidable. That's an inevitability. You stand in the presence of a just and holy being, you will realize your weaknesses. You are going to recognize what you lack.]

*"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."*

How do weak things become strong? Not by fighting a battle you are going to lose. It is by appreciating as the brother of Jared did, the fact that none of us can come into the presence of God without feeling keenly this scripture. *"Fools mock, but they shall mourn."* This is Christ speaking. *"I give unto men weakness, [for one purpose], I give unto them weakness that they may be strong."*

That anvil you are dragging around was given to you by God as a gift. Don't curse it. Pray for God to come and lift it. You are never going to be able to get far carrying it anyway. You may not even be able to lift it, but in the economy of God, that is a gift. A gift! Not for you to act upon, nor to surrender to, but for you to fight against in humility and meekness and to say, "I'm not winning. I haven't won. It goes on and on, and yet still I fight against it."

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<sup>186</sup> 3 Ne. 11:12.

<sup>187</sup> D&C 76:74.

<sup>188</sup> Paraphrasing Ether 12:27.

When will you finally come to Him and cry out? When, in the bitter anguish of your soul, like Joseph Smith in Liberty jail, will you cry out, "How long must I endure this? How long do I have to suffer from the abuse of the guards? How long do I have to sit inside a gated room, in a dungeon, to hear stories about the rape of the people who followed me? And the murder of the people that believed what I was teaching?"

How long did Joseph's heart break in Liberty Jail? He emerged from that ordeal a fundamentally different man than the one who went in. People who say, "Oh yeah, in Nauvoo he got carried away with all kinds of things." We will talk more about that tomorrow. We will talk more about this idea of marriage, and will touch upon the notion of plurality of wives. We'll brush up against that tomorrow.

Look, these Scriptures, these invitations, these prophecies, and this message that began in Boise and will conclude in Phoenix. This message is inviting you to do what was originally prophesied as this dispensation began. We looked at those prophecies in the beginning in Boise, Idaho. The game's afoot. The challenge is underway. The opportunity is here.

There was a price that had to be paid first involving several generations of delay. We could not kill a man like Joseph through the conspiracy of his followers without forfeiting an opportunity. But that moment has come to an end. And a new moment is upon us. And if you'll hear it, I can declare to you, in the name of our Lord, that the day of salvation has once again arrived! Have faith! Be believing! He is real! I gave you a description of His demeanor. I gave that last time, and I'm reiterating it again here about some of His attributes. Come to Him! Seek for Him! Have faith in Him! You have more reason to have faith and confidence in Him right now than the brother of Jared did in his day.

There was an incident that I think one word, one word in this incident really explains a great deal of what I have been talking about in this installment. This is an event that occurs within *the Book of Mormon* that may seem otherwise, quite puzzling. But now that we've looked at the Ether chapter 3 material, and we go back to look at the incident, it suddenly begins to have a connection together.

This Alma chapter 22 involving Lamoni's father, the King. I want you to look at the father beginning in verse 17 of Alma chapter 22: "*And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried mightily, saying:*" [It was not the words of the prayer that provoked the attention of heaven. Although his prayer was in fact needed, relevant, and exactly what the Lord answered. It was what came before.]

This was the King. The King who could have people killed if he chose to do so. This was the one who, like God among his people, exercised the power of life and death. This was the one who could exact taxes from them. This was the one who had absolutely no reason to do what he did here. Look what he did. He prostrated himself on the ground and he "cried out mightily." He didn't pray. He mirrored exactly what the brother of Jared did when he approached God. In the depths of humility and in the sincerity of his heart, he showed absolutely an appreciation for the difference between himself on the one hand, and God on the other.

Don't mistake me, I do not think it is necessary to physically engage in this kind of display. But when the display is an extension of what is in the heart, it is absolutely fine. But when what is in the heart is right, it doesn't matter how it's displayed, because God looketh on the inner man.<sup>189</sup>

This King was so overtaken by what he had heard, that he was not ashamed to prostrate himself in front of the foreign missionaries. He was not ashamed to cry out in the depths of humility. He didn't care who saw it. He didn't do this for to be seen. He didn't care that he was being seen. He did this because at that moment, that was what he was. He was seeking grace from the throne of grace.

Then we read his prayer: "*O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God...*" [Do you see this? This is someone who isn't at all certain. This is someone who was convicted of his own inadequacy. It may not be that in your case you don't know enough, it may actually be that you know too much that is wrong. It may be that what you lack comes from your own false beliefs. It will all be erased and started over anyway, if you happen to gaze into heaven for five minutes, you realize that people who have been writing about this stuff since the beginning of time who have not gazed into heaven, don't know what they're talking about. The suppositions and the connections and the ideas that get floated around, are

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<sup>189</sup> 1 Sam. 16: 7.

not only false, many of them are offensive to God. They're not right. The board is going to be erased. God's going to re-order it when He ministers to you. You are going to see things in a completely different light when it happens.]

It is not that you are brilliant and a shining light of knowledge to qualify you to know God. Instead it is what is in your heart. How has your heart been prepared? If your heart is open to receive, because it is broken, and your spirit contrite, then you are read.

Sometimes I'm amazed at my own idiocy, because I have argued with God one time preferring Mormon doctrine to the truth! Sometimes I think that the Lord had that in His heart all along. He wanted to qualify me in a way that would make me typical of every man who finds himself in the predicament of the Latter-day Saints. He wanted to qualify me to say, "You claim to hold authority. I held authority equal. If I did not abuse mine and you've abused yours, then the kingdom has been taken from you." But it's been taken from you and not left. It still exists. Just no longer where the institution claims it exists.

I'm not going to start another church, and I don't intend to compete with the Latter-day Saints, and I don't intend to overthrow them. That is God's work, and it will be up to Him to decide how useful the various Mormon churches are to His purposes. But it is clear to me we do not need another church. The only thing we need are penitent people. The only thing we need are people whose hearts are right. If someone is here from a Baptist church, then go attend your Baptist Church. Go attend your Mormon church. There's good in all churches, but study the doctrines of the Restoration and get to know God, and then go and do what He would have you do.

I was pointing out at the break about the people who were first invited to the wedding feast aren't going to be ready and aren't going to come.<sup>190</sup> They are just going to be hostile or indifferent to their invitation. They will be slain.<sup>191</sup> It's going to be people on the byways who will come.<sup>192</sup> Right now there's one group that the Lord wants to hear my voice. They are in a small corridor, and it's very narrowly confined. They are the first ones to hear what I have to say. Not many are interested, and those who hear about it are largely hostile, even angry. The LDS Church opposed these talks. The threat of excommunication was based, in part, on the demand I not give these talks.

I'm going to put all the talks on the Internet so the invitation will be available for anyone, no matter what byway they occupy. I don't care where you are in the world, when you read the words I'm speaking, or you hear what is recorded through Doug's efforts, you are likewise invited. The message is to all. It begins here, it sounds here, but it will echo outward.

I don't care if no one gives me credit for this message. It is the truth within the message that matters! It's never been about me. It's been about the doctrines of the Restoration. It has always been about the truth that rolled forth through the prophet Joseph Smith. This is about the acts of God offering salvation to us in our day. Ultimately, it will be about the establishment of a city of refuge. Not now, but by and by. There aren't enough converted yet, it's too weak. But in that day, there still won't be a need for another church. There still won't be some reason to say, I want to sustain someone. God and God alone will be sustained in that day, not me and not any other man.

Nor do I anticipate in the city of refuge there will ever be another reason to rename the priesthood. My belief is that, should we have Zion, the priesthood ought to return to its original name, "The Holy Order after the Son of God." If some great man wants to step forward and rename it after himself, I'm not going to gather.

Returning to the king's prayer: *"I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. And now when the king had said these words, he was struck as if he were dead."*

Look what happens next. When he recovers, because as he was struck as if he were dead, he was converted. The Lord ministered to him!

And in verse 23: *"And the king stood forth, and began to minister unto them. And he did minister unto them, insomuch that his whole household were converted unto the Lord."* [This is what happens when you are converted to the Lord. You can't stand to look about you and see other people left in the darkness. You want to invite them, rather like Nathaniel was invited to,

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<sup>190</sup> Matt. 22: 2-6.

<sup>191</sup> Matt. 22: 7.

<sup>192</sup> Matt. 22: 8-10.

"Come and see for yourself."<sup>193</sup> You come to the Lord, you come and see for yourself. This little bit of skeptical praying, whether there is a God, and "if thou art God, will you make yourself known to me?" That worked! But not because this is a magic incantation, instead because the king cried out with a broken heart and contrite spirit.

The folks who go through religious ceremonies often mistakenly think they have some powerful mojo, some compelling voodoo. But the purpose of ceremony is to teach you some inner precept, a powerful truth. The precept is what you ought to find in your heart. Rites and ordinances are intended to testify to a greater truth. Anciently among the Jews there were Aaronic priesthood rites. But they viewed their ordinances if they were an end. Rites are not an end. They are intended to be a symbol reminding you of some great truth concerning our God.

The capstone of the ceremonies restored through Joseph involves a dialogue between you and the Lord in which you are symbolically brought back into His presence. Then, following that, you are sealed as a married couple for eternity. Those are lofty concepts. They are powerfully portrayed in the ordinances and the rites. They are intended to convey to you the reality that all this is possible, because God does in fact, intend to preserve you, and all those associations that you prize, so long as they are worthy.

Don't think you lack the faith! If this King, with this prayer, can go to God and ask and receive an answer, your faith is enough. That is not the impediment. The impediment is the pride of your heart, the hardness of your heart, the self-reliance you think you have, the traditions that bind you down, the arrogance of your heart, the unwillingness to cry out mightily to God, and then to be open to receiving an answer. This was enough, and you too, can do enough.

The Lord tells a story in Mark chapter 9, beginning at verse 17. There was a fellow who came to Christ and asks, *"Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."*

You don't need more of what you already have. Why are you here? (Well, most of you. Some have come only to criticize and gather information. Some of you in the hardness of your heart are going to come to the point, where, in the day of judgment, you will look back on this moment and realize, "I damned myself by the hardness of my heart and the bitterness of my soul, because I came to judge a man whose heart was right before God, and mine was not." Your heart will be broken in that day.)

But look at this man whose heart was broken on this day. He cried out. *"Lord I believe help thou mine unbelief."* [You have a desire, you have the willingness, but it is so fragile! It is so frail that you don't think it's enough! That's not the problem. Cry out! Ask him!]

Remember His disciples who had been following Him, who were His faithful followers, those disciples couldn't fix this boy. Those disciples had given up everything to come and follow Him. They knew much more than this man. But their knowledge did them no good.

Jesus healed the boy. After the incident the disciples came to Him and said, *"Why could we not cast him out?"* Christ answered them and said, *"This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."*

Why do you have to be afflicted by prayer and fasting, if you're a follower of the Lord, in order to get to the point you can accomplish this? Because you don't fall prostate, crying out with tears from a broken heart and a contrite spirit. If this man, in this condition, can say, *"I believe, help thou mine unbelief."* If this man can do this and have the Lord on his behalf work a miracle, you too can believe enough, you too can accomplish what you desire, you too can come to Him.

Matthew covers the same incident. This is Matthew chapter 17, beginning at verse 19: *"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have*

<sup>193</sup>In response to Nathanael's inquiry about whether anything good could come from Nazareth, Philip said, "Come and see." John 1: 46.

*faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."*

Faith as a grain of mustard seed is what the Lord said they needed. The defect does not consist in the absence of faith in the Lord. The defect is the arrogance and hardness of the heart that prevents you from crying out, in the realistic and anguish of your heart, looking to God who is trying to bring you to Him. That depth of humility, that status of being someone who is utterly harmless, that condition in which you present no threat to the righteous, you are harmless as a dove, and you seek only the betterment of others. That is who God is, and what you must become in order for God to be able to redeem you to be like Him. That involves you voluntarily changing to be that person, by your submission to Him. Because there is no reason to give to the proud, the vain, and the warlike, the ability to torment and to afflict others because they have authority from God. There is every reason to give authority only to someone who would ultimately be willing to give the rain to fall on the righteous and the wicked, and to make the sun shine on both the righteous and the wicked. They can be trusted with the power of God, because the power of godliness consists in this kind of a heart. And in this kind of heart God, can accomplish anything.

In all of these examples the petition made to God is not called prayer, but are instead crying out to Him. In Romans chapter 4, Paul writes about father Abraham. In verse 3 he explains Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Verse 13 talks about God's promise that Abraham would be an heir of the world not to him or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Because Abraham believed in God, he trusted in Him, therefore he inherited it all, all of the world, he is the father of the righteous!

Beginning with verse 17: *"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."*

There was no proof an aged, "dead," that is, now impotent old man, could sire a child with a barren, post-menopausal, Sarah. But Abraham doubted not, and you have before you, promises spoken by the voice of an angel concerning the things God has in store for your day, and you doubt? And you question, and you think God not able to bring about what He intends to do?

The very day all the prophets have look forward to, from the beginning of the days of Adam down till now, (as we looked at in Centerville) are upon us. You doubt God can bring this to pass? You doubt what I have been talking about since we began in Boise, and have now arrived here? If God can send someone to declare these things to you, in the confidence and the faith and the knowledge that I'm speaking to you on His errand, and I can do it in this room, in this building housing a casino, in this city built on gambling and desperation, salvation comes to you today by the word of God. You doubt God cannot make a holy place somewhere that has not been trodden under the foot of the Gentiles? You doubt that God cannot bring to pass His work in culminating the ages? Have the faith of a grain of mustard seed, because it is coming, it is going to happen, and if you lack the faith, you will not be invited.

The promises required Abraham to endure the test of his faith. It is not easy. I want to take you back into an incident, remarkable in its own way. It is in 1 Samuel chapter 17. The entire armies of Israel were put to shame. David brought cheese and bread to his brothers, and overheard what was going on and said, "Well, I'll go out and smite that godless Philistine."

1 Samuel chapter 17, verse 34. *"And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."* [This is David, who had every confidence, despite everyone else hanging back, looking into the valley said, "We will not go." But David said, "Yeah, I'll go out. I'll take care of him. I've killed a bear, I've killed a lion, I could kill this guy. There's no difference here, really." David did not see this as a conflict between man and man, *mano a mano*. He saw this as a conflict between a mere man and God. All that was required was for someone go out there who believed in God, and God would take care of the fight. The battle is the Lord's! It always has been. The battle is the Lord's, and therefore the Lord is able to deliver. But, here is where it gets interesting.

Skip to verse 39: *"And David girded his sword upon his armor, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. (so he got rid the sword, got rid of the armor, he got rid of everything) And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine."* [On his way out to the battle, he stopped at the brook and picked up five stones.]

Skip ahead to verse 49: *"And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead."* [He only needed one. David needed but one. David had picked up five. David believed the Lord could kill Goliath, but David picked up five stones. He had enough faith. It did not mean he had such confidence he armed himself only with one stone. After crossing the brook you will not find smooth stones. The brook wears them down, grinds them to be round and smooth. You need a smooth stone for the trajectory to be true. He was a slinger and knew he needed that kind of stone. So as he crossed the brook, he picked up five, not one.]

In all of these examples, you see exactly the same thing! You see you. That's what you see. Oh, the great and the mighty and the powerful, and the miraculous and the wonderful, and the ones about whom we read, they are you. They had the same insecurities as you. One says, I'll give away all my sins to know you. That's a bargain worth making, and then it's a bargain worth keeping.

Be believing. You have faith enough, but also have faith enough in what we read earlier. I want to read it again. *"Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will."* (D&C 88:68) He and not you control that.

I remarked during the break to someone and I'll reiterate it again here. Many of those to whom these promises are made will receive the vindication of the promise in the last moments of their life. Alvin, as he lay dying, had angels come and minister to him. Joseph would later see him in the celestial kingdom,<sup>194</sup> but it was in the throes of death when angels ministered to his brother Alvin.

Stephen, as he was being stoned, had the heavens opened to him. In the last moments of his life, suffering a brutal form of execution, he was praying. He was so filled with the Spirit of what he beheld that he prayed for those who were in the process of killing him.<sup>195</sup>

St. Francis of Assisi, living in an apostate era, in an apostate church, believed and followed the Sermon on the Mount. His heart was pure and as the last month of St. Francis life drew to a close, angels came and ministered to him. Our idea of what it takes to be pure before God is not the same as God's view of what it takes to be pure before Him.

Turn to Luke chapter 18, because there the Lord pretty much tells you how He evaluates whether someone has purified themselves before Him. This is a parable the Lord gives found in chapter 18 of Luke, telling about those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.

Beginning at verse 10. *"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

God can only exalt the meek, because only the meek can be trusted. This is what it means to sanctify yourself. Our idea of purity and Christ's idea of purity are based on very different criteria. Why is meekness required of a God, by a God? What would happen if God Himself were not patient, willing to suffer abuse and be rejected? What would happen if God were egotistical? What would happen if God did not return blessings for cursings? What would happen if God were not exactly what He preached in the Sermon on the Mount? What if God did not bless those who despitely used and abused Him? What would happen if God did not submit Himself to fall into the hands of wicked men to be despised and rejected? And then

<sup>194</sup> D&C137: 1-5.

<sup>195</sup> Acts 7:59-60.



to be killed in shame, hanging naked on a cross, in full view of the world, while people spit upon Him, and mocked Him and ridiculed Him, and saying, "If you really are what you say you are, come down from the cross, then we will believe."

Woe unto all those who say, If you really are who you say you are, when the voice of God is sounding in their ears. They would have rejected the Lord as well. They would have crucified the Lord as well. They are not His sheep because they do not hear His voice. If they were His sheep they would hear His voice.

If we are required to develop the attributes of Christ, how is it possible for us to do so, unless God patiently tries to persuade us to voluntarily be like Him? How can you hope to be like Him, if you refuse to be persuaded?

God came as one of the weak things of this world. The only way He is ever going to invite you is through one of the weak things of this world, speaking in weakness, asking you to be persuaded. It doesn't matter how earnest I am, I know my standing before God. What matters is your willingness to be persuaded. Over that I have no control, and want no contro. I simply put the case as the Lord has put it to me, in the hopes that what He has to offer, and what He says need to be said will get through to you. Your relationship and your accountability is not to me, it's to Him. Therefore, be persuaded. Please, for your own sake, be persuaded.

Now I want to cover a couple things that may be disconnected, but they've come up so I am going to address them:

We don't have opening hymns and we don't have closing hymns, and we don't have prayers. You can read a sermon of the Lord from the New Testament or the Book of Mormon, and you will see He didn't have opening prayers before He delivered the sermon. He came, He delivered the sermon and He left.

There is no choir to get you ready. There was no opening prayer or closing prayer. I thought we should do that, and I was told, "No, we don't do that." He didn't do it, I'm on his errand, therefore I'm doing it His way.

When we are on a Sabbath, which has happened on one occasion in these talks, and will not happen again, we did have an opening song, we did have an opening prayer, we did have a closing prayer to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy. So if someone was put out about that, if they listen to this recording, they will have their answer.

In Christ's example of praying, (I'm talking about His example now, I'm not talking about what He said on the subject.) Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount told you that prayer ought to be done in secret. This is Matthew 6 beginning at verse 5. *"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."*

Look, I've given opening prayers in sacrament meeting, I've given opening prayers in High Council meetings, I've given opening prayers in Stake Conferences, I've given opening prayers one time in a meeting with Bruce R McConkie who was the visiting general authority, I've given opening prayers in a lot of settings and I have to tell you, when praying in secret, I don't have to worry about what anyone else thinks about my vocabulary, content, incomplete sentences, dangling participles, or stupid notions. I don't have to worry about any of that. It is between me and God. But when I'm standing on the corner, or at the pulpit, or before people and praying, (you may be better than I am), but I have never been able to pray in public in those settings, without at least some concern about the words coming out of my mouth and their effect upon the audience. I have always felt like I was delivering more of a sermon than a prayer to God. That's a weakness I have that you may have too. Christ deals with that by how He teaches us to pray.

Our Lord's example of prayer was so private that His disciples had to come to Him and ask: *"Lord teach us how to pray."* They witnessed Him praying. I'll insert it in the transcript. I'll give you the examples. When the Lord went to pray, He went out alone, apart. Sometimes He spent all night praying. But the fact that He prayed, while that fact was known, the content of the prayer was lost. What He said was not known. There are two examples that we have. We have the example that He gives on the Sermon on the Mount that is largely in response to the question of, "Teach us how to pray." He tells them how to pray. Then there is the forlorn prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane where He begs to have a cup removed from Him.

When our Lord prayed, even though His prayers may have lasted over night, they were in private. He lived what He taught. He did what He said. And I don't want to tempt people to surrender the same weakness I have, and that is, to do so for to be seen of men, simply because men are listening.

Go to John chapter 17. This is another thing about the prayer. The prayers of Christ. John chapter 17 verse 1. This is the Great Intercessory Prayer. *"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven."* [When Christ prayed, He didn't bow His head or fold His arms. He addressed His Father who is in heaven as His eyes were lifted up.

Go to John chapter 11 verse 41. *"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."* [Again, addressing His Father while lifting His eyes upward.]

Now I understand in some of the examples we've looked at they fell prostrate onto the ground. I know they bowed themselves, and beat on their breast, and not so much as to lift their eyes up to heaven. But even there the presumption implicit in the example used by the Lord is that man's eyes should be lifted up into heaven when he's addressing the Father.

How would you like it if I talked to you like this? [Turns to the wall and talks with back to audience.] Maybe I'll finish talk this way. [Returning.]

Look, pray to Him and realize that as you reach up to Him, He would rather reach down to you with greater enthusiasm than any of you could muster. But in order to establish the necessary conditions for our development, there was a law ordained before the foundation of the world upon which all blessings are predicated. That law is as easily accessible by the father of King Lamoni, as it is accessible to the father of the young man overtaken and falling into the fire, and into the water. It is as accessible to the brother of Jared as it is accessible to you. Because when the law before the foundation of the world was ordained, it was intended for all men to possibly receive of God's fullness. If receiving of His fullness required a course in rabbinical reasoning, or an advanced theological degree, there would be almost none who are saved. But *the Book of Mormon* gives us account after account. What happens to those who do not possess the required soft heart and willingness to bow? They come away saying, "God maketh no such thing known unto us." Like Lehman and Lemuel, they establish for themselves, using their iron necks and their brass brows, the inability to look up to God and be saved.

I have finished the content I was required to deliver here. I hope some of you come to hear what I have to say tomorrow, I understand it will be a tighter fit. Of course, I don't know if any of you have any intention of showing up. So, let me end by bearing testimony to you that this is not so far away that you cannot lay hold on it. This is not so far away that you can't likewise receive it. This is not distant.

*"For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)*

Receive the Holy Ghost, and it will reside in you. Receive what God offers and then you won't need any man to say unto you, "Know the Lord," for you will all know Him.

I end in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



# Marriage and Family

Denver Snuffer 7-26-14  
Lecture 9 St. George, Utah

This is the ninth installment of a single talk, all of which is designed to remind us of what was once given in the Restoration through Joseph Smith. Much of what went on before is intended to be foundational to what comes today, and to what comes next when we finish in Phoenix. Today the topic is about marriage and the family, and as a consequence of that, I view everything before as foundational to today, because of all things that are necessary to understand before we qualify to be like God, it is having this subject understood and incorporated into how we live.

If you go to Genesis chapter 2 verse 18 it says: *"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."* [If it is not good for man to be alone, we have to necessarily conclude that if you're going to be "good" in the sense that God desires for man to be good, you have to be with a woman. There has to be a union of the man and the woman. Otherwise no matter who you are, no matter what you are, no matter what virtues you may hold, you cannot be, in the eyes of God. Meaning "good" in the sense God uses the word "good" to describe the condition of man in his separate, single state.]

The work of God, after all, is to bring to pass *"the immortality and the eternal life of man."* That is not even a possibility if you do not have the man and the woman together. The condition of "eternal life" requires procreation. Therefore, it is not "good" for man to be alone.

In the creation, this is preceding chapter of Genesis chapter 1, the creation of man is described: *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."* (Genesis 1:27 - 28) [You see, when it comes to the image of God, the image of God is both male and female. That is who the Eloheim are. When we talk about the "Eloheim" a singular verb is used. That is, the Eloheim "is." This singular verb is used despite the fact that the word "Eloheim" is plural. Why would you use a single verb with a plural noun? The reason you would do that is they two are one. It is because there is no difference between the Father and His Consort, the one about whom so little is said. This is because there is something about Her role, that at this point, has not been permitted to emerge into our plain view. That is wisdom in Them, because They know withholding information protects us.

In the scriptures the voice of God is described as the sound of waters, rushing waters, mighty waters<sup>196</sup>. If I were going to stage the endowment, the voice you would hear whenever Eloheim speaks would be the voice of a man and a woman speaking in unison. It would not be the voice of a man alone, nor would it be the voice of a man in an echo chamber, and I would not use sound effects. I would not make some effort to cause feedback, or make it sound like Charlton Heston's conversation on the mountain as depicted in Cecil B. De Mille's movie, *The Ten Commandments*. I wouldn't do that. I would have a man and a woman speaking in unison whenever Eloheim were to speak.

If you want to know what the image of God is, the scriptures declare plainly: *"...in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."* [That is the image of God. That is what God, if you look at His image, should look like. This is the reason why, when you have the Father throughout Scripture on display, it is always with a Host. He appears with the heavenly Host because our God, in the end, is not the image of a single fellow standing about in a robe. It is this image, male and female. They two are together.]

You see this in scripture in a passage that has been read by Latter-day Saints perhaps more than any other denomination. It is in 1 Corinthians Chapter 11 beginning at verse 11: *"Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God."* [The modifier here in the King James translation, works marvelously well. Because as you think about what is being said here, the woman is of the man, all things are of God, and the man is by the woman. Woman of man, all things of God, man by the woman. That's how men get into the world is by the woman. That is, incidentally, also how the first man got into the world, it is by the woman.]

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<sup>196</sup> Rev. 1: 15; D&C 110: 3.

Think of the image of God. Then think of what is said here about it “not being good for man to be alone.” That is, the image of God includes the notion of companionship. That is what makes it “good.”

Think about multiplying and replenishing. The image of God includes necessarily, offspring. As a separate and single individual you are finite, each of us is finite. But when you put together the man and the woman, it is in the image of God because they become potentially infinite. Despite the fact we are in mortality, we become infinite, meaning we have no end, by multiplying. Sitting in this room today, we are all descendents of Adam and Eve. They are present here today in you, because they continue, despite the fact they died. Until they come back from the grave, it still does not matter they are dead, they are yet present through the people who are their offspring.

They became in the image of God. This is at the core of redemption, this is at the core of the work of God, this is at the core of what it means for God to complete His work and to have the continuation of the seeds.<sup>197</sup> This is what God does. This is what Gods do.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants section 132. We brush up against this concept of the infinite in section 132 as well. (I intend to say a good deal about some of the mischief that has been introduced to us through section 132, but not now. We will return to this, but right now I want to focus on the language and the promises that are extended, because they duplicate what you are seeing in the account of Genesis.) This is in section 132, beginning at verse 19: *"And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise,"* [Then they are promised, about midway through that verse, that they will inherit,] *"thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions."* [It goes on to say, *"they,"* notice it's not *"he,"* and notice it's not *"she,"* it is *"they."* Because if you're going to pass by, you're going to have to be *"they"* and not he or she. ] *"...they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory."*

The notion that you are going to succeed in acquiring the glory likened to God, as a separate and single individual, is nowhere found as a promise in scripture. It is not a reasonable expectation. It is a non-scriptural expectation. It is a foolish hope. Because it does not reckon according to the things God created as He created them. Understand, those verses that we read in Genesis? Those verses were before the Fall, and the condition in which Adam and Eve found themselves at the time those incidences took place included immortality, because they had not yet fallen from grace. The marriage and the union of the two of them was intended to last forever, because death has not entered yet into the world. As God put it, it was "good" for them to be together. Consider the requirements: -Marry a wife,

-“sealed,”

-“Holy Spirit of Promise,”

-then “pass by the angels,”

-“enter into exaltation,”

-obtain “glory, fullness,”

all these words are applicable only to the man and the woman together as one. It is only applicable to the exalted state of a marriage worthy of preservation into eternity.

Instead of focusing on this as something you may receive in the great hereafter as a reward, change your view. Instead of some distant glory to be given in the afterlife, why not think about whether the conditions described in these verses are themselves a reward in this life. Think about this as something to be had now, not something to be postponed and hoped for in the afterlife. Not in eternity, but today.

Can it be said concerning your own marriage, that it is not good for the man to be alone? Are the two of you together, better than what each of you are alone? Is your marriage a source of joy, of happiness, of contentment, of companionship? The Lord told them to multiply and replenish the earth. Do you find within your family relationship there is joy, rejoicing and happiness as a consequence of the environment you and your wife have put together in your home?

<sup>197</sup> D&C 132: 19, 22.

As a woman, is your relationship in the image of God? Is there godliness about the way in which you and your husband interact? If you had to reckon whether or not someone, looking at the two of you, would see in you the image of God, would they? These are not just happy notions for the afterlife, these ought to be descriptions of what your marriage could and should look like. Can you sense the glory of God in your marriage? Remember, we looked at this in D&C 93:36. *"The glory of God is intelligence, or another words Light and Truth."* The glory of God being light, the glory of God being truth. Is that something present in the marriage that you now have? Is your marriage filled with life? With light? With truth? With understanding?

Turn back to D&C 121, there a couple versus there that I want to call to your attention, particularly if you view the man and the woman together as one. Read these verses as if they describe "the one," which is you and your wife. This is beginning at verse 40. *"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."*

Within your family, within your marriage, are you and your wife learning to use persuasion? Within your marriage, are you and your husband learning to use gentleness in dealing with one another? Are the two of you together, facing one another, in all the difficulties that come as a result of being married, are you facing that together in meekness? Do you find that, in all the relationship troubles, turmoil, and challenges, together you face it all with mutual kindness? Is there a search for understanding that results in pure knowledge, when it comes to any dilemma you two confront?

Look at verse 37: *"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."* [It has been my observation that as soon as the Spirit of the Lord withdraws, that quickly will another spirit step in to assure you that you right, that you should be vindicated, that you ought to proceed on in the arrogance of your heart to feel yourself justified and vindicated. There are false spirits that go about, but there is no better an audience to receive the whisperings of those false spirits, than the abusers of their authority. Those who, having grieved the Spirit and caused it to withdraw, then accept counsel from another spirit saying: "You are right, press on! Well done! You are good and you are doing good using this great authority from God! You will be vindicated. This is all God's work, and you're a great man because you are engaged in God's work! Do not back down, do not relent. Forget about persuasion, you should never be long-suffering, you should make those under your rule suffer if they resist your power. They should yield to your rule. There is no place for meekness. We believe in a God of strength, a God of power, a God whose work can be done despite the frailties of man! God's work cannot fail, and you are doing God's work! There is no need for men to be meek. And it's kind in the end, to punish, and to force, and coerce, because we have a good objective in mind." This false spirit influences much of what happens today among the Latter-day Saints. It grieves God, and leaves the Saints in a state of confusion.]

All the lies and all the deceit that led to Catholicism falling into the abyss it fell into are presently in play with the Latter-day Saints. Those same deceiving spirits who worked this deception out long ago, are now taking the Restoration of the Gospel as another opportunity for them. And so they once again whisper to the priests and the priests listen. As soon as the Spirit of God is withdrawn, another spirit convinces men they have God's power, and therefore cannot go astray.

So, does your marriage help you avoid covering your sins? You are never going to solve this problem in a community of Zion, until you first begin to solve it the walls within your own home. You are never going to have Zion somewhere in a community, until first that community has been composed of those who have a marriage that is in the image of God.

Does your marriage help you to avoid "gratifying your pride?" Does it help hold down your "vain ambition?" Is your ambition to exalt the two of you, rather than the one of you? Does it bring you time and time again, to not exercise control, but to respect the freedom to choose?

Your children will make mistakes. It is not your job to force them to avoid the mistakes. It is your job to counsel them, and to let them have the experience through which your counsel then makes sense, and is vindicated. You hope the mistakes they make are not too serious, but even if they are serious and they involve lifelong struggles, it is their right to choose. It is your obligation to teach and to persuade, and then to rejoice when they return after they are tired of filling their bellies with the husks the pigs are fed.<sup>198</sup> It is your job to go and greet them and put a robe on their shoulder and put a ring on their hand and to the kill

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<sup>198</sup> See Luke 15: 11-16.

the fatted calf.<sup>199</sup> It's not your job to beat them and chain them to the farm so that they cannot go away and behave foolishly. They need to know that your bonds of love towards them are stronger than death itself.<sup>200</sup> They need to know that they will endure as an object of your love within your heart into eternity. Not only your children, but one another, because we all make mistakes. Do not exercise dominion, do not exercise compulsion; but exercise long-suffering, gentleness, meekness and kindness. Some of the biggest disasters come when you did not give people the right to choose freely, and you attempt to coerce them. Be wise, be prudent, be someone who they would respect and who they would gladly listen to. Your children will correctly measure you in the end, even if they do not do so at the beginning.

Look at Doctrine and Covenants section 130, starting with verse 18. We have looked at these verses in several contexts, but we need to look at them again today in this context: *"Whatever principle of intelligence (and understand that means Light and Truth) we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated— And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."*

Think about those verses and as an invitation to work this out inside your marriage first. To work out, inside the relationship between you and your wife, the principle of intelligence that gives you the opportunity to be diligent, the opportunity to be obedient, the opportunity to gain experience that will make you more like God. Your marriage is a laboratory to prove you, and to let you become more intelligent.

After the creation itself, marriage was first ordinance. I want to take an opportunity to look at the sequence of events, because it is very interesting. Adam and Eve were sent down here as the first. Adam and Eve were then the first introduced into the world. Therefore they were the first of the human family to face these challenges. They were the first ones to begin the search to return to God. And the way in which their story is told in the scriptures is not chronological. To get the correct sequence, you have to go through Moses' record, and you have to carefully examine Enoch's record within *the Book of Moses*, in order to put together the chronology of these things. When you do that, the story is really rather fascinating. So I want to take a few moments and lay out the sequence.

Marriage was the first ordinance, it was introduced before the Fall, and it was introduced before man was instructed on sacrifice. Go back to *the Book of Moses* in chapter 4, verse 27. This is after they had transgressed, but before they had been sent out of the Garden: *"Unto Adam, and also unto his wife, did I, the Lord God, make coats of skins, and clothed them."* [Now it's important that, while the account sometimes refers to Adam by meaning both Adam and Eve, in this case, it was necessary for a clarification to be made. The garment that was given unto them to clothe their nakedness, is also referred to in the temple, as the garment of the Holy Priesthood. God wants the record to be clear: *"Unto Adam, and also unto his wife, did I, the Lord God, make coats of skins, and clothed them."* Therefore Adam was not clothed and then told, "You go and do this and clothe your wife," God clothed them both. God did not expect Adam to intercede when it comes to the clothing of the woman who had been given him. God treated her as if she too were about to embark upon the journey into mortality that would require her likewise to understand the principle of sacrifice. Think about it for one moment. You learn that they practiced sacrifice thereafter, but when were they taught the principle of sacrifice? They were taught about sacrifice at this moment, when they were clothed in the skins of an animal. The animal gave its life to cover them.]

There are legends about this event. They show up in a variety of ways, they even show up in mythical characters. These legends are about the animal chosen by God to be slain as the first sacrifice. A choice had to be made for the sacrifice, in order to clothe them with the skins of an animal. I rather like the theme of many of those, which is that when the animals were brought to Adam, and he named them, there were some he really liked more. But there was one particular animal he liked above all the rest. It was that animal, and that animal's consort, who were slain in order to provide the clothing for Adam and Eve. So Adam and his wife Eve could understand the principle of sacrifice came at an enormous price. So the animal was no longer left in this sphere, having been slain while yet in the Garden, to provide the coats. It was this great loss which was used to drive home the point about the sacrifice required in order to clothe the nakedness of the man and the woman. To "cover their shame" there was a great price to be paid.

If you turn over to Moses chapter 5, beginning at verse 5, this is talking about after they had been expelled from the Garden. *"And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. And after many days an angel of the Lord*

<sup>199</sup> *Id.* vs. 17-32.

<sup>200</sup> D&C 121: 44.

*appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth."*

That first sacrifice was performed in the Garden, before they were driven out. It brought such sadness in verse 27 of chapter 4, that occurred before they were driven out of the Garden. But sacrifice was simply a commandment to repeat the process. Adam and Eve then did as they were commanded. It was some time later, many days later —and "many days" is not defined— before this was explained. It appears to me from the context as we go further, that "many days" in this context means "many years." In fact, it means more than "many years," it means "generations." There are many generations of their descendants alive on the earth before the explanation of why they were offering sacrifices is finally provided. And you're impatient. And you want to know more, and you want to know it now. And you don't think that God tries the patience of all those to whom He will eventually come to comfort.

This occurs before the baptisms of Adam and Eve. Go to Moses chapter 6, starting at verse 50. This is Enoch now, and Enoch is talking about earlier events. Enoch in his record retells what went before. We still don't have the full record of Adam and Eve, but we have enough snippets that if you begin to gather them together you can reconstruct the picture. And so beginning at verse 50: *"God hath made known unto our fathers that all men must repent. And he called upon our father Adam by his own voice, saying: I am God; I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh. And he also said unto him: If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you."*

This was what God said to Adam, preliminary to Adam being baptized, which was still later than when Adam learned about the purpose behind the sacrifice he had been offering.

And so he was told about it. Then look at when it happened, which again, this is not Enoch, this is going back to what Moses says about when it occurred. This is the voice of the Lord saying that it's going to happen. When it happened is in verse 64: *"And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord."* [Understand that word "cried," after what we talked about yesterday, should mean something to you. The pattern is the same, and it doesn't matter what scripture you look at. Adam "cried" unto the Lord. What he "cried unto the Lord" is not recorded, but clearly when the Lord had told him about baptism, this is what Adam wanted, and therefore he cried unto the Lord for a purpose. And look what happens:] *"...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: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever; And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity."*

This was Adam's baptism, and confirmation. This was Adam's gift of the Holy Ghost, this is his baptism of fire, and this is his ordination by the voice of God out of heaven, ordaining him after the order of Him who is without beginning of days or end of years. This was all in one, at one moment. This is many years later. There are generations of descendents of Adam and Eve who existed at the time this took place.

The effect is then picked up in the narrative of Moses. This is a Moses chapter 5 verse 9: *"And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will."*

These are the events that took place in that first generation of Adam and Eve among their descendents. If you want to have peace and harmony for a community, it has to begin inside strong marriages. Zion necessarily requires holy matrimony. Adam and Eve had sons and daughters at the time this took place.

Chapter 5 of Moses, verse 2. *"And Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth."* [This occurred because they were married, and they were commanded to, at that point, offer sacrifice, and also to multiply and replenish the earth. So they offered sacrifice, and they multiplied. They began to have children and the



children began to multiply in verse 3.] *"And from that time forth, the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land, and to till the land, and to tend flocks, and they also begat sons and daughters."*

Notice that the image originally created of the image of God, the man and the woman, that is, Adam and Eve, is now replicated in the children of Adam and Eve. These children imitate the same pattern; two and two. They are necessarily male and female if they going to produce offspring. If they beget sons and daughters, they have to be male and female. It was not one on three, it was two by two. It was the man and the woman. That is the image of God, and no other image is offered to us in scripture, it simply isn't. There is no such thing as same-sex marriage in the scriptural model. There is no such thing as same-sex marriage because how else do they produce offspring? How can you obey the first commandment to multiply and replenish the earth if there is same sex marriage? If the commandment to multiply and replenish the earth arises within the context of marriage, necessarily it requires there be the man and the woman.

Adam and Eve had sons and daughters, their children likewise were married and they had sons and daughters. They were visited and they were instructed by the angel. They were baptized, then they received the Holy Ghost. Look what is provided by access to the Holy Ghost in verse 66 in chapter 6. They are baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, this is the record of the Father and Son from henceforth and forever. It's also referred to and defined more in verse 61: *"It is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment."*

So that is what was within them. What happens when they are so endowed and they are equipped? This is Moses chapter 5, verses 10 and 11. I am so glad that these verses were restored to us, because contained in this is a much, much greater lesson if you have the eyes to see it: *"And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God."*

That's Adam prophesying what is going to befall all the future generations. That was what Adam did. Now look at what Eve did: *"And Eve, his wife, heard all these things [the prophecy comes through Adam, Eve hears it] and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient."*

There is a profound difference between, the response to the power of the Spirit upon these two. With respect to its effect upon Adam on the one hand, and its effect upon Eve on the other, there was a fundamental difference. These were remarkably different reactions. To the man it is, that he prophesies, that is, he declares the truth. The "truth" being a knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come. That definition is given to us in the Doctrine and Covenants.<sup>201</sup> This is the role of the man, and this is the role Adam fulfilled. But to Eve on the other hand, she obtains wisdom through the Spirit.

The role of the man is knowledge, the role of the woman is wisdom, and you see that on display right here in these verses. It is role of the woman to have the understanding, to take the prophecy that has been delivered by Adam, to process it and to say, here is what it means. This is the role of the woman. This is the gift of the woman. This is eternally the role of the woman. This is why there is a male and there is a female. In many respects the gift of wisdom eludes the male, and in many respects the gift of knowledge eludes the female. I'm not talking about "knowledge" in the sense that a woman can't have a PhD. Two of the brightest people I know are daughters of mine. It's not that I am referring to. I'm talking about knowledge in a godly sense. Knowledge in "the gift of God" sense, and I'm talking about wisdom in "the gift of God" sense, and the scriptural sense. This is an example.

Now look at verse 12. *"And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God."* [And how did they do that? They did that by a ritual. They did that by offering sacrifice. They did that by observing what they understood, but they did it together.] *"And they,"* [it is they, the two of them,] *"they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters."* [This was not Adam preaching repentance, this was not Eve preaching repentance. This was they, both together. This was the two of them. They are equally yoked. This is the two of them joined together to make the declaration. They together. The two of them however, beginning in verse 12, begin to make all things known unto their sons and daughters after they had been adequately prepared to understand and declare the truth. They were first prepared before they began to preach.

<sup>201</sup> D&C 93: 24.

There was some eagerness on the part of father Hyrum (Joseph's older brother), before *the Book of Mormon* was even in print. He wanted to begin preaching repentance, because he believed in the work. But the Lord held Hyrum back. If you go to Doctrine and Covenants section 11 beginning at verse 13, this a revelation given to Hyrum: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy; And then shall ye know, or by this shall you know, all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive. Behold, I command you that you need not suppose that you are called to preach until you are called. Wait a little longer, until you shall have my word, my rock, my church, and my gospel, that you may know of a surety my doctrine."*

Hyrum was told, "it is good to be eager, but don't go out and try to preach something because you're not yet qualified. You don't have enough knowledge in order to do so." Likewise, Adam and Eve, were not qualified at first. The circumstances of their lives did not prepare them to do it, until there were generations already alive on the earth. Then they were given the gifts, the endowment necessary in order to begin preaching.

Hyrum was told in verse 21: *"Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men. But now hold your peace; study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which is now translating, yea, until you have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation, and then shall all things be added thereto."*

Hyrum Smith would eventually become co-president with Joseph. Hyrum Smith whom the Lord would command to be ordained, not only to the office of the priesthood,<sup>202</sup> but become the one possessing the sealing power over the Church.<sup>203</sup> Hyrum Smith, who would be the successor to Joseph,<sup>204</sup> though he was killed before Joseph. This same Hyrum Smith who was the prophet of the Church (and Joseph rebuked the Church because they weren't giving heed to Hyrum's words), Hyrum Smith who's letter to the Church ought to be in the Doctrine and Covenants because he was a President, and he issued a general epistle admonishing people, Hyrum Smith, whose name is omitted from the list of Church presidents, even though it should be there, Hyrum Smith was told by the Lord do not go out and start preaching yet. You need to learn some things first. You need to be qualified first, in the revelation to Hyrum given in 1829. Similarly, in the lives of Adam and Eve God was in no great hurry to get them preaching before they were qualified.

There was this comment Joseph Smith made *"I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and He is within me, and comprehends more than all the world: and I will associate myself with Him."* [That's from *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 350.] This was what qualified Adam and Eve to declare repentance to their children. This was what qualified them to know the truth of all things, and have the wisdom to impart it, so that they could persuade their children to believe in Christ. This is the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You, to be competent in teaching your children, must first have the Holy Ghost as your guide. Then, once you have that, you ought to have familiarity with the scriptures, just as Hyrum was told to first learn what was in them before trying to teach others. Then you are qualified to go and teach your children, and you have an obligation to do that. Children are the means to preserve Zion. Without the conversion of children, Zion has no chance of surviving.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants section 68, beginning at verse 25. *"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents. For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized. And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands. And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord. And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy."*

Isn't it interesting that coupled with the obligation of the parents to do this for their children, it is immediately followed by the command to observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. This is a nondelegable responsibility. You cannot take your children and drop them off to someone in an organization somewhere, and say, "There you are, see you in three hours." You cannot just hope that what comes out of your children's mouths at the end of that bears some remote resemblance to the content of scripture,

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<sup>202</sup> D&C 124: 91.

<sup>203</sup> D&C 124: 93

<sup>204</sup> D&C 124: 94.

and not merely some warmed over reiteration or regurgitation of a talk we all slept through when it was broadcast on TV every six months.

It is now the same talk, recycled over and over. Correlation has so reduced the content nothing varies. The content is reduced, the material becomes repetitive, and everything is predictable. I can cut-and-paste and give you all the talks coming in the next one. So do not tell me that is what you going to use to fulfill your responsibility to teach your children. Don't assume that will be an adequate basis upon which you discharge your responsibility to your children to teach them to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. That cannot be what you're going to do to discharge your nondelegable responsibility.

You think that enduring to the end is all that needs to be done? If you've got your checklist, and you've got your little pamphlet, and you fulfilled that, you cannot believe that will be enough. Is that how you discharge your obligation to God? That's how you mirror what Adam and Eve did when they preach repentance? That's what you're going to do to take care of this? Well, good luck with that! Because I'm telling you, that is not the way in which Zion is going to be assembled. It's not going to work.

You put your children at risk whenever they are inadequately educated about the events of this dispensation. When they become adults, they begin to see all the holes in the traditional narrative about what happened when God began to work through Joseph Smith. You will have children that are going to leave in droves. You going to have children who are going to say, "I reject you, I reject the Gospel, I reject your *Book of Mormon*, I reject your Church, and I reject all the notions that you present to me, because I have found enough material on the Internet to raise serious doubts about all of this.

Do you, as parents, really think you have discharged your responsibility when you've let your children grow up in ignorance, hearing a story that is put together to make the Church look good, without any regard for the salvation of the souls of your children? That's what you're going to do?

Do you think you can come to God and say, "Look, they were regular Primary attenders when they are in my house! Look, we did *For the Strength of Youth*, we went out and we did the Trek thing, we drug a bunch of carts around, and mirrored carrying the girls cross the creek. We did all that stuff. We praised our ancestry, blessed noble pioneers. We did all that stuff! We sang *Praise to the man*. We stood when one your anointed entered the room." Do you think this will discharge your scriptural duties to your children? Do you think this will save them?

My God people!<sup>205</sup> What are you thinking!? What on earth are you thinking? Do you read these scriptures? Do you recognize that the salvation and eternal life of your children hangs in the balance by the ignorance you visit upon them? Do you understand that their salvation may be lost entirely because the responsibility devolving upon you to teach, preach, exhort and expound, both the man and the woman, both mother and father, has been imposed upon you by God?

You have to take time on Sunday, if you spend your Sabbath at a regular three-hour block, thereafter educating your children about the foolishness they just heard, and about the vanity and the pride that is just been taught to them. You need to inoculate them against the errors of our day, and you need to ensure that they understand the truth. Because if you simply turn them loose to hear what they hear there, I don't care if you go to an LDS Church, Lutheran Church, Catholic Church, or a Baptist Church, you're not going get anything more redemptive out of what now is taught in the Primary programs of the LDS Church, than what you can get in these others. In fact, some of these other congregations may even do a better job, because they preach and focus upon Jesus, they don't have a hierarchy to point to and say, "Look at that man! He'll get you somewhere! He has a key, and all you have to be is some keyhole."

Children need to be taught. Children need to be challenged. Children are the most inquisitive creatures on the planet. Children are eager to learn. They not only don't know a lot, they know they don't know a lot. They are sponges. They want to learn. Boring a child about the Gospel of Jesus Christ is an offense to the child and an offense to God! Preach the gospel to them. Tell them the truth. Take the material and challenge them to see that this Gospel is infinite in scope. That Joseph Smith did not, indeed, could not, have written *the Book of Mormon*. That there are at least two voices in the dialogue that we looked at yesterday in *the Book of Ether*. That one of them never uses the word "prayer," and the other one never the uses the word "cry."

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<sup>205</sup> This expression is not "taking the name of God in vain" because: First, I am not using God's name. Second, I am not advancing an untruth, vainly attempting to empower a falsehood by attributing it to God. Third, it dramatically calls attention to the importance of this sequence of statements and, hopefully, makes it all the more memorable. These are serious matters deserving your complete attention.

Show them from the scriptures what it means to be saved. You will be astonished at how much children are capable of understanding! But I have to warn you, when you begin to teach your children, if you do decide to discharge your obligation to them, you are going to make them strangers and foreigners and sojourners. You are going to have to find other people who are like-minded and willing to teach their children and discharge their responsibility, so your kids know that there are more than just your family that is interested in comprehending the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Look, go to D&C section 88. I want to read this and take a slightly different view of it. Beginning at verse 119: *"Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a 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; That your incomings may be in the name of the Lord; that your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord; that all your salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the Most High. Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings. Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege. See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires. Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated. And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace. Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come. Behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive you unto myself. Amen."*

Think of this as a description of you, as husband, you, as wife, and your children. And make your house this house. Make this your family, a family of prayer, a family of fasting, a family of faith, a family of learning, therefore a family of glory, which will bring about a family of order, and therefore, a house of God.

These are seven things. Seven is a symbolic number used to signify the completion, or the perfection of something. Finish your house. It has yet to be built, if you haven't built upon that foundation. Let this description not be of some multimillion dollar building that is built using the funds you donate to the organization. Instead, make this you. Make this your people. You should be the temple of God.

The organization's building involves a ritual designed to depict coming back into the presence of God. Make that ritual a reality in the lives of you and your children. *"Where two or three are gathered in my name,"*<sup>206</sup> makes it possible for Him to come and be with you. Make it possible for Him and the angels to take note and to say, "Look! It's beginning again! There is faith again on the earth, and the children are being taught. We must act! Let us go down and gather them." Make yourselves worthy of preservation. Get your own houses in order.

Now, I want to change subjects and talk about something for a moment. I've been asked over and over and over, why I don't talk about some subjects, and therefore, I'm going to talk about this subject only because it fits within the context of what I'm challenging you to do.

I've been asked, "Why don't you speak about 'One Mighty and Strong,' and why don't you talk about the Davidic servant?" There's plenty of nonsense going on about that, and I do not want to contribute yet more to the fire. But I also don't want to take good, honest, earnest people and criticize them one whit for their best efforts in trying to parse through this subject. I don't blame them for resorting to all kinds of tools, and making an effort, and I don't want anything I'm about to say to be viewed as criticism of anyone. I don't care to do that. I think there's some very good people making an effort at least to raise the level of consciousness. And I don't think there's anything wrong with trying to figure this stuff out, and preliminarily, in good faith, reaching what you think is a correct conclusion, even when it happens to be wrong. As long as you want to hold onto that tentatively, as long as you're willing ultimately to be taught by the Spirit, I say all those folks that make this their primary thrust, good for them! I've avoided it, but in this context on this day, I want to talk about those verses because they fit.

This is talking about the One who is Mighty and Strong. In Doctrine and Covenants 85, beginning at verse 7. First of all, I want to say, if this is a role to be occupied by a single individual, then no one can claim the role until after he has done the required work. Only fools, knaves, imposters and pseudo-strongmen who have accomplished nothing run about proclaiming themselves as possessing the "button." I am referring to the game, "button, button, who's got the button?" These various claims

<sup>206</sup> Matt. 18: 20.

remind me of that children's game. These various knaves proclaim: "I do! I'm mightier and stronger than you!" What a load of crap!

Beginning at verse 7: *"And it shall come to pass that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God; While that man, who was called of God and appointed, that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God, shall fall by the shaft of death, like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning. And all they who are not found written in the book of remembrance shall find none inheritance in that day, but they shall be cut asunder, and their portion shall be appointed them among unbelievers, where are wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

So this is work yet to be done, according to some. According to others, this was fulfilled by Joseph Smith. The narrative the Church would offer to you is that Joseph Smith, or an early church bishop fulfilled this prophecy. As a result of the Church urging that as the interpretation, I'm very suspicious that that is, of course, wrong. If this has not yet been fulfilled, then what is coming will upset the church's apple cart. So the possibility that this is yet to be fulfilled I think is the greater probability.

But, if this person wants to step forth, then they need to hold the scepter of power in their hand. They need to have light for their covering. Their mouth needs to utter eternal words, and their bowels need to be a fountain of truth. These are the works to be done. So if someone wants to say, "I'm the guy," then go ahead and do these things. If you want to accomplish these things, once you have, then maybe this was a description of you.

But, in our context, in this day, on the subject, I want to invite all of you to set in order your own house. I want to invite all of you, after putting it in order, and making that house of order worthy to be God's house, for you, all of you, to be this one who is mighty and strong. To have everyone of you have the scepter of power, or in other words priesthood, in your hand. I want all of you to be clothed with light for a covering, that is, to have the knowledge of Truth and Light, the knowledge of God. I want all of you to be that. I want your mouths to utter eternal words within your families. And I want your bowels to be a fountain of truth. And that as a consequence of that, you are able to set in order your house to make it the house of God. Let this begin with you. Whoever you are, male or female, sitting today. Let it begin with you, then let it extend to your spouse, then to your children. And when your house is in order, look at your extended family, and then others who are likewise inclined to believe. These are the kinds of preparations that need to precede Zion. We are not going to get there in one step. We are only going to get there incrementally through repenting and remembering.

There are a great number of increments yet to be accomplished. It's not going to happen through fairy dust. There's not going to be someone who comes along and says to you, "*Spiritu Sancto, Ave Maria*, get the holy water, get the incense, voodoo, voila, now you're Zion!" It's not going to happen. It doesn't matter if it's a Dominican in a brown robe, or a Mormon Elder with a name tag, you, you must become holy. You must receive the guidance, blessing, benefit and baptism of the Spirit. You must become the house of God. You are going to have to be the one that God visits with, in order to have the preparations necessary to take place. This is not something to be accomplished in a single step. Indeed, all of it must precede the gathering.

We looked a while back, in Grand Junction, at how dangerous it would be for an unworthy person to attempt to be in Zion. Because when it finally is acceptable to the Lord, and when His presence does finally dwell there, it is unsafe for anyone unprepared to face His glory to be in that location. Therefore, when the gathering takes place and you would like to join in, you do so at your peril if you have not accomplished the things required beforehand.

We read those verses in Alma yesterday about Melchizedek's people in chapter 13, about how the people Melchizedek gathered had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination, and had all gone astray. It doesn't matter if you look about and see the tattered ruins of the restoration. It doesn't matter that we are filled with all kinds of false notions, inadequate and incomplete teachings. It doesn't matter that we are a vain and a proud people. It's even worse when, recognizing that we live among a vain and a proud latter-day people, we gather together to think of ourselves as somehow even better than the Latter-day Saints. Because if we do that, we immediately import the same failing culture of arrogance and pride. We immediately take what is offered, and instead of becoming, as we talked about yesterday, humbled by the greatness of the steps remaining in front of us, we view ourselves comparatively. We think if we are slightly better than them, we please God. But the standard is absolute! It does not matter if you are kinda, sorta, a little bit better. The standard is absolute! It is an on-off switch. And if it's on, it's on, and if it's off, it's off. There is no dimmer. It doesn't happen that way. We aren't better than them. In some respects we have greater reason to fall into the folly of our own pride. We have greater reason to think ourselves better, than the people who

think that they are better than the rest of the people. So we foolishly move along incrementally, to become yet further away from God. If we think we're better than them, and they think they're better than the world, then we ought to become a fool for Christ's sake.<sup>207</sup>

We should go and serve among them. We ought to do like the missionary who went out and did everything that the king didn't do, and did it with such exactness and with such fidelity, because he wasn't trying to serve the king, he was trying to serve the King of Heaven.<sup>208</sup> He was trying to show in the integrity of his heart and in the integrity of his soul, what was true. Maybe the way to fix some of the problems with your own children would be for you to go and ask your Bishop to be a Primary teacher. And then you're not only teaching and ministering to your own children, but you are teaching and ministering to others as well.

Hearts of people get hard the older they get, although there is at least one exception, because I ran into a man in my office who was like 85 years old, and he was still as young and as nimble minded and as open and as flexible as a child. That is why we have to become childlike, because we have to be willing to consider these things. We must be willing to still learn.

Well, in Alma chapter 13, beginning verse 14 it says: *"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 forever. 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."*

What are these ordinances spoken of here? That was what we looked at in the Orem talk concerning chapter 13 and we are not going to repeat it here. That is the material explaining everything God does, He does by an ordinance. Everything that He does, every blessing that He confers, He confers by a covenant. One of the good things about the absence of a binding covenant is that you can't damn yourself by taking upon yourself an obligation you will never honor.

One of the good things about the Restoration is that there are covenantal examples we were given, that give us an idea of the kind of behavior that God would want. I wish everyone would go to the LDS temples and take on covenants and then try to live them. But if you fail, unlike the stuff that comes into play with this Melchizedek character, there is no severe penalty, because it is for your good, and for your practice, and for your instruction. If you were to honor those commitments, there is no reason why God and the angels cannot ratify whatever it is you do, if you qualify for it. The Holy Spirit of Promise is embedded within the architecture of the Church's teachings. It was as recent as the General Conference before last, when President Eyring talked about how they had the sealing power, and then he threw in that caveat that everything has to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. I put that up on my blog, I quoted it and said, "That's good doctrine." And that was good doctrine.

Go to the temple, get your ordinances, and then work to have the Holy Spirit of Promise, because the Keeper of that Gate is the Holy One of Israel, and there is no employee there. It is the Holy One of Israel, and you qualify to receive that directly with heaven. There is no other gatekeeper opening and closing doors. There is only the Holy One of Israel, He employeth no servant there.<sup>209</sup> Therefore, this scripture is talking about the very things that I have been talking about since we began in Boise. Now we have reached this point.

We need to respond when repentance is preached, by repenting. Righteousness only comes after that. And this is the only way out of our similarly bleak, current condition. This! It is by remembering, it is by returning, it is by finding yourselves, no matter who you live among, being someone God has accepted. You must be someone God has spoken to from heaven. You must take the Holy Spirit as your guide, and not be taken off this task. You set in order the house of God, beginning with your own marriage. You do that.

Now, we are going to change subjects, and go back to Doctrine and Covenants section 132. The next part of this needs to focus on what is said in section 132. By way of background, section 132 has an uncertain beginning. There are lots of debates about how, when and where. I have taken the position this was first given during the translation of the *Book of Mormon*. This makes

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<sup>207</sup> 1 Cor. 3: 18.

<sup>208</sup> See Alma 18: 8-11.

<sup>209</sup> 2 Ne. 9: 41.

sense because Joseph and Oliver prayed to know concerning baptism when they got to those passages in *the Book of Mormon*. Therefore it is likely they would have likewise prayed to know about the subject of plural wives when they got to the translation of Jacob chapter 2.

The way in which the translation took place, was that the Jacob chapter 2 materials were part of *the Small Plates of Nephi*, translated at the very last. So it would have been very late in the translation of *the Book of Mormon* when they got to Jacob chapter 2, almost at the end of the translation process. I think they would've made an inquiry as a result of that. Other people believe it was later and as a result of the translation of the Bible. These people believe it was during the time Joseph and Sidney were going through what is now called *the Inspired Version* of the Bible, that provoked the inquiry.

However, even though it is not well known history, those first four missionaries that were sent out included Oliver Cowdrey. Oliver expected to be able to take a plural wife among the Indians. There is reason to believe Oliver, rather than Sidney, was involved and had knowledge about it. Oliver would have gained that knowledge at the time the revelation came.

There is also a comment from Brigham Young, in which he said knowledge of this came during the translation of *the Book of Mormon*. Therefore, it would have been in the 1829 time frame, when the beginning of section 132 was first revealed.

The fact of the matter is that because of the content of section 132, the content was suppressed and not reduced to written form for many years. We know when it finally got put into writing. The headnote on section 132 says it got reduced to writing July 12, 1843. William Clayton's journal confirms that that was the date it was finally written down. Then the subsequent events in the diary, about what happened as the section 132 transcript was taken to Emma and her reaction, confirms the July 1843 date. Shortly afterwards Joseph deeded to Emma unsold lots in Nauvoo in order to make sure Joseph's legal and property affairs were not intertwined with other women claiming rights, and all of that. There seems to be a pretty good historical basis for saying that section 132 was a document created by Joseph Smith, dictating it to his scribe in July 1843, just as the head note says here. And if you look at William Clayton's Journal, you will see that there's other contemporary evidence on that date for this happening, but it did not get made public.

The content of section 132 does not appear to be a single revelation. It appears to be, in my view, at least five different revelations that go back in the beginning verses to 1829. When you get to the end it speaks about events occurring in July 1843. So it is really a series of revelations which, for convenience, were dictated at one time by Joseph, in one document. Therefore, when you look at it, it is really not clear where the divisions take place. I tried to parse through it and give you what I think is a reasonable way to break the chronology apart to see what happened in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*. But you don't have to have read that. Today I am going to talk about this revelation just generally.

The brother of Jared, as we saw yesterday, went to the Lord to inquire about a practical matter. And the Lord in response to the inquiry about the lighting, first of all, asks the brother of Jared if he will believe Him. The Lord asked the brother of Jared if he would accept the words, (in other words, the covenant) which the Lord would then offer to this man. Once he agreed to the conditions, the Lord gives him a revelation containing all of God's revelations a mortal is permitted to receive.

What the brother of Jared received in the revelation had nothing to do with the original problem that brought him in prayer to the Lord. He wanted to solve a lighting problem inside a barge. The revelation has nothing to do with the lighting problem inside the barge. It contained instead all of God's revelations.

Similarly, when Joseph Smith went into the Sacred Grove he was trying to find out which church to join. In answer to the inquiry about which church to join, he was told to join none of them, and that they were all corrupt, and he would be the means of bringing something else about.

Later, when Joseph prayed to find out what his state and standing was before the Lord, and the angel Moroni came and disposed of Joseph's inquiry very perfunctorily, telling him to "fear not" and then went on to tell him about everything the Lord had as an agenda, including the plates of *the Book of Mormon*.

The subject someone asks about when they go to the Lord does not necessarily then control the content of what the Lord will reveal. Likewise, when Joseph made the inquiry about the plurality of wives, the Lord took it as an opportunity to talk about something more important. The Lord wanted to talk about eternal marriage. The Lord's priority is what you read first in section 132.

He talks about the eternal duration of the marriage covenant. He answers the question about plural wives very late, in the original revelation, almost as an afterthought. But it is first and foremost a revelation about the eternity of the marriage covenant. You do not read an answer about Joseph's inquiry concerning plural marriage until verse 34. Beginning at verse 1 and going through verse 33, all of that is about the eternity of the marriage covenant. All of that is about marriage of a man and a woman, like the marriage of Adam to Eve, and like the children of Adam and Eve who went off two by two to create their families.

The blessings of exaltation you hope to inherit in eternity are tied to the first 33 verses of section 132 dealing with the marriage of a man and a woman. Therefore, when you read section 132, don't leap to verse 34 and then read retrospectively back the statements beginning there into the earlier text. Nothing in the earlier text addresses anything other than the marriage of a man and a woman. The subject matter changes, and the question that was asked is answered beginning with verse 34.

What was on the Lord's mind, and what the Lord inspired Joseph's inquiry to allow Him to reveal, is in the beginning of section 132. Look at verse 7. *"The conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment...(and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead."*

So everything that you hope to receive into the next life, even your "expectations," all of that has to be obtained from God by covenant. I mentioned in an answer to a question in Ephraim, that the role of the woman was significant, even in the life of Christ. I mentioned that she anointed Him preliminary to His death and burial. One of the things that gave Him the expectation of coming forth out of the grave, was the anointing that promised Him. Why do you think in the temple the rites of washing and anointing include preserving some of the functions of the body through the resurrection?

The temple anointings are not to make you healthy here and now. They are given so that you can lay claim upon this as an "expectation" in the eternities. Because if you do not have the expectation conferred upon you by the Holy Spirit of Promise, you will be left to obtain it in some other cycle. The only things you will be able to take with you into eternity must be obtained in this manner. Everything has to be obtained by covenant.

Look at verse 13. *"Everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities,..."* [It doesn't matter if it is ordained by man, and it does not even matter if someone, sitting in eternity on a throne, who has authority in the presence of God, ordains it. It does not matter if it is given to you by "...principalities..." That is talking about angels. It is talking about people from the other side, even if they are in a position of authority in the presence of God, it doesn't matter. *Everything* that is in the world,] *"whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God."*

The Keeper of the Gate is the Holy One of Israel indeed!<sup>210</sup> These words should mean something to you if you have listen to, or read the text, we discussed in Orem on priesthood. You should understand what God is saying here. You should understand that when it comes to some things you hope to have continue into eternity, it is not enough to have even one of the noble and great, even one of those who would we regard as an Archangel, promise it to you, it doesn't matter. God and God alone holds the keys of death and hell.<sup>211</sup> Christ paid that price. Christ has to be the one, because He is the only one qualified to do this. He has to be the one. This is a nondelegable responsibility by Him who provides you with a return to life thereby becomes your Father in heaven. If Christ is going to become your Father in heaven, He's got that same responsibility to you that He imposed upon you as a parent in Zion that we looked at before the break. He does not spare Himself from bearing the same burden He asks of us.

*"For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed."* [That's Christ's word. That is what He says is going to happen.] *"Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world."*

<sup>210</sup> 2 Ne. 9: 41.

<sup>211</sup> 2 Ne. 9: 10-11.



Although God is talking about the eternity of the marriage covenant, He extends this into everything. Everything, even your associations, are controlled by His covenant-making. All of your expectations in the afterlife are obtained by a covenant from Him, because His word and His word alone will endure.

*"Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory."* [Partners in such marriages become angels that are ministering servants. Angels look to receive the things God has offered to men, but unless they come down and participate here, they cannot obtain them, for they are only to be had by the rigors of life experienced while here.]

Verse 19: *"And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, [...skipping down] shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—[...skipping down] and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever."*

You cannot receive these things unless you enter in by the Gate, the Keeper of which is the Holy One of Israel, who employs no servant. If you do that however, *"then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them."*

These are people who have qualified for trust by God. God knows they will honor the condition required for eternal life. This insures that eternity will not be infected by the kind of abuse, neglect, unworthiness, and ambition which God wants to throw down. All evil and excess God wants to have come to an end. This is not because He is mean, but for the protection of yourself, for the protection of eternity, for the protection of the potential offspring that would result of the continuation of the seed. This is so that, in the beginning when life comes into existence as an organized spirit, that spirit is introduced into an environment that is perfect, pure, holy, and like God.

Therefore, when we finally come to this topic, we are talking about something which, even if it exists only with you and your spouse, it is Zion. It is eternal. It bears the hallmarks of God's hand and covenant. It is what this topic is all about. These people have no end, they are everlasting, they have all power, and all of this is a discussion about a marriage, between a man and a woman.

Plural wives do not get mentioned until verse 34 for the first time. Lay aside all the issues that are thundering into your minds right now. Ask yourself this, if you're a man, do you have a wife, if you're a woman, do you have a husband, with whom you are one? Ask yourself, do you and your spouse reflect the image of God? Ask yourself that soberly.

Now, just to rule out what I think needs to be ruled out. It is in this place this needed to be declared, because we are now in close proximity to those who have taken what starts at verse 34, and they've gone on, believing that it is appropriate to take a plural wife. I want to ask you, since *"there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred,"* and since in verse 64, *"...verily, verily, I say unto you, if any man have a wife, who holds the keys of this power,"* This "power" being the power to seal; do you hold those keys? Are you that one individual? Before you answer that question, I hope you're aware that every single one of the polygamist sects claims that their particular leader is the one described in verse 7, *"there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred."* Every one of them make this same claim.

Here is the bad news for you. They cannot all be right, but they can all be wrong. If no one has told you this before I'll declare to you today, no man holds that authority among the various polygamists sects, period. I don't care what priesthood line of authority they choose to claim, they don't have it.

If you are wrong, and you engage in this behavior, D&C section 132, verses 41 and 42 address the woman, and says if she does this without this authority, she has committed adultery. And verse 43 addresses the man, and says if he does it without this authority, he commits adultery. It is interesting in this context (just like when the Lord clothed both Adam and then clothed Eve), He does not leave it with one or the other, but speaks to both. This is an important enough subject that He talks to them each, and warns them both.

Adultery is one of the things so threatening to the foundation of society that it is forbidden in the 10 Commandments. (Exodus chapter 20 verse 14.) In Moses' day those who committed adultery were put to death (in Leviticus 20:10). In our day we're told if you do this, and let me read this, D&C section 63, beginning at verse 14. *"There were among you adulterers and adulteresses;..."* [Again, don't think that God has one standard for men and another for women. It doesn't work that way. He's always on this subject, treating the man and the woman the same.] *"...some of whom have turned away from you, and others remain with you that hereafter shall be revealed."*

*Let such beware and repent speedily, lest judgment shall come upon them as a snare, and their folly shall be made manifest, and their works shall follow them in the eyes of the people. And verily I say unto you, as I have said before, he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear."*

You ought to fear. Because you should ask yourself, is this who you are? Is this what you are? Joseph Smith said, *"If a man commit adultery he cannot receive the celestial kingdom of God. Even if he is saved in any kingdom, it cannot be the celestial kingdom."*<sup>212</sup> We are supposed to hearken to the commandments.

Look at Jacob chapter 2, verses 27 and 28. *"Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none; For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts."* [One wife!]

Jacob chapter 3, beginning at verse 5. This is a remarkable, remarkable passage. *"Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the cursing which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our father—that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them. And now, this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore, because of this observance, in keeping this commandment, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people."* [It was the fidelity of the Lamanites to their one wife. They rejected the prophets, they rejected Nephi, they rejected the Gospel, they turned to their loathsomeness, they were a wild and a ferocious people, but this preserved them in the eyes of God. This was important enough that they deserved to continue on, unlike the Nephites who had the Gospel, unlike the Nephites who had the prophets.] *"Behold, their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands; and their husbands and their wives love their children; and their unbelief and their hatred towards you is because of the iniquity of their fathers; wherefore, how much better are you than they, in the sight of your great Creator?"*

God does not judge righteousness the way we do. If you've read the 10th parable,<sup>213</sup> what was it that attracted the attention of the angels? They looked at the marriage, and they said, "This! This looks like what we come from! This relationship, this marriage, the man and the woman, this is what heaven itself consists of. And look! It's on the earth!" And the angels went and they brought the Lord to behold. They said to Him, "Behold the man and the woman!" Then the Lord set in motion everything that was needed.

What more do you need to see from the theme of *the Book Mormon* than this passage, in order to realize when it comes to the relationship of marriage, this is the image of God. This is what God would like to preserve into eternity. It is so much easier to take people who have this kind of a marriage and to preserve them into eternity than it is to take someone who may know all mysteries, but whose marriage is a tattered ruin, and attempt to preserve them.

Look at the example of your first parents. Moses 3: 22-25. *"And Adam said: This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."*

You may have a spouse who is Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian or Mormon. You may have a spouse who is Community of Christ Mormon. You may have a spouse who believes in dancing naked at Wiccan ceremonies while high on peyote. You and your spouse need to love one another. You and your spouse have something far, far greater, potentially, between you and your children, than all the distractions of this world. You and your spouse face the challenge of becoming one. And if you are one,

<sup>212</sup> DHC Vol. 6, p. 81.

<sup>213</sup> *The Missing Virtue*, found in *Ten Parables*.

remember that the Lamanites were condemned, consistently in the *Book of Mormon*, BUT they were praised and ultimately preserved because of their marriages, because of the love of the spouses.

Now, if you claim you have enough love for two or more women, then I'd ask you, can you not love your one wife enough to give her your full attention?

Every day my wife and I get up and we have a 4 mile hike that we do every morning before we get ready for work and the day. We spent about an hour doing that. That hour is filled with conversation, every day, about what's going on in my life, what's going on in her life, what's going on with this big problem, or what is going on with our children. Every day.

I come home for lunch very frequently and we spend the noon hour talking. We probably call each other, I don't know, four or five times during the day. I drive down to Utah County a couple of times a week. Driving down I am on the phone talking to my wife, driving back I am on the phone talking with my wife. We have a lot to talk about.

I do think marriage can be something that is godlike, and two people can in fact, become one. It requires effort. You should make that effort.

Although Moses permitted a man to take another wife, the law propounded through Moses protected the first wife's rights. Exodus 21:10 *"If he take him another wife; her food, [the first wife] her raiment, [the first wife] and her duty of marriage, [that is all the rights of association] shall he not diminish."*

The first wife is referred to in scripture throughout, as "the wife of thy youth."

I want to look at Malachi. Malachi was quoted by the Lord, and quoted by the angel Moroni. Go to Malachi chapter 2, beginning at verse 14. This is talking about "the wife of thy youth." *"Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away."*

Take heed to your spirit that you deal not treacherously. Only a fool will practice plural marriage. There is only one, if that, on the earth who can have the required keys. If you err, it is an offense and adultery and an abomination. Your first wife, the wife of your youth, must be unaffected in all her rights.

That having been said, it is possible some of you are already in such a marriage. If that is the case, do not tear your family apart. That would be worse still. Do not take another wife, and do not abandon any wife you presently have, but teach your children to come out of this system. Teach your children. And if you have a friend, or if you have a neighbor, or if you have someone in your own extended family who is in this predicament, don't judge them, help them. Help them teach their children to come out of the system. Don't destroy the lives of children that are already in such a community, but let it come to an end in this generation. It would be wrong to destroy families, even if they are peculiarly situated.

Zion is going to require strong, happy and noble marriages, worthy of enduring beyond the grave. I suspect that if someone repents, even if they keep their marriages intact, but teach their children to forsake this system of multiple wives, that Zion is going to include them. Some who have awakened and decided the practice, and the continuation of taking yet more wives, needs to end, will be accepted by the Lord. It would not surprise me to find out there will be those who have plural wives within Zion. But it will not include those who still believe in continuing the practice, perpetuating the practice, or adding additional wives, it will be those who have awakened. Once awakened, stop it in the children. But do not destroy the families.

Look, the practice of plural wives is an abomination. Everyone that said they had the keys to do that, they reckon their authority somewhere downriver from Brigham Young. I want you to think about all that has been said, and all the scriptures that have been read today, while I read to you a General Conference talk, given by Brigham Young, in the October General Conference on October 8th of 1861. I want you to consider the folly of these words, and measure it against the standard of a marriage worthy of the perpetuation into eternity.

*"The second way in which a wife can be separated from her husband, while he continues to be faithful to his God and his priesthood, I have not revealed except to a few persons in this Church, and a few have received it from Joseph the Prophet as well as myself. This other path a woman may take, if she can get a chance, and do it in accordance with the order of heaven, if a woman can find a man holding the keys of the priesthood with higher power and authority than her husband, and he is disposed to take her, he can do so, otherwise she has got to remain where she is. This is a second way in which a woman can leave her husband to whom she has been sealed for time and eternity. In either of these ways of separation you can discover there is no need for a bill of divorcement."*

He goes on to say, without a bill of divorcement a new marriage could be arranged under the system taught by Brigham Young.

Are you kidding me!? Are you kidding me!? This was doctrine? I'm inclined to now engage in a string of obscenities. You believe this crap? You think Brigham Young knew what the hell he was talking about when he spoke about these important matters? Keep in mind he just happened to be the guy who had the most keys. Therefore if this were true, he could be the one at the top of the "food chain" or chain of women. Therefore he could take for himself the most women, assuming they wanted some higher "key holder"—because there was none higher within his organization. Do you believe this to be true? Any woman, married to any man, anywhere, at any time, if he could get her to come aboard, he can take her? This is the tenuous thread upon which eternal marriage is to be based? Yet this was what Brigham Young proclaimed in General Conference as how marriage operated.

Here is a section of the Doctrine and Covenants taken from the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants when Joseph was still alive. It is an article on marriage. *"One man should have one wife, and one woman one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. It's not right to persuade a woman to be baptized contrary to the will of her husband, neither is it lawful to influence her to leave her husband."*

I mentioned Hyrum Smith's *General Epistle to the Church*. Do you know what Hyrum Smith said in the *General Epistle to the Church*? The President we don't recognize? No one does. President Hyrum Smith's letter said:

*To our well beloved brother Parley P. Pratt, and to the elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England, and scattered abroad throughout all Europe, and to the Saints—Greeting:*

*Whereas, in times past persons have been permitted to gather with the Saints at Nauvoo, in North America—such as husbands leaving their wives and children behind; also, such as wives leaving their husbands, and such as husbands leaving their wives who have no children, and some because their companions are unbelievers. All this kind of proceedings we consider to be erroneous and for want of proper information. And the same should be taught to all the Saints, and not suffer families to be broken up on any account whatever if it be possible to avoid it. Suffer no man to leave his wife because she is an unbeliever. These things are an evil and must be forbidden by the authorities of the church or they will come under condemnation; for the gathering is not in haste nor by flight, but to prepare all things before you, and you know not but the unbeliever may be converted and the Lord heal him; but let the believers exercise faith in God, and the unbelieving husband shall be sanctified by the believing wife; and the unbelieving wife by the believing husband, and families are preserved and saved from a great evil which we have seen verified before our eyes. Behold this is a wicked generation, full of lyings, and deceit, and craftiness; and the children of the wicked are wiser than the children of light; that is, they are more crafty; and it seems that it has been the case in all ages of the world.*

*And the man who leaves his wife and travels to a foreign nation, has his mind overpowered with darkness, and Satan deceived him and flatters him with the graces of the harlot, and before he is aware he is disgraced forever; and greater is the danger for the woman that leaves her husband. The evils resulting from such proceedings are of such a nature as to oblige us to cut them off from the church. And we also forbid that a woman leave her husband because he is an unbeliever. We also forbid that a man shall leave his wife because she is an unbeliever. If he be a bad man (i.e., the believer) there is a law to remedy that evil. And if the law divorce them, then they are at liberty; otherwise they are bound as long as they two shall live, and it is not our prerogative to go beyond this; if we do it, it will be at the expense of our reputation.*

*These things we have written in plainness and we desire that they should be publicly known, and request this to be published in the STAR.*

*May the Lord bestow his blessings upon all the Saints richly, and hasten the gathering, and bring about the fullness of the everlasting covenant are the prayers of your brethren.*

*Written by Hyrum Smith, patriarch. (Underlining added.)*

Well, I guess we did not interfere with marriages, and preserved them even if the husband was an unbeliever, until the “mighty prophet” Brigham Young came along on October 8th of 1861 and said, “Hey there is another way you can get a woman, without a bill of divorcement from her husband, you can just take her if you've got the keys. And damn! I'm just loaded with keys!”

So that this topic becomes clear, I'm not going to take the time today to address the many foolish things that have been said by the LDS Church, and by break-off groups in an attempt to win a lawsuit. That was what happened. I have prepared a paper that am going to present at the Sunstone Conference in Salt Lake City on August 2. On the evening of August 2, I'm going to put that paper up on the blog, and you can download it and you can read it. You will see there a discussion that fits right in with this series of talks, right here, at this moment in the content. It deals with this subject, and it's going to be put up and you can read it.

When it comes to the subject of marriage, as if all I have said, and all that is in scripture is not clear enough, Revelation chapter 19 has a description of the culmination of all the Lord's great work in this cycle of creation. This is talking about when it all wraps up. In the prophecy God cannot think of anything better to put into the mouth of John his Beloved who wrote this prophecy than the analogy of a marriage used here. Revelation chapter 19, beginning at verse 6. *“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, [male and female] and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”*

Not only does He likened the final triumph of the Lord's atonement to a wedding feast, but it is in fact a wedding feast. For all those who come through the tribulation, male and female, in the image of God, He will put on for them a wedding banquet, because they are like Him. They will see as they are seen, because they are like Him. *“Male and female created he them, in the image of God created he them.”*

When our Lord's ministry began, John's Gospel has in chapter 1, Christ's baptism. John's Gospel has in chapter two, the wedding at Cana. When Christ prepared for His death and burial, it was by a woman anointing Him. And when Christ was resurrected, the first, and at the moment only witness, was a woman. When Christ finally got around to seeing His disciples, He upbraided them for not believing the testimony of the woman.

Well, Zion is a distant accomplishment yet to be achieved, but it is before us. The next talk is going to be in Phoenix on September 9, in the morning. I hope before you come, or those who do come and are hearing this, that they review the first nine talks. This is all one talk. This is all one subject. We have been reconstructing the Restoration.

I don't care who copies this material. It would please me if General Conference began to quote this stuff and began to use it. I think that is a fool's bargain. I don't think that's going to happen. But if you believe the scriptures, and if you believe in Joseph, and if you believe in the Restoration, then you believe the work is still incomplete. You believe that the challenges lie in front of us. And one of the most remarkable challenges we face is the topic we addressed today. All of that other stuff is foundational to bring us to this point, to talk about this subject. So that in this subject you can see how great the challenge is we all face.

Now, I know that there are a lot of broken homes. I know there are a lot of broken families, and I know there's a lot of broken hearts. But we are not given any trouble in this world that we are not equal to. We don't get tempted above our ability to withstand.<sup>214</sup> God has something in mind for every single one of us. God has something in mind for each one of you whose marriages may presently be troubled. Each one of you who may now find yourself in a broken home will be cared for in His due time. Trust in Him. Trust in His desire for you. Take your problems to Him and weary Him.

Remember yesterday when we talked about crying unto the Lord? When I consider all of the people about whom I care, and the problems they face, I want to cry to the Lord. If your circumstances trouble you, cry to Him. Maybe all of that is one of those weaknesses given unto you that you may be humble, so that you might come and cry unto Him.

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<sup>214</sup> 1 Cor. 10: 13.

By the time that Adam and Eve knew enough to declare repentance unto their children, their children were already suffering from the ravages of the Fall. As soon as they began to declare repentance unto their children, and teach them some things about covenant making, one of their sons took the information and turned it into a combination to create inordinate wickedness. And you wonder why God withholds some things from the view of the public? It is because some things, if abused, can bring to pass such wretched wickedness in the lives of men that you are better off if God does not reveal them. You are better off if heaven does not disclose them.

Adam and Eve declared and cried repentance together, they labored side-by-side, they received the garment at the same moment, they were instructed on sacrifice at the same time, they were taught and received the Holy Ghost at the same moment, they experienced the baptism of fire, and Adam prophesied at the same moment that Eve was overcome by the Spirit, and in the Spirit of Wisdom, was able to interpret and define what was going on. All of this was suitable and appropriate in the lives of our first parents, for they two were one.

Don't think that the heartache you feel is any less poignant than the heartache of our first parents. This is a place to be proven, and it's rough stuff down here. You came here full of enthusiasm and confident in your ability to withstand the day, and now the day is upon us. It really doesn't look the same down here as it did up there. But if you be noble, and if you are faithful, and if you are true, and if you leave witnesses here among us, it just may be that in some other day, when some other rough challenge like this, is put to the test, and we are all asked, "Whom should the Lord send?" That some of us will look at one of you and say. "I trust him! I trust her! I know that she will remain true and faithful. I know that he will do so likewise." Because it will be a great while after we have departed this life, before we will have attained to everything that is necessary in order to rise up.

This was what we talked about in Ephraim. You need to hear all of these, and you need to hear all of them in one continuous discussion, because it's all one. This isn't my material, it's the Lord's. All we have been doing is looking at these scriptures. My volume of scripture is actually color-coded. These are the scriptures. My scriptures are color-coded with orange in Boise, and yellow in Idaho Falls, and pink in Logan, and light green in Centerville, and dark green yesterday, and purple today. You can see the Scriptures have become rather littered with markers. These talks are to help you remember. We cannot go forward until first we remember what has been already given.

This is the Gospel of Christ. This is the power of God unto redemption. This is the revelation Joseph Smith was attempting to lay out when he was taken. There is a lot left to yet be done. There is more left to be done than has been started. There is more that has not been revealed than what Joseph was able to get on the ground here before he was killed.

As we have gone forward we have preserved less and less. Now with the engines of Correlation, we are managing to trim yet further. The Gospel of Christ is not about, "Have a nice day." The Gospel of Christ is not about being a keyhole. The Gospel of Christ is about awakening and arising. It is about you becoming redeemed from the fall and coming back to God's presence. Thank God, that before Joseph died, he was able to lay out something in the red brick store, through ritual and through ceremony, that described walking back into the presence of God, conversing with Him through the veil, and then entering into His presence. Thank God that in addition to the scriptures, Joseph left us a ritual testimony.

But do you know why ancient Israel had their temple? It was to have ceremonies to point them to the coming of Christ in the flesh. The Latter-day Saints have been given a ritual ceremony to point them to also receive Christ in the flesh. The Israelites thought their temple was an end in itself. The Latter-day Saints seem to do likewise. But do not you do this. See the ritual for what it is: merely an invitation.

There needs yet to be another temple built. But it will be in Zion, and those who go there will meet with their Lord, because that will be His house indeed. You can build that only if you qualify to do so.

There is so much left to be done! Right now the only thing that can be done is to remind you of the Restoration, and that is available to all. Everyone is invited. Everyone. But don't expect the Lord to give us anything further, or permit us to move one inch further, until we first remember what we've been given. Even if you are in a fallen world, among a fallen people, who are proud and who are arrogant to think themselves more than they really are, if you will love your wife, and if your wife will love you, you are in the image of God and that will be preserved unto all eternity. No matter what else you may have to go through between now and then, that's what He's trying to preserve. That is the image of God.

I bear testimony of that and hope these words will be allowed to sink into your heart. They come from scripture, and they come from the Lord, they don't come from me.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

## Preserving The Restoration

Denver Snuffer 9-9-14

Lecture 10 Mesa, AZ

This is the concluding part of a single talk. This talk began in Boise and now concludes here. It has all one talk, and it really helps if you have heard the 9/10<sup>th</sup> of the talk that preceded today. They can all stand alone, but it is just that you will understand things better today if you have in mind what went before.

All of this has been about Zion. The whole purpose of this endeavor is limited to that one subject; Zion and seeing that Zion comes again.

I want to clarify a couple things preliminarily. First, if you go to the testimony that John the Baptist gave of Christ recorded by John the Beloved in the third chapter of John, it runs on for a number of verses from 27 to 36, but I want to only take note of one reference John makes to our Lord. He says that Christ had the Spirit "given to Him without measure."<sup>215</sup> Meaning that, when our Lord was down here accomplishing what was expected of Him, He had access to the Spirit in a degree to which none of us can equal. That was necessary for Him to fulfill His responsibility.

Second, we are in a very different state, all of us, even the very best of us. We are being "proven." Christ came to prove us and we are here to be proven.<sup>216</sup> As a result of that, all of us, according to the scriptures are given weakness.<sup>217</sup> You are not going to perform in this estate at the same level as our Lord performed in this estate, period. You are given weakness, and He was given the Spirit without measure.

So adding to what went on before, about the ascent up Jacob's ladder and the arrival to the state in which you have completed the course and you have "attained unto the resurrection,"<sup>218</sup> please understand that our Savior who accomplished that, did so using a very different criteria and experience in which He lived His life than how we live ours. That is just the way the plan operates, it is the way the development of God's children must operate.

Now, it is clear when it comes to the Gospel, there are absolute standards. Doctrine And Covenants 1:31 says: *"For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance."* And if that is not a troubling enough idea, then remember King Benjamin's warning in Mosiah 4: 29: *"And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them."* So there is an infinite supply of opportunities to commit sin, and God cannot look upon that with any degree of allowance.

This is a formidable challenge for us to consider. But there is a Divine purpose underlying it all. The Divine purpose is to bring us in humility to God, while recognizing there is a gulf between who and what we are, and what is expected of us in order to be truly holy.

Think about all the ways that there are to err. Consider the warnings given in Section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants concerning priesthood: *"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,"* And by the way, *"in any degree of unrighteousness,"* is a serious warning. We are told in verse 41 how power or influence is to be affected, and it is not "by virtue of the priesthood," it is rather *"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."*

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<sup>215</sup> John 3: 34: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by

<sup>216</sup> See Abraham 3: 25-26

<sup>217</sup> Ether 12: 27: "I give unto men weakness that they may be humble..."

<sup>218</sup> This does not mean merely coming forth from the grave, although that is termed "resurrection" also. Joseph Smith more accurately referred to it as an achievement following exaltation: "[Y]ou have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power." *TPJS*, pp. 346-347.



This presents an opportunity for everyone involved, every time, to fail. In addition to all this, as to priesthood if you go to 2 Nephi chapter 26, verse 29 there is another warning: *"He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion."*

Zion can only come about as a consequence of consecration and sacrifice, and not as a result of seeking to get gain. In fact, when you are in the employ of the Lord you ought to be sacrificing, it should not be gainful; it should cost you in order to serve.

To accomplish purity, there are absolutes that are necessary. Sacrifice is absolutely necessary, and equality is necessary as well. Or at least, there be no poor among us. My guess is, sitting among us in this room here today, there are those who have significant issues with financial needs, and there are some sitting here today who could help in solving those.

In Alma chapter 1 it talks about the circumstance in which the priests are to serve. Alma 1, beginning at verse 26. *"And when the 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 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."*

You see they prospered in this, and they were blessed because of it. We should learn from their example when they were prospering, about what it was they did that was right to bring it about. The ideal is never to have a professional class of clergyman. The ideal is to have every one of us as equals.

In our own day, in a revelation given through Joseph, Doctrine and Covenants 52 beginning at 39 says: *"Let the residue of the elders watch over the churches, and declare the word in the regions round about them; and let them labor with their own hands that there be no idolatry nor wickedness practised."*

To *"labor with their own hands"* means they are not professionals receiving compensation for preaching, because as soon as you turn them into a professional clergy people idolize them. The object is to avoid idolatry, to avoid the professional class of clergy to whom people look for blessings at their compensated hands. *"That there be no idolatry nor wickedness practiced."* "Wickedness" because when you have people elevated so as to have control over others, almost invariably the existence of control tends to lead inexorably to abuse.<sup>219</sup> On the other hand, if all you have with which to work is persuasion, you will find there are a lot of people you will never persuade. There are a lot of people who will never agree with you.

Therefore, if you are limited to persuasion alone, you have to afford people the freedom to reject, to be contrary, to raise their hand and make a contrasting point, and not have someone empowered say, "Your point is not welcome here. You are not doing what you need to do to be heard!"

*"And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple."* Isn't it interesting, that both in the case of Alma, talking about how their system worked with their priests, and in the modern revelation, talking about how things should be among us, the first principle is "there is no such thing as professional clergy," followed immediately by, *"remember the poor, remember the needy,"* in both instances. That is not happenstance.

I mention priesthood because I want to remind you of a few things about priesthood, conceptually. John the Baptist restored the priesthood before there was any organized church. Therefore, because it was "before," it is independent, and has never required a church in order for priesthood to exist with mankind.

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<sup>219</sup> See D&C 121: 39.

Likewise, if you go to Doctrine and Covenants section 84, verse 6 it says: "*And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro.*" Just to remind you, Jethro was a Midianite. He was a descendent of Midian born to Keturah. Keturah was the wife of Abraham after Sarah. After Sarah died Keturah bore Abraham children, one of whom was Midian. The birthright had already been given to Isaac. There is so much about the priesthood that has yet to be clarified (and I think that is a good thing. And I am not going to clarify enough for mischief to ensue.) But the fact the matter is, that priesthood Abraham had was different from the priesthood handed down through Midian. These differ. Priesthood that descended down and came to Moses did not possess the birthright. It did not possess that and its associated privileges. Therefore, it was not the same authority previously belonging to the Patriarchs. It was something less, something different.

Moses obtained priesthood through Jethro the Midianite, who was not even an Israelite. Midian was genealogically the same generation as Isaac (he was Isaac's half-brother). It would be Isaac's son Jacob, who would be named Israel, and it was Israel who possessed the birthright priesthood. Therefore Moses inherited a form of priesthood that was by its very nature, lesser than the one tracking the birthright. It was enough, however, to bring Moses into God's presence. This is one of the reasons why the prophets of the Old Testament all had to be ordained directly by heaven<sup>220</sup> in order to inherit the authority they held.

In any event, the point is only this: priesthood exists independent of Israel, it exists independent of a church, and while the church may be dependent on priesthood, priesthood is not and never has been dependent upon a church, period. I hope you understand that. Priesthood is not and never has been dependent upon a church! These are two entirely different topics and very important to be understood for our purposes here today.

In addition to this, I hope you all understand the Holy Ghost can and does speak to everyone, Baptists, Lutherans, and Catholics included. C.S. Lewis could not have written and comprehended what he wrote and understood, unless the light of the Holy Ghost shown upon that man's mind. He has been often quoted in General Conference because he declares the light of eternal truths in his writings.<sup>221</sup> There is no organization that controls the Holy Ghost. It is untrue to say there is some organization, which itself must be dependent upon the existence of priesthood for its order, has the authority to control the priesthood in the entire world! That is utter rubbish!

The practice of the missionaries demonstrates the 'rubbish-ness' of any such thought. This is because when the missionaries teach investigators about *the Book of Mormon* they use Moroni chapter 10, verse 4, and admonish they pray and ask God if these things are not true. Investigators are promised God will manifest the truth of it unto them "by the power of the Holy Ghost." To the unbaptized, unwashed, uninitiated, missionaries extend the invitation to ask God, and then listen for the Holy Ghost speak to them. If they submit to this process, the Holy Ghost will speak to them. The Holy Ghost does, can, and will speak to anyone. You need these concepts in your mind in order to understand.

The Holy Ghost and the claim of owning a franchise over it is hollow. The idea the Holy Ghost can be controlled is false. The fact that LDS Mormons have some acquaintance with the Holy Ghost means very little. It does not distinguish Latter-day Saints, and it should not separate you from the Holy Ghost and its ministrations, whoever you are.

The Holy Ghost does not thrill you, it informs you. It gives you understanding. If I want to be thrilled, I can get that from *Braveheart*. The Bruce's of Scotland are in my ancestry Alice Bruce is one of my ancestors. I was glad to see depicted in the movie the repentance by Robert the Bruce, the son who led the rebellion.

In any event, thrilling music can rouse you. A great TV show can get you thrilled and feeling goose bumps. That is not the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost enlightens your mind, it enlivens your senses, it brings light into your life, and you understand something anew.<sup>222</sup> There are some people who have the Spirit with them in such a degree, that to be in their presence is to understand things better. Understanding, comprehension, light and truth—these are the Holy Ghost, not emotion, thrills and goose bumps.

<sup>220</sup> "All the prophets [after Moses] had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself." *TPJS*, p. 181.

<sup>221</sup> This is one of the manifestations of the Holy Ghost, or Comforter. See Moses 6: 61.

<sup>222</sup> "The first Comforter, or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence." *TPJS*, p. 149. "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator." *TPJS*, p. 328.

I have never said this publicly, but because of what I think will ensue after this talk I am going to say it, not for my sake, and certainly not for the sake of anyone who believes the truth or who has the Spirit, but I say it only to benefit those who may view things completely otherwise.<sup>223</sup> The Lord has said to me in His own voice, "I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you." Therefore, I want to caution those who disagree with me, to feel free, to feel absolutely free to make the case against what I say. Feel free to disagree, and make your contrary arguments. If you believe I err, then expose the error and denounce it. But take care; take care about what you say concerning me for your sake, not for mine. I live with constant criticism. I can take it. But I do not want you provoking Divine ire by unfortunately chosen words if I can persuade you against it.

I talked about paying and administering your own tithes in Grand Junction. I want to remind you that if you do that, none of it should go to the priests. None of it should go to anything other than helping the poor. And if after all is done to help with the poor, and there's money left over, before we finish today, I will briefly mention there will need for a temple to be built at some point. Not yet and not more than one. But there will be a need for one.

A great deal is made of Joseph's first vision and nothing made of his last one. I want to turn to his last one, given on the morning of the martyrdom. This is Joseph's last vision, taken from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, beginning on page 393. Joseph spoke it, but was not alive when it was written down. It was recorded and recounted by someone else, and I am not sure they got everything right in the way they recounted it, but nevertheless, this is the best source we have of Joseph's last vision. It is good enough, even if a point or two were not well understood. This is Joseph speaking:

*"I was back in Kirtland, Ohio, and thought I would take a walk out by myself, and view my old farm, which I found grown up with weeds and brambles, and altogether bearing evidence of neglect and want of culture. I went into the barn, which I found without floor or doors, with the weather-boarding off, and was altogether in keeping with the farm. While I viewed the desolation around me, and was contemplating how it might be recovered from the curse upon it, there came rushing into the barn a company of furious men, who commenced to pick a quarrel with me. The leader of the party ordered me to leave the barn and farm, stating it was none of mine, and that I must give up all hope of ever possessing it. I told him the farm was given me by the Church, and although I had not had any use of it for some time back, still I had not sold it, and according to righteous principles it belonged to me or the Church. He then grew furious and began to rail upon me, and threaten me, and said it never did belong to me nor to the Church. I then told him that I did not think it worth contending about, that I had no desire to live upon it in its present state, and if he thought he had a better right I would not quarrel with him about it but leave; but my assurance that I would not trouble him at present did not seem to satisfy him, as he seemed determined to quarrel with me, and threatened me with the destruction of my body. While he was thus engaged, pouring out his bitter words upon me, a rabble rushed in and nearly filled the barn, drew out their knives, and began to quarrel among themselves for the premises, and for a moment forgot me, at which time I took the opportunity to walk out of the barn about up to my ankles in mud. When I was a little distance from the barn, I heard them screeching and screaming in a very distressed manner, as it appeared they had engaged in a general fight with their knives. While they were thus engaged, the dream or vision ended."*

Joseph did not live long enough after receiving this vision to comment on it or provide an interpretation. But I can tell you if "the farm" is the church he established, that today, Joseph would have no welcoming arm within it. It would suffer from such a curse in its present state that they would quarrel with him, and tell him to leave if he came among the church today. I believe that the farm in the last vision was a symbol for what the church has become.

God's house is a house of order, but that does not mean what you think it means. God follows patterns. He establishes and ordains things according to one pattern, and then He takes them down again according to another pattern, and He does not vary. There is no guarantee, when He establishes a house in one instance, that that house cannot rebel, reject Him, and be rejected by Him at another. Just because God undertakes one work does not mean that He cannot undertake yet another.<sup>224</sup> Just because He ordains one system at one time it does not mean that, when that system becomes abusive, He will not deal with the system He ordained according to its own standards in order to bring about the result He warned about. He follows a pattern and therein is the house of order.

<sup>223</sup> This is to protect others. I want no one to needlessly incur any difficulty because of me.

<sup>224</sup> See 2 Ne. 29: 10.

When Christ came the first time, God took down a previously established hierarchy using an orderly process, informing us about His house of order. He ordained John to bring it to an end, which put him on a collision course with the hierarchy. John the Baptist was “ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord...”<sup>225</sup> Joseph Smith elaborated, “The son of Zacharias wrested the keys, the kingdom, the power, the glory from the Jews, by the holy anointing and decree of heaven.”<sup>226</sup>

For His return, we should expect something similar to His first coming. That is, an orderly take down of a competing hierarchy using someone ordained to accomplish that end that is put by God on a collision course with the targeted power structure. John’s mission required them to reject the truth and testimony he offered.<sup>227</sup> It was orderly, public and required a conflict followed by rejection. In any modern take down of the LDS hierarchy the Lord will allow those involved to act freely. The hierarchy must voluntarily and clearly violate God’s standard.<sup>228</sup> It must be orderly, public and the result of a conflict ordained by God’s will. This is how a house of order operates anciently and again today.

The Book of Mormon is more prophecy than history. Before the Lord’s appearance to the Nephites, society broke down into tribes consisting of family and friends.<sup>229</sup> Immediately before the Lord’s return we should expect something similar. Therefore, part of the preparation by God’s house for coming social chaos is likely to include some preliminary preparations by families and friends to fellowship with one another in local gatherings, perhaps completely apart from control by the LDS hierarchy. Only by independently functioning can they hope to prepare for social chaos prophesied to accompany Zion and precede the Lord’s return.<sup>230</sup> There will also be indigenous prophet-led people coming through God’s assistance to Zion.<sup>231</sup>

Joseph Smith cautioned the saints about violating God’s trust. As Joseph put it: “His word will go forth, in these last days, in purity; for if Zion will not purify herself, so as to be approved in all things, in His sight, He will seek another people; for His work will go on until Israel is gathered, and they who will not hear His voice, must expect to feel His wrath.”<sup>232</sup> We should expect God’s house to be ordered around only one principle: repentance. When the pride of a great organization replaces repentance, the heavens withdraw, and when they do, “Amen” to that portion of God’s house. But the restoration through Joseph will always remain, even if God chooses to order it differently before His return. It is His to do with as He determines best.

*At the time I was excommunicated, I was in good standing with the Lord. I had nothing amiss in my personal life. There was no sin warranting church discipline. As a former member of the High Council for years, every church disciplinary proceeding I attended that resulted in excommunication, always involved serious moral transgression, betrayal of marriage covenants, and in some cases criminal wrongdoing. In contrast, the reason for my discipline was a book I had written about church history, in which I attempted to align the events of the Restoration to the prophecies of the Book of Mormon and the make better use of it? (JD 6: 125.) George A. Smith said, “God has set his hand at the present time to establish his kingdom. But unless the Saints will so live and so exert themselves that they can preserve the purity of the holy Priesthood among them, the work will be left to other people.” (JD 6: 161.) Even Brigham Young commented on the possibility that only an LDS remnant would remain to carry forward the work: “God will preserve a portion of the meek and the humble of this people to bear off the Kingdom to the*

<sup>225</sup> D&C 84: 28.

<sup>226</sup> TPJS, p. 276.

<sup>227</sup> “The Jews had to obey his instructions or be damned, by their own law.” *Id.*

<sup>228</sup> See D&C 121: 37-38.

<sup>229</sup> See 3 Ne. 7: 2-4.

<sup>230</sup> D&C 45: 66-68: “And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; and the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion. 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.”

<sup>231</sup> See D&C 133: 26.

<sup>232</sup> TPJS, p. 18. To the same effect, during the Mormon Reformation Heber C. Kimball said: “We receive the priesthood and power and authority. If we make a bad use of the priesthood, so you not see that the day will come when God will reckon with us, and he will take it from us and give it to those who will

inhabitants of the earth, and will defend His Priesthood; for it is the last time, the last gathering time; and He will not suffer the Priesthood to be again driven from the earth." (JD 2: 184.)

*Doctrine and Covenants. The stake president admitted to me and my wife before the Council began, that I was then worthy of a temple recommend.<sup>233</sup> By any standard of moral conduct, I was an innocent man, whose only offense was believing the scriptures revealed our condition before God. On the evening of May 1, 2014, the Lord gave me further light and knowledge about His work in His vineyard. The Lord is in control over the church, men, and all things. When He undertakes to accomplish something, "there is nothing that the Lord God shall take in His heart to do, but what He will do it." (Abr. 3:17.) Often the means used by the Lord to accomplish His "strange act," and to perform His "strange work" (D&C 101: 95), are very small indeed. "Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise. And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls." (Alma 37: 6-7.)*

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

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

*Section 121 is a warning to church leaders. It is addressing the powerful, not the powerless. It is addressing those who occupy the seats of authority over others. Only those who claim the right to control, compel, and exercise dominion, are warned against persecuting the saints, who believe the religion and practice it as I did from the time of my conversion. My excommunication was an abuse of authority. Therefore, as soon as the decision was made, the Lord terminated the priesthood authority of the stake presidency and every member of the High Council who sustained this decision, which was unanimous. Thereafter, I appealed to the First Presidency, outlining the involvement of the 12 and the 70. The appeal gave notice to them all.<sup>234</sup> The appeal was summarily denied.*

*Last general conference, the entire First Presidency, the 12, the 70, and all other general authorities and auxiliaries, voted to sustain those who abused their authority in casting me out of the church. At that moment, the Lord ended all claims of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to claim it is led by the priesthood.<sup>235</sup> They have not practiced what He requires. The Lord has brought about His purposes. This has been in His heart all along. He has chosen to use small means to accomplish it, but He always uses the smallest of means to fulfill His purposes.*

*None of this was my doing. The Lord's strange act, was not, could not, be planned by me. Was not, could not, have been controlled by me. It was not anticipated by me, or even understood by me, until after the Lord*

<sup>233</sup> I had a current temple recommend at the time of the disciplinary council. I was not asked to return it before the council, nor asked to return it even after the council's decision. It expired in March, 2014, six months after excommunication.

<sup>234</sup> A transcript of the Appeal Letter is attached as an Appendix to this paper.

<sup>235</sup> Meaning the leaders who exercised control, compulsion and dominion, and not the powerless who had no part in the affair.

*had accomplished His will, and made it apparent to me on the evening of May 1, 2014. He alone has done this. He is the author of all of this.*<sup>236</sup>

Just because something is true at one moment does not mean it is true at another moment. Things change, decisions matter, what we do always matters. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the same thing as it was when I joined in 1973. At this moment it is not even the same thing it was in 2012. It is in the process of changing rapidly, and will be something very different again in just a few more years. The Lord, knowing the direction the LDS Church is now headed, has acted to preserve the Restoration itself. This change does not affect the leadership's legal right to preside.<sup>237</sup> They are upheld by common consent, and therefore have the right still to control the direction of the organization. But it cannot be fixed, either. Any new authority will have to sustain the senior leaders now in position. I belonged for forty years to the church, and President Monson, President Packer and Elder Perry were in leadership when I joined and they are among the senior most leaders today. Adding new authorities that were not in the leadership when the Lord took these steps cannot remedy the Lord's decision.<sup>238</sup>

If the church's leaders continue to be upheld by the prayers of members, prayer has power and can give strength. However the action taken by the Lord frees His hand to do something further now. His house is a house of order, but since the days of Abraham God's house has included things about which we have very little knowledge.

Because of apostasy by the overwhelming majority of Adam's posterity, Abraham was born into apostasy.<sup>239</sup> Abraham's struggle to overcome an apostate world qualified him to be the father of the righteous. His struggle to return and reclaim faith is the model mankind would see, with very few exceptions, forever after. He was the prototype of "everyman" in a post-deluge world, cut off from God, the Patriarchs and the Garden.

Abraham's chosen son, with whom the covenant would continue, was Isaac. God renewed the covenant with Isaac, and again with Jacob, and again with Joseph. But Abraham married after the death of Sarah.<sup>240</sup> His wife, Keturah, bore him sons also. Among these was Midian.<sup>241</sup> Generations later, the chosen line was devoid of priesthood, but through Midian a descendant named Jethro was still a "priest"<sup>242</sup> whose line of authority reckoned back generations.<sup>243</sup> This priest who had seven daughters,<sup>244</sup> ordained Moses to the very priesthood<sup>245</sup> that allowed him to enter God's presence.<sup>246</sup> From this we know the "house of God" extended beyond the Biblical narrative involving Abraham's lineage. God's house included generations of righteous, priesthood empowered, independently functioning families lost to the scriptural record and our memory.

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<sup>236</sup> Transcribed from *Journal of Denver Snuffer*, Vol. 8, entry of May 2, 2014, pp. 29-33.

<sup>237</sup> The entire corporate church is organized as a "corporation sole." There is one owner: the LDS Church President. As The Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints he owns everything from the copyrights to chapels, from temples to business entities, from websites to artwork, the entire "church" belongs to one man. Even if voted out by common consent, he, and not church members, would own all the property. In a very real legal sense, there is only one Mormon in the LDS organization.

<sup>238</sup> It would require such a radical and unprecedented change from history and tradition that it will not be possible. Every one of the leadership positions would have to be replaced at a single moment, which in LDS practice, although actually possible for them to do, is impossible for them to even contemplate.

<sup>239</sup> "My fathers, having turned from their righteousness, and from the holy commandments which the Lord their God had given unto them, unto worshiping of the gods of the heathen, utterly refused to hearken to my voice; for their hearts were set to do evil..." Abr. 1: 5-6.

<sup>240</sup> Gen. 25: 1.

<sup>241</sup> Gen. 25: 2.

<sup>242</sup> Exo. 2: 16.

<sup>243</sup> See D&C 84: 7-13.

<sup>244</sup> Exo. 2: 16.

<sup>245</sup> D&C 84: 6.

<sup>246</sup> D&C 84: 22-23.

Even if only the chosen line from Abraham is God's house, the Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom removed ten tribes from the Bible's account. The apocryphal book of Esdras records they were led away to the north by God,<sup>247</sup> at which point they vanished from our record. While absent from our Bible, these missing people remained prophet-led.<sup>248</sup> They kept a sacred record we have yet to have revealed to us.<sup>249</sup> Christ following His resurrection visited them, like the Nephites.<sup>250</sup> God's house of order spread in all directions and vanished from view.

At approximately 600 B.C., a party of believers were prophet-led to abandon Jerusalem and flee to the Americas. Their record is the Book of Mormon. They, along with the missing ten tribes, remained part of God's house of order, although we knew nothing concerning them until the Book of Mormon publication in 1830.

Despite being widely separated, Christ considered them all "one fold." He was their "one shepherd."<sup>251</sup>

Moses founded a religious establishment headed by descendants of Aaron and assisted by male members of the Tribe of Levi. This hierarchy, however, never controlled the Old Testament prophets, who were outsiders frequently condemning the religious establishment. God ordained them directly, outside Israel's religious hierarchy.<sup>252</sup> One of these independently ordained prophets declared: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel."<sup>253</sup> Called only by God, they functioned outside of man's authority and control. The house of order God establishes and watches over has frequently refused to obey Him. Prophets roundly condemned Israel's priests and false prophets for failing to follow His path and respect His commandments.<sup>254</sup> All of this is God's house of order.

The Book of Mormon follows a splinter group led by Zeniff into the land of Lehi-Nephi. His kingdom was conferred on his son, King Noah, who was wicked.<sup>255</sup> His wickedness included an aggressive building program, while neglecting the needs of his people.<sup>256</sup> He released all his father's priests and called new ones "such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts."<sup>257</sup> Among these was the priest Alma.

When Noah's people departed from God's path, a single man entered the scene. He was unconnected from any known genealogy.<sup>258</sup> Only he bears the name "Abinadi" in the book, and therefore we cannot know for certain if he was Nephite, Lamanite, Jaredite,<sup>259</sup> or something other. The lone witness, Abinadi, condemned King Noah, his court and his people. The established authorities were incredulous. King Noah declared: "Who is Abinadi, that I and my people should be judged of

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<sup>247</sup> "[T]hey took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a further country, where never mankind dwelt, That they might there keep their statutes, which they never kept in their own land. And they entered into Euphrates by the narrow passage of the river, For the most High then shewed signs for them, and held still the flood, till they were passed over. For through that country there was a great way to go, namely, of a year and a half; and the same region is called Arsareth. Then dwelt they there until the latter times; and now when they shall begin to come, The Highest shall stay the stream again, that they may go through." *Apocrypha*, 2 Esdras 13: 41-47.

<sup>248</sup> 2 Ne. 29: 12.

<sup>249</sup> 2 Ne. 29: 13.

<sup>250</sup> 3 Ne. 16: 1-3.

<sup>251</sup> 3 Ne. 15: 17.

<sup>252</sup> "All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself." *TPJS*, p. 181.

<sup>253</sup> Amos 7: 14-15.

<sup>254</sup> See, e.g., Eze. 22: 26: "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things..." Micah 3: 11: "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money..." Zeph. 3: 4: "Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law." Mal. 1: 6: "O priests, that despise my name."

<sup>255</sup> Mosiah 11: 1-2.

<sup>256</sup> Mosiah 11: 8-14.

<sup>257</sup> Mosiah 11: 5.

<sup>258</sup> The narrative reports he "was a man among them" and not that he was "from among them." Mosiah 11:

20.

<sup>259</sup> There were Jaredite survivors despite their destruction. Nephite coinage bore Jaredite names (see Alma 11: 5-19), Alma's sons had Jaredite names (Shiblon, Corianton), and most Book of Mormon apostates had Jaredite names (Sherem, Nehor, Gadianton).

him, or who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction?"<sup>260</sup> The house of order, as far as the king and his priests could tell, could not include such an outsider.<sup>261</sup>

Joseph Smith explained John the Beloved was still here,<sup>262</sup> laboring with the lost tribes of Israel. There were three Nephite disciples who similarly "never taste of death" and remain here.<sup>263</sup> LDS scripture also mention there are yet others "ye know not of"<sup>264</sup> who are likewise here with no account given us.

Many more examples could be given, but this is enough to show the house of order established by God is beyond man's will and never fully disclosed. Although an orderly process fills offices in His house,<sup>265</sup> God reconnected to that line, and reestablished Patriarchal authority for himself and four generations that followed. Following Moses, the tribe of Levi and family of Aaron held office. In the LDS Church common consent has been used for all but one office, the Patriarch to the Church. It was filled through patrilineal succession. Hyrum, as the older brother, held this "by right" (D&C 124: 91) which would continue "from generation to generation, forever and ever." (D&C 124: 96.) That office has been can, has and will still speak up through whomever He chooses. Just because He says something to one, we should not conclude He is prevented from speaking with another.<sup>266</sup>

Prophecy is not given so you can anticipate the details beforehand. Prophecy is only given so that after the event takes place, you can then understand the scriptures' meaning. Only after He has acted can you understand how the Lord intended to accomplish His will and fulfill His promise. Prophecy's purpose is not to allow you beforehand to know the events with enough specificity so that God's will could be anticipated, prevented, and frustrated. If you knew what He was up to, you could prevent it. But because you do not, when the prophecies are fulfilled, then you know the Lord has acted. God can use any means He chooses to accomplish His promises. Everything God is doing is not disclosed at the time it is underway.

Take the opening of the New Testament as an example. Today we all know and accept John the Baptist as someone sent by God because history tells us that is so. But it was not until a revelation was given through the Prophet Joseph Smith that we understood the great hidden effort behind the scenes required to bring to pass John the Baptist's mission. We did not know what I am going to read to you at the time John acted, but we do know it now because of a modern revelation.

Doctrine and Covenants section 84, beginning at verse 27: *"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. For he was baptized while he was yet in his childhood, and was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord, in whose hand is given all power."*

It was because of this Joseph Smith said concerning John: John *"wrested the keys, the kingdom, the power, the glory from the Jews, by the holy anointing and decree of heaven."*<sup>267</sup>

Did the Jews notice?

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<sup>260</sup> Mosiah 11: 27.

<sup>261</sup> His priests explained: "And now, O king, behold, we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore, this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain." Mosiah 12: 14.

<sup>262</sup> D&C 7: 1-8.

<sup>263</sup> 3 Ne. 28: 4-8.

<sup>264</sup> D&C 49: 8.

<sup>265</sup> Anciently it was by descent through a family line. In Adam's day the eldest worthy, surviving son (Able was replaced by Seth) held the priesthood in each generation. The accounts in Moses 6: 10-23 and in D&C 107: 41-53 are both preserving the priesthood lineage during the era of the Patriarchs. Abraham discarded, its last occupant, Eldred G. Smith, was made emeritus by President Kimball October 6, 1979, and died April 4, 2013.

<sup>266</sup> See 2 Ne. 29: 9. This verse affirms one proof God is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" is that He will "speak forth [His] words according to [His] own pleasure."

<sup>267</sup> *TPJS*, p. 276.



God's house is a house of order. He does it according to patterns. It is not God's purpose to abandon the Restoration, but it is His purpose to preserve the Restoration, which at this moment is in terrible jeopardy. The Restoration itself must be rescued and preserved. If you cannot detect the terrible changes it has undergone and is now undergoing, then you are blind indeed.<sup>268</sup> Shall God forget the work He began through Joseph? Shall this now universally downward course be permitted without His hand being bared again? Or should a kind and merciful God take steps to give to us a chance to preserve it with His assistance, if we choose to act? There are many willing to act. We only need some indication from God of how to do so. Thankfully, the pattern was given to us through Joseph Smith.

Baptism has always been required from the days of Adam until the present. Baptism is always the sign of acceptance of what God is doing in each generation. If He acts again now (and He is), then we need to recognize that and respond. Baptism is a mandatory sign of penitence; turning and facing God, and then walking in a new path. From the days of Adam, it will continue through the end of the millennium. Whenever there has been believing people upon the earth, they have always been invited to perform the ordinance of baptism as a sign of their faith.

Authority was restored as part of the ministry of Joseph Smith and should be remembered. In fact, everything accomplished by the Lord through Joseph should be remembered, preserved and respected. We should not abandon anything that has been given by heaven, but we should also not neglect anything given or commanded by heaven. We should not be forgetful. It is a sign of ingratitude when we forget and neglect.

No corporate church organization, or man claiming authority should hijack your obedience to God. You are accountable to Him. You are accountable only to Him, and not to me or any other man. When Joseph wanted to know his state and standing before God, he asked God.<sup>269</sup> It is to God alone that you must answer and it is to God you must be grateful. Only before Him must you be humble.

That having been said, true religion, when it is present on earth, always exists as a community of believers. Community is required. If we don't have a community then we cannot be willing to mourn with those that mourn. We cannot comfort those that stand in need of comfort. We cannot stand as a witness to one another of God at all times and of all places. (Mosiah 18: 9) We cannot bear one another's burdens that they may be light, (Mosiah 18: 8) as is required by the Gospel and by the covenant of baptism. None of this can be done without fellowship between believers.<sup>270</sup>

However, we do not need a new church. The only thing we need is a community of fellowship. Legal entities, whenever they are formed, become prey to the law. Men who have ambition can control legal entities. They can be sycophants, brown-nosers and people who are willing to do whatever is required of them in order to show they are desperately submissive to the one above them so that they might join them and have control over others. This is the way that organizations go. They invite abuse.

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<sup>268</sup> In LDS Mormonism's fourth phase, now underway, the public relations infrastructure uses opinion polling and focus group testing to adapt public perceptions of the church. This system makes the LDS Church continually vulnerable to changing opinions. Even the temple endowment ceremony has been altered after taking opinion polls in the US and Canada of approximately 3,500 active LDS families. As politically correct speech informs public opinion, and public opinion drives shifting LDS policies, the future of LDS Mormonism will continue to mirror the larger social values.

<sup>269</sup> JS-H 1: 29.

<sup>270</sup> In a recent book by Rock Waterman, he wrote: "This term 'the Church,' in Mormon parlance, has become virtually undefinable. Get a group of latter-day saints in a room together discussing the Church, and it's possible every one of them using the word will have in mind a vastly different meaning. One person may be referring to the local congregation, while another uses it to refer to Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. Another may have in mind the First Presidency and the quorum of the Twelve, and still another, when referencing 'the Church,' is actually thinking about the LDS religion as a whole with all its facets, tenets, teachings, and doctrines. Another may simply be thinking of Utah culture. So clearly we could use a better definition. Well it turns out we have one. Almost never these days will you find a modern Latter-day Saint using the term as it was originally defined by the Lord himself in Doctrine & Covenants 10:67. In that section He defined 'my Church' as simply all who repent and come unto Him. That's right. The meaning of *church* is nothing more complicated than a group of people with shared religious values. Have you repented and come unto Christ? Good, you're in." *What to Expect When You're Excommunicated: The Believing Mormon's Guide To the Coming Purge*, p. 22. Later on pages 51-57 he writes an interesting discussion of New Testament and early Mormon practices in contrast to modern Mormon sensibilities.

In the Sunstone Conference, I presented a paper called, *Cutting Down the Tree of Life to Build a Wooden Bridge*, it is available on my blog with all the footnotes. I think the footnote version is much better than what I was able to do verbally. The inevitable process is described in that paper. Aspiring men will always corrupt whatever it is that is organized on the earth.

So ask yourself, what can remain pure? Even here, in this awful world, what can remain pure? There are three things that can remain absolutely unmolested and uncorrupted: the truth, which is fixed and cannot be touched by us. God's love, which is free and available to all. Neither the truth nor God's love requires effort on our part. The third thing that can remain pure here is our desires. That, however, requires effort. Nevertheless, it is possible that perfection can touch each of us, if we have the right desires.

The fact is, however, we all have weaknesses, we all need rest, we all need food, and we all wear down. There are things that trouble each one of us. Even your desires are going to be better than you are. At least I hope they are.

But these three things can be perfect, and they can be pure: the truth, God's love and our desires.

You do not need to leave anything behind that is good or noble or virtuous.<sup>271</sup> And you do not need to establish another entity. You can serve wherever you are. However, to preserve the Restoration itself, starting now, we need to more closely follow the pattern of scripture. This is no revolution, only a recollection. It is not abandoning anything, only preserving the essential foundation of true religion.

Christ gave the baptism prayer, word for word. This is in 3 Nephi Chapter 11, beginning at verse 19. *"And Nephi arose and went forth, and bowed himself before the Lord and did kiss his feet. And the Lord commanded him that he should arise. And he arose and stood before him. And the Lord said unto him: I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people when I am again ascended into heaven. And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize."*

Christ did not touch them, He said to them, *"I give you power to baptize."* Although the record is incomplete, these disciples in all likelihood had previously been ordained. But Christ was renewing His church when He came. All that was needed to obtain the power to baptize was (and is) for Christ to tell you.

This is in contrast to the power given by Christ to lay on hands for the Holy Ghost. For power to do that, Christ needed to touch them. Later in the record, when Christ actually does give power to give the Holy Ghost the account stresses the touching: *"And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of these sayings, he touched with his hand the disciples whom he had chosen, one by one, even until he had touched them all, and spake unto them as he touched them. And the multitude heard not the words which he spake, therefore they did not bear record; but the disciples bare record that he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost. And I will show unto you hereafter that this record is true."*<sup>272</sup> (Emphasis added.)

The promised account Mormon would provide "hereafter" was not given by him, but his son Moroni, delivered on the promise: *"And he called them by name, saying: Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; and after ye have done this ye shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles."*<sup>273</sup> In our own dispensation, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost is likewise only an ordinance to be performed by an "apostle" upon whom Christ laid hands: *"An apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to baptize; ...And to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures..."*<sup>274</sup> At the beginning, all the church's elders called themselves "Apostles" of Jesus Christ. That practice changed when a Quorum of Twelve was organized. The Quorum of Twelve, chosen by the Three Witnesses and ordained by them, were given a charge which included the necessity to have Christ lay hands on them to complete their ordination.<sup>275</sup> LDS practice does not limit laying on hands to those whom

<sup>271</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> Article of Faith.

<sup>272</sup> 3 Ne. 18: 36-37.

<sup>273</sup> Moro. 2: 2.

<sup>274</sup> D&C 20: 38, 41.

<sup>275</sup> "It is necessary that you receive a testimony from heaven to yourselves; so that you can bear testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and that you have seen the face of God. That is more than the testimony of an angel. When the

Christ has touched, but many Latter-day Saints also struggle with whether they have ever been baptized by fire and the Holy Ghost.

How then does the authority to baptize come? Well, once John the Baptist came and laid his hand on Joseph, we have had a practice of continuing to lay hands on one another to confer Aaronic Priesthood, and we ought to continue to respect that tradition. But before any of you baptize any other of you, get Christ's "word" for yourself through the Spirit. It is the same thing Alma did in Mosiah chapter 18. If you go to Mosiah chapter 18, verse 12, before he baptized, Alma *"stood forth in the water, and cried, saying: O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart. And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him."*

He got the authority to baptize by the Spirit. If you are going to use the priesthood to perform a baptism, no matter what the Church has told you, no matter what quorum leaders and respected others, including your own father perhaps, have taught you, before you do so, ask God to give you the authority. Get the "word" from Christ through the Spirit, just as Alma did. His example is in the scriptures to teach us the way. We have lost it, and need to reclaim it. If you get power to baptize, you get it from Him and you are not dependent on someone else. But get the power from Him. Power is required. It must come from Christ. The pattern must be followed.

John the Baptist when he restored the authority, in Joseph Smith History, verse 69 said: *"which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."*

The Gospel of repentance is turning to face God. Baptism by immersion is for the remission of sins. John's declaration does not say that this authority will not ever be taken from the church; it says it will not be taken from "the earth." It was restored to remain on the earth. No matter what happens among those that choose to abuse one another, it needs to be preserved by a faithful few so that it does not cease from the earth. It is still here, though it has been much neglected and it has been much abused. But with you, renew it, using Alma's example. Alma had been previously ordained as one of the priests in wicked King Noah's court. Alma had been ordained precisely because he was wicked.<sup>276</sup> Alma qualified for ordination because he was wicked, an idolater and lifted up in pride while flattering those who listened to him.<sup>277</sup> He was corrupt. Noah wanted him and so he was ordained.

After Alma repented, but before he used any authority to baptize, he asked God to give him power. God, seeing penitence on the earth, respected it, and poured out His Spirit upon him so that Alma could baptize with power. The proof of that was found not merely in what Alma experienced with the Spirit empowering him to perform the ordinance, but also in the effect the ordinance itself had upon both Helam and Alma who himself went into the water at the same time. The Spirit was poured out upon them. Renew the power to baptize in this same manner. Alma and Christ's disciples got authority from Christ's "word" spoken to them by the power of the Spirit.

Likewise, we need to have a renewed community. Not an organization, but a fellowship. Not a hierarchy, but a group of equals. The community needs to be renewed. Men who have been ordained already, should renew this in the manner just described in the example of Alma. Have a community of believers. Be accepted by them. But before acting ask God to pour out His Spirit to give power.

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proper time arrives, you shall be able to bear this testimony to the world. When you bear testimony that you have seen God, this testimony God will never suffer to fall, but will bear you out; although many will not give heed, yet others will. You will therefore see the necessity of getting this testimony from heaven. Never cease striving until you have seen God face to face. Strengthen your faith; cast off your doubts, your sins, and all your unbelief; and nothing can prevent you from coming to God. Your ordination is not full and complete till God has laid his hand upon you. We require as much to qualify us as did those who have gone before us; God is the same. If the Savior in former days laid his hands upon his disciples, why not in latter days? . . . The time is coming when you will be perfectly familiar with the things of God. . . . You have our best wishes, you have our most fervent prayers, that you may be able to bear this testimony, that you have seen the face of God. Therefore call upon him in faith in mighty prayer till you prevail, for it is your duty and your privilege to bear such a testimony for yourselves. (DHC, 2:192-98, emphasis added.)

<sup>276</sup> Mosiah 11: 5.

<sup>277</sup> Mosiah 11: 5-7.

In my disgust and personal preference, I asked the Lord that priesthood get extended beyond the confines of the men who have continually abused and neglected it. I was told that priesthood is confined to men because of the Fall and the conditions ordained by God at that time.<sup>278</sup> Until we reverse things in the Millennium, that is the way it is going to remain, as to the ordinances thus far given in public. I asked the Lord to change that order. It is not going to change. I then asked the Lord that if only men were to hold priesthood for our public ordinances, then could only women vote to sustain them. The saying pleased the Lord, for it was already in His heart. But He said to me: "There shall be a minimum of seven women to sustain the man in any vote, and if the man is married, his wife shall be one of them."

Here is how I would proceed. Even though I have already been ordained, a community needs to recognize I am authorized before I proceed further. However, given the fact men have abused and neglected the priesthood that they have been given, and given the fact that if men are only going to hold the priesthood, that there ought to be some independent check. Therefore when it comes to sustaining me, or any of you, to perform in a priesthood capacity in any renewed community, only women should vote. No man should be allowed to vote to sustain another priesthood holder, period. If only men hold it, then only women should sustain them. I have a wife and six daughters. Therefore I have a community. Jethro had seven daughters.

For any of you who would like to renew your fellowship, call a conference. In your conferences attended by a minimum of seven women, at least seven women must vote to sustain one to be a priest to the community. When that is done, all seven who vote to sustain should sign a certificate. If you look at the *Joseph Smith Papers* there were certificates given in the early church. These were just handwritten things so there was a written authorization to function in the church. Among your own fellowships, do like they did in the early church. Do as they did, but let the fellowships now respect a balance between the obligations of the men and the rights of the women. If the man is married, his wife must be among the seven women. If his wife will not sustain him, he is unworthy to provide priesthood service in the fellowship. Of course that does not bar him from continuing to do so in the LDS Church. Nor would it bar him from being in fellowship with both.

The word "unworthy" is not a statement of condemnation, but of qualification. There is nothing implied in the word about a man's standing before God, only the fact that within the community of fellowship until the wife is prepared to support him acting outside the family, his effort should remain within his family until the wife sees value to her husband serving others. The word "unworthy" was the Lord's and therefore I do not feel at liberty to change it. But I want it clear that when He used it I had a definite understanding that no condemnation was implied, only an orderly arrangement was given. In all such matters it has been my experience that with time how the Lord orders things proves to be exceptionally wise, even if we do not immediately see the wisdom.

When you ordain someone to serve in these fellowships you should ordain no one to an office, only confer the priesthood. Have no offices. Let everyone be equal. Be without ranks. Keep your lines of authority. It will reckon through the one ordaining. But power can only come from Christ. Wait until the Spirit ratifies your ordination before you act. Do as Alma did, and ask Christ to give you power to baptize.

If someone is ordained to priesthood for the first time within your fellowship after April 2014 General Conference, they should reckon their line of authority in these proceedings for this fellowship. The LDS Church will maintain their lines, but let these fellowships maintain their own. All who are ordained in these communities should keep a record of your line of authority and pass it down. Be prepared to defend your line of authority using the records you keep. All of the women who vote to sustain should not only sign the certificate, but also put it in your diaries and in your journals. Let the records be kept so that if anyone questions, there will be an abundance of witnesses.

Conferences can be called by any who desire it, but you must have seven women if the business includes a priesthood ordination. There is no need to purchase a building. You can meet anywhere including in your own home.

Continuing then with what Christ said in 3 Nephi Chapter 11, verse 22: *"And he said unto them: On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you. Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them—Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water..."*

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<sup>278</sup> Moses 4: 22; Gen. 3: 16.

I would recommend if at all possible that water for a living ordinance be performed in living water. I would not perform this in a font constructed by man, I would use the things God created. You are trying to connect to God. Use what He created. I recognize that there may be circumstances where that becomes impossible. I have been baptized twice. Once in the Atlantic and once in a stream in the Little Cottonwood Canyon. Both times it was so cold my lips were blue. I recognize that some of you hardy people may not want to experience a baptism that invigorates you to the point of turning your lips blue, but I would recommend when you go stand in the water that it be living water.

*"...and in my name shall ye baptize them. And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."*

When I was baptized into the LDS Church, the baptismal prayer was, "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father..." When I was rebaptized, I was rebaptized by one who had authority from Christ, therefore, in that baptisms the words were, "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ..." If all you are going to do is baptize someone again according to the LDS pattern, with the commission in the Church, do not bother doing it. But if you follow these principles, and if the Spirit empowers you to baptize, then baptize having authority from Christ and follow His words. We have deviated long enough. It is time to return.

*"And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name; for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one. And according as I have commanded you thus shall ye baptize."*

I am telling you in the name of the Lord that commandment is renewed again by Him today, to you. This is His command recorded in the Book of Mormon, translated by Joseph Smith through the gift and power of God, and confirmed again today! *"And there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been. For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another."*

Do it in this way. If someone disputes and says, "They ought not be doing it, and you ought not be doing it," leave it alone. Don't fight. Don't quarrel, but invite, persuade. If they are not persuaded, let them go. If you invite and they will not come, let them go. If you entice, if you entreat, and they say, "We will not hear your entreaty," then let them go.<sup>279</sup> There is no need to harbor ill will and to fight with people.

Any who desire to be baptized, should be baptized. If you have this power given to you by Christ and *anyone* comes to you, baptize them. Refuse no one. Freely give what you received from God. Do not charge to perform an ordinance. The ordinance is between them and God. They need to have it performed between them and someone God has asked to do it. You rise up to become the people God asks to do it.

Before baptism, teach them the Doctrine of Christ. Christ immediately discusses this following His instruction on baptism. *"Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine. And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me; and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me. And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost."*

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<sup>279</sup> I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin. I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men And ye ought to say in your hearts—let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds." D&C 64: 9-11.

That is the purpose of the baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The doctrine of Christ is connected with this. Once baptized, you can have the testimony of the Father concerning his Son shed upon you by the power of the Holy Ghost. It comes as a consequence of the ordinance of baptism. If Christ lays hands on you, then you can also confer it by the laying on of hands. But even in the absence of such a man, the Holy Ghost will be given, according to the Doctrine of Christ, to any who repent and are baptized according to His command.

*"And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things. And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock; but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them. Therefore, go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth."*

This is Christ's doctrine. Nothing more and certainly nothing less. This is His doctrine. This is the power of redemption. This is the means by which the Holy Ghost is given. It is the Holy Ghost, which when given, bears record of all things. The Holy Ghost teaches you.

Believe in Christ, repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and become as a little child. There is no more inquisitive creature on the planet than a little child. That is who you are to become. You should hunger and search for understanding. This is all of the doctrine. There is no more doctrine. This is not all of the teachings, nor all the tenants, nor all the precepts, nor all the covenants, nor all of the commandments, nor all of the principles, but it is all of the doctrine. There is no more doctrine than this, according to Christ.

We are very loose in what we call "doctrine" and have been so even when Joseph was alive. When Christ defines and limits His "doctrine" to this brief outline, it is probably impossible to carry on a conversation today without using a broader definition. Joseph F. Smith wrote a book called *Gospel Doctrine*. Joseph Fielding Smith wrote a three-volume work called, *The Doctrines of Salvation*. Bruce R. McConkie wrote *Mormon Doctrine*. He also wrote *The Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, which is multiple volumes. Millet, Fronk, Skinner and Top wrote *LDS Beliefs, A Doctrinal Commentary*. There is *The Development of Temple Doctrine*. There is *Unlocking the Doctrine of the Fall*. There is *The Doctrines of the Kingdom*, by Hyrum Andrus. There is *The Doctrinal Developments in the Early Church*. If you go to Deseret Book and you search the word "doctrine," they will sell you 791 items. Our background makes it impossible for us to use the term "doctrine" in the narrow sense Christ defines as His doctrine.

But we should remember, that though we use the term loosely today Christ was very serious about confining His doctrine to these few statements. He accompanied it with the warning: *"Whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock."*

Sometimes we apply the word "doctrine" when we really mean a tenant, or when we really mean a teaching, or a precept, or principal, or a covenant. Christ has narrowly defined what we ought to be declaring as His doctrine, and I would suggest He did that on purpose in order to avoid *"coming of evil."*

In answer to a question about a single man: I don't think there are any impediments to conforming to the pattern and being ordained in the absence of having a wife, but if you add a wife? You better add a wife who is going to sustain you if you intend to use priesthood in these independently functioning communities. But that is your problem.

Does this mean you have to leave the Church? Of course not. This is to add to anything that you already have. There is no reason you can't be part of this fellowship and be part of the Lutheran Church, Catholic Church or part of an LDS community. I wouldn't leave until they throw you out, but they will probably throw you out. They shouldn't, but probably will. I would not leave the LDS Church if you find value in service there. I think the youth programs are wonderful.

Because the winningest high school baseball coach moved from Taylorville High School, to Juan Diego Catholic High School, and my son went to school and played baseball at Juan Diego Catholic High School. They had mandatory devotionals because the school belonged to the Catholic Church. There were a lot of Catholic things observed as part of the

school. While he was at Juan Diego Catholic High School he heard a lot of Catholic teaching. He would come home and we would talk about it. There is nothing wrong with letting your kids learn within the LDS community. I would not run away from it. However, if they find out that you are participating in another fellowship, particularly one that says that there has been some loss of authority, my suspicion is that you are going to forfeit a temple recommend, and you may suffer more than that.

What about ordinations that occurred before April 2014? As I said previously, I would respect them and keep them in place. God did not do anything until April of this year, and then only with the LDS Church leadership. It is His act. It is not mine. It is His purpose. It is not man's. If I had a son and still attending and I ordained my son in the regular course of events in the LDS Church, I would go ahead and participate in all of that as part of the LDS Church. Then I would come to one of these conferences and I would get a sustaining vote for my son, and I would have him ordained again, and I would have seven women<sup>280</sup> certify the additional ordination. He would then have an LDS Church ordination on the one hand, and an ordination according to the pattern of God now. I would expect my son to hold onto both of those. I would not abandon the Church. For goodness sake, LDS people need to hear your testimony to God's work with you. But also remember this is not limited to the LDS Church. Christ's doctrine and baptism is for everyone.

Proselytizing about the Restoration has been halted in the nation of Israel because of an agreement between the LDS Church and that nation. But the Restoration needs to continue there. Not through the LDS Church in violation of their agreement, but through these fellowships. In the Muslim block where religion is enforced by law, these fellowships can be part of their community even if they remain publicly part of the religion mandated by law. Every denomination in the world may be represented among your fellowships. This is not designed to limit the possibilities of shared faith, but to greatly expand them. The Restoration must roll forth, even into places that bar the LDS Church. Because these are informal, based only on the Doctrine of Christ, and require only acceptance of Christ's simple statement of His doctrine, faith to believe and act, repentance from sin and baptism, this can sweep the world across barriers now preventing the Restoration from penetrating.

Do you lay on hands to ordain? Yes, I would follow everything that has been given in scripture to this point. We are "adding to." We are not throwing away anything. We are trying to preserve, return, and renew. We are not trying to tread under our feet anything that is useful, laudable, worthy, desirable, or that came down from the Restoration. It is not God's purpose to abandon the Restoration. It is His purpose to preserve it. Laying on hands, however, confers only the right to go to God to get power. Power in the priesthood comes from Him. Some forms, as previously mentioned, can only come by conversing with the Lord through the veil, while others require us to enter into His presence. The talk given about priesthood in Orem also remains part of the Lord's agenda.

There are changes presently underway that are going to jar the LDS community more and more in the coming years. If you are not prepared to preserve what has been given, everything will be lost in what will soon happen. It is necessary there be some few who seek for a community that tries to preserve the essential elements of the Restoration in their purity. In all the various Restoration churches what is rapidly underway at an accelerating pace, is more and more corruption. Whether it is the largest body, the LDS Church, or the Community of Christ, the United Apostolic Brethren, the FLDS, or the dozens of other splinter groups, there is widespread corruption. The Restoration has to be preserved. Every one of you has some issue that you would say to yourself, "if this," then I would no longer follow. All those "if this's" are in the wings. Inexorably, they are coming. The Restoration has to be preserved. It has to be preserved in a manner it can remain pure. Fellowship between the splinter groups does not happen because they all denounce one another. We can and should all agree to accept the Doctrine of Christ. This allows what is broken to be repaired. We cannot hope to merge the various Mormon denominations into one, but we can hope to allow fellowship in these communities of believers to happen.

Once again, in modern revelation, the Lord clarified in Doctrine and Covenants Section 10, verses 67 and 68, exactly what He said to the Nephites. *"Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church."*

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<sup>280</sup> There have been four different people who have contacted me (one during the first break in the talk), all of whom have associated this requirement of seven women sustaining to a fulfillment of Isa. 4: 1 and 2 Ne. 14: 1. If that is the case, then the meaning of being "called by thy name" is clearly a reference to the name of Christ. Seven women sustaining the man to perform the baptism precedes the ordinance of baptism itself. When baptized, we take upon us the name of Christ. It is the name of Christ that will "take away our reproach."

So, if the LDS Church or any other church chooses to do more, or chooses to do less (and the LDS Church is choosing to do both), then His church will consist of those who choose only to do what He says. Not as an organization. Not as a corporate entity, but rather as a body of believers who do as He says, where all are equal and free to worship Him in truth and Spirit.

This is what He said to the Nephites, and said again in modern revelation. It is exactly the same. Not only does His simple doctrine defining His church appear there, as if that were not enough witnesses, Nephi taught it as well. In 2 Nephi he explained the Doctrine of Christ. 2 Nephi chapter 31, beginning at verse 5 and going through Chapter 32, verse 6. He talks about the need of baptism. This account gives us a view into how great a prophet Nephi was. His dialogue includes Christ teaching and the Father witnessing to Nephi. It is one of the greatest prophetic accomplishments in all scripture, and its focus is the Doctrine of Christ!

Nephi explains, the Lamb of God being holy, He needed to be baptized, therefore, don't we likewise need to be baptized?<sup>281</sup> Then after baptism, *"if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel. But, behold, my beloved brethren, thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying: After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by the baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, and can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the tongue of angels, and after this should deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not known me. And I heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved."*

Then He goes on to talk about the way. *"There is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen."*

It was the Doctrine of Christ at the time of Nephi some six centuries before the Lord's ministry; it remains the Doctrine of Christ in the Restoration. Between these, it was the doctrine the Lord taught in His own voice to the Nephites in 3 Nephi. That is the doctrine. Preach Christ's doctrine to any who will receive it, baptize them. It doesn't if they have never been members of any church. It does not matter if it is a Catholic priest that comes to you. It does not matter if it is a Mormon Apostle in any of the Restoration churches. If they are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or Baptist, and they come to you and accept the Doctrine of Christ, baptize them. There is a coming time of distress. Those who believe Christ's doctrine will need to have the baptism you will minister to survive the judgments to come. This is the only way they can face Him when He comes again.

Another requirement is a record of the names of those you baptize. You do not record their email addresses, vital statistics, phone numbers, or any contact information. Only names. Therefore, after you have complied to have power to baptize, and taught them the Doctrine of Christ and they have repented, and are being baptized, their name must be recorded. You choose recorders in your fellowships, and a recorder to compile the names from all the various fellowships. Someone has to keep the names in a record. Faithfully record the name every time there is a baptism. There will be various recorders in various locations. The various recorders need to submit them to a single central record keeper on an annual basis. Have the recorders from the various fellowships identify themselves. I can give them some further direction, but there should be annually complied, a single volume, that will be deposited in a temple. Ultimately there will be a temple built.

In Grand Junction I spoke about tithing. I talked about organizing yourselves, collecting your own tithing and managing it yourselves, to assist the poor who are among you, and to do this by the voice of your own local group. Do it by common consent. Provide for those who need housing, food, clothing, healthcare, education and transportation. Do it by the voice of united agreement of you all in small groups in which all know one another. Since that time there have been several groups that have begun. Two groups are assisting single mothers with their needs. One group is assisting a

<sup>281</sup> 2 Ne. 31: 4-7.



family. One group has no needy among them, and they've accumulated for large charitable purposes, and they bought for a quadriplegic, a sophisticated electric wheelchair with the tithing money that they gathered.

I have also heard of some failing experiments, where frustration and contention have been problems. As the scriptures warn, and I discussed in Grand Junction, we must overcome "jarrings," "contentions," "envyings," "strifes," "lusts" meaning ambitions, and "covetous desires."<sup>282</sup> These conflicts need to be worked out before any gathering. All of the social ills of our day are in the churches of our day. Every denomination that came from Joseph Smith's ministry is plagued with the same shortcomings. Before any gathering, we must be put through a refining process. We must grow; we must rise up first, before God will gather us to Zion.

There is no reason to pay for priesthood service. Serving should always require sacrifice. Do not pay for ministers. I would recommend if you choose to participate in a tithing group, you do it in the same manner described in Grand Junction. Do it voluntarily among yourselves. Community is necessary. I do not know how you can bear one another's burdens without administering your own tithes, administering your own fast offerings, doing things to help those people who are in need.

Some are giving tithing to an organization that is purchasing commercial and residential real estate, farms, and developing shopping centers, but has little left by comparison to give to the poor. Even though they give money to help the poor, billions spent in commercial ventures dwarf the amount. If you choose to participate that, that is up to you, but try and care for those among you who have needs. Try to participate in helping others and fellowshiping with them.

As to the Sacrament, only an antichrist would forbid you from partaking of the Sacrament in the way commanded by your Lord. That is an abomination. If you get together, even if it is only in your own family, partake of the Sacrament together. Let no one forbid you from partaking in remembrance of Christ. He commanded that you do it. Follow the pattern that is given to us. In Doctrine and Covenants section 20, verse 76, one of the things that used to be practiced, and has been abandoned, but should now be renewed among you, is that when the Sacrament is blessed, kneel. "Kneel with the church" is how the verse explains it. It is in the scriptures before you. Follow them.

You can use wine. Or, if you are opposed to alcohol, alternatively you have some medical condition that prevents you from using wine, then use grape juice. Not water. Use red grape juice. Use the symbol of the blood of our Lord. I can tell you that generally, red wine is bitter for a reason. Partaking of that bitter wine in remembrance of the blood that was shed is appropriate.

Here is the doctrine required for us to be gathered. Doctrine and Covenants Section 10, beginning at verse 57. *"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I came unto mine own, and mine own received me not. I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."*

Even today, He is the light that shines in the darkness, not comprehended because there remains just too much darkness. We forbid His presence by driving away the Spirit and not allowing utterance in our meetings. That is where we should be hearing from the Spirit and edifying one another.

*"Yea, and I will also bring to light my gospel which was ministered unto them, and, behold, they shall not deny that which you have received, but they shall build it up, and shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me. And this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them. Therefore, I will unfold unto them this great mystery; For, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts; Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely. Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church. And now, behold, whosoever is of my church, and endureth of my church to the end, him will I establish upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. And now, remember the words of him who is the life and light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Amen."*

<sup>282</sup> See D&C 101: 6. These were the reasons Zion failed in Joseph's day.

At present priesthood is confined to males because of the Fall. But when He gathers His people together who are "His church," every time He refers to that gathering the sex of the gatherer changes. It is not as a male (rooster), but is a female (hen), and "she" preserves "her" chickens. There is something more to be looked forward to, if there should ever be a gathering. The heavens will not be so fully veiled at that time. Then, at last, we will understand His saying, "as a hen gathereth *her* chickens."

Christ taught this. Nephi taught this at the beginning of the Nephite dispensation. Christ taught the same doctrine, and modern revelation reaffirms it. Not only there, but earlier in March 1830. This is in Doctrine and Covenants section 19, verse 21. *"I command you that you preach naught but repentance."* And verse 29: *"And thou shalt declare glad tidings, yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and among every people that thou shalt be permitted to see. And thou shalt do it with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers. And of tenets thou shalt not talk, but thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism, and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost."*

That is the Gospel. It is what needs to be preached and it is what needs to follow. But, as mentioned in this revelation, there are tenants. There are many tenants to Christ's faith. As to those, we are commanded to search, understand, but not necessarily declare as doctrine. The thing about which we need to have unity and absolute agreement is the Doctrine of Christ. For that, we should be able to fellowship with one another across every other religious divide.

Every dispensation of the Gospel has only left a remnant behind. Christ's work is designed to preserve a remnant. At the end, He will gather all remnants together again. The Restoration given through the Prophet Joseph Smith has also put itself into a position where it can only produce a remnant. The original Restoration begun through Joseph Smith must resume. First, we must remember. All who will remember will constitute a remnant that will be preserved and not abandoned by God.

In 3 Nephi chapter 21, the Lord talked about some things that become exceptionally relevant in light of what we have covered today. *"And verily I say unto you, I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place—that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion."* [This is addressing all of those various remnants, wherever they may be found, so long as they are some residue of the house of Israel.] *"And behold, this is the thing which I will give unto you for a sign—for verily I say unto you that when these things which I declare unto you, and which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself, and by the power of the Holy Ghost which shall be given unto you of the Father, shall be made known unto the Gentiles [You see, the Gentiles had to first receive some things] that they [the Gentiles] may know concerning this people who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, and concerning this my people who shall be scattered by them [the Gentiles]. Verily, verily, I say unto you, when these things shall be made known unto them [some constituent group of the Gentiles] of the Father, and shall come forth of the Father, from them unto you."*

It cannot come from any source other than from the Father. The Father and Christ being one. The authority to minister and to deliver His Gospel must come from Them. The power to baptize before the end will be brought forth from some remnant of the Gentiles who will bear it.

*"For it is wisdom in the Father that they [the Gentiles] should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth from them [the Gentiles] unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel."*

"O house of Israel" is much more than one group. "O house of Israel" is inclusive of all the scattered bits and remnants, wherever they may be found anywhere on earth. I talked about fulfillment of covenants when we were in Centerville. All the covenants that apply to His people Israel, and the remnants, need to be gathered into one group.

*"Therefore, when these works and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter shall come forth from the Gentiles."* [Not their "book," but their "works." Not their book, which has been brought out in 1830, but the "works" to bring the Doctrine of Christ to them. Someone must establish repentance, declare Christ's doctrine, and baptize by the authority of Christ, to have people then baptized by fire and the Holy Ghost. These are the works.] *"Shall come forth from the Gentiles, unto your seed which shall dwindle in unbelief because of iniquity; For thus it behooveth the Father that it should come forth from the Gentiles, that he may show forth his power unto the Gentiles."*

That is what He now needs to do with some who will assist in the work. That is what He intends to do if you will receive it. *"For this cause that the Gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent and come unto me and be baptized in my name and know of the true points of my doctrine, that they may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel."*

You can't get there except through the power of the doctrine and the power of the ordinance of baptism performed with power. God has given us the way, and told us how it is to be performed with the exactness, fidelity and language given to us by Christ Himself. *"And when these things come to pass that thy seed shall begin to know these things—it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel."*

All of Israel will receive this witness that His work has commenced. *"And when that day shall come, it shall come to pass that kings shall shut their mouths; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them those who will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them. But behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him, for I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. Therefore it shall come to pass that whosoever will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ, which the Father shall cause him to bring forth unto the Gentiles, and shall give unto him power that he shall bring them forth unto the Gentiles, (it shall be done even as Moses said) they shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant. Therefore it shall come to pass that whosoever will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ..."*

These are Christ's words. We touched on these words in the beginning back in Boise. It was quoted by the angel Moroni referring to Joseph Smith, Acts 3, verses 22- 23. *"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."*

That prophet is Christ. It does not say Christ is going to come and deliver His words, it says "His words." *"Those who will not believe my words, who am Jesus Christ, they shall be cut off."* And the angel Moroni said to Joseph in verse 40 of the Joseph Smith History, *"The day had not yet come when "they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people," but soon would come."*

That prophet is Christ. His words are what I have spoken to you today. We must all respond to His words, because if we will not we will be cut off from among the people.

Back to 3 Nephi 21:12. *" And my people who are a remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, yea, in the midst of them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Their hand shall be lifted up upon their adversaries, and all their enemies shall be cut off. Yea, wo be unto the Gentiles except they repent; for it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Father, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots; And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strongholds; And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy land, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers; Thy graven images I will also cut off..."*

Graven images are people you worship. Graven images include men you allow to rule over you as objects or idols of authority. If you trust them to deliver you by some magic key they purport to hold. Whether Catholic or Mormon or Fundamentalist, graven images are going to be cut off. Our strongholds are going to fail. There is a coming day of judgment.

*"Thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands; And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee; so will I destroy thy cities. And it shall come to pass that all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, shall be done away. For it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that at that day whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel; [that is all remnants gathered together] And I will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard. But if they [speaking of the Gentiles] will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church*

*among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance."*

Every time there is a covenant, there is always a land given to man as part of His covenant. This is the land God covenants He will give to the people who receive the covenant, including the Gentiles, in whose ears this first shall sound. Coming into the covenant is not possible because we are not yet proven. It requires more than has been given at present, but it will not be given until first we accept and act on the Doctrine of Christ. It is possible to come in and become part of His church, as He calls it. That is a heaven-recognized group, not something men control. It must be done in His way, according to His commandments, practiced in purity before Him. It is possible, if you follow as instructed today, to become part of the church He recognizes and will preserve. But coming fully into the covenant spoken of in this verse will require more than can be given right now. It will require a covenant. It will require adoption. It will require sealing. It is what Joseph looked forward to have happen at some point in the future during the days of his prophecy. Although Joseph qualified and bound some few with him, it was not possible in that day to fulfill this promise. In our day, we will not even learn enough about it to attempt to practice it until after we have eliminated jarrings, contentions, envyings, strifes, lusts, and covetous desires from us. Then we must become of one heart, having no poor among us. Gentiles have never accomplished that. Some few, however, are prophesied to accomplish this, and to be given the covenant spoken of here.

*"And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven..."* [In this case it is the singular. It is not the "powers," because when you have Him present with you, you have all the authority.] *"...then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst. And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day..."*

Christ will come. Once the covenant has been renewed, the city of Zion will follow. The Lord will come, and then the final stage begins. *"...even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem. Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name. Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward."*

It is not going to happen in haste. The work of the Father in those nations, to allow for the possibility of gathering, will require destroying a great deal of political, social, and military obstructions now preventing such a gathering. These obstacles prevent preaching to those who would gather, if they could hear. But the work of the Father? (It is always the Father when it comes to condemnation and destruction.) The work of the Father is going to bring this to an end. All the scattered remnants will be brought back again. The original unified family of God will be restored again. The fathers will have our hearts turned to them, because in that day, once it is permitted to get that far, we will be part of their divine family again.

Our day is filled with darkness and deception. Our day is the day Nephi wrote about. If you turn to 2 Nephi chapter 28, beginning halfway through verse 4. *"...and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance."* This is why the ordinance of baptism must be renewed again. This is why the pattern has to be followed. This is why the light has to be turned on. The Holy Ghost can give you robust assistance if you are penitent. God cannot dwell in unclean vessels, and so He remedies that by cleaning the vessel in accordance with the pattern that He has given, thereby making it possible for the Holy Ghost to give to you utterance.

*"And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and they say unto the people: Hearken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men [You can hear that every Sunday if you attend some LDS wards]; Behold, hearken ye unto my precept; if they shall say there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day he is not a God of miracles; he hath done his work."*

See, the claim is that God does not do miracles, but if there is a miracle performed then it is performed by the devil. So the only one that is responsible for anything miraculous is necessarily the devil, and you are following the devil. These false precepts are now everywhere. They encourage Satanism because it suggests Satan has power and the Holy Ghost does not.

*"Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."* [Indulge yourself, you needn't be caring for the poor, you needn't be attentive to their needs, you don't need to minister to those who are in want. Eat, drink, and be merry! It is going to be well with us.]

*"There shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; [And that is, by the way, how you get ahead: dig a pit for your neighbor. He is your "competition" and must be overcome.] ...and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God."*

We are told, 'don't worry there is no hell. There is no hell, no awful pit, there are just degrees of glory. Don't worry about it!' But concerning the reality of the suffering of hell our Lord warned: *"I command you to repent—repent lest I smite you...and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not. For, behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; but if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink of the bitter cup, and shrink."*

You cannot read our Lord's lament and believe there is no hell. You have the scriptures before you. How can you believe there is no need for repentance? How can you think there is no need to come to Him and be redeemed, and to seek to remove from us the awful burden of your own sin?

*"And there shall be many which shall teach after this manner, false and vain and foolish doctrines, and shall be puffed up in their hearts, and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord."*

How might one better *"hide their counsels from the Lord,"* than to conceal all the money that is gathered from the tithes of His people? How better than to hide from view all the revenues paid to the authorities of the church, and even admonish the paid mission presidents that they must never disclose the revenue benefits that they are receiving? How better to hide your counsel, than to conceal it from the very sheep that are being shorn? By the people who sit in positions of authority, claiming they have the right to come to the stake that I lived in, as a member of the quorum of the 12, and hand my membership record to the stake president and insist that there be a disciplinary council held against me. The church seeks deep to hide their councils. I participated in that conspiracy when I agreed I would conceal that Elder Russell M. Nelson of the quorum of the 12 came and called my new stake president and handed to him my membership record, instructing him that I must be disciplined. And to his credit, president Hunt took 18 months fighting that decision, because he knew I was an innocent man, before he submitted. Before relenting President Hunt was called in repeatedly, and finally "instructed" using the church Handbook of Instructions telling him he had no choice but to hold a disciplinary council. I will no longer participate in concealing the councils kept from the public! It is wrong! president Hunt should not do it. Elder Russell Nelson should not do it. None of them should do it! They should come clean and admit my excommunication was only from the top, although it required the stake to relent and impose their sentence.

One of conditions of the employment agreement general authorities must sign is that all of their diaries become the property of the church once they die. This is to conceal their counsels from God and man. They do not want their affairs to be made public. If you knew, many of you would be horrified at what you would learn. A great deal of information about what went on in church history, spilled out into the public when the diaries became public. Church Historian Leonard Arrington opened up the archives. D. Michael Quinn did a pioneering job collecting, analyzing the journals and diaries, then publishing history we had never seen before. Although he has been vilified, much of LDS history now written relies on D. Michael Quinn's research and work. He donated a great deal of material to Yale University, and some of that has been published in limited editions. Richard Van Wagoner put together a large, five volume collection of all Brigham Young's talks, greatly expanding what was previously available. The oftentimes-shocking information contained in

the diaries, journals, letters and previously unpublished talks have shone a completely different light on LDS history. To staunch the flow of information, the church now requires the private journals and diaries to become church property; to better conceal from public view what has happened.

*"Seeking deep to hide their counsels from the Lord, and their works shall be in the dark,"* is exactly what the authorities of the LDS Church now do! It is exactly a description of the hierarchy of LDS Mormonism. Put your budgets online. Disclose your revenue. Show us what you do with the poor in contrast to what you do with the rest of the revenue. Don't hide it. We do not even know what the total annual revenue is. The Auditor's Report only affirms the first presidency and twelve know and approved what was spent. That is a shallow assurance indeed.

*They "seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark. And the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them. Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted. Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted, and their churches are lifted up; because of pride they are puffed up. They rob the poor because of their fine sanctuaries; they rob the poor because of their fine clothing; and they persecute the meek and the poor in heart, because in their pride they are puffed up. They wear stiff necks and high heads; yea, and because of pride, and wickedness, and abominations, and whoredoms, they have all gone astray save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men."*

The dedication of the first book I wrote, *The Second Comforter, Conversing with the Lord Through the Veil*, was to "the few who are the humble followers of Christ," and it cited this verse. Some people say, "Well, he was enlightened at one point, and then he fell victim to a dark and evil spirit, and now he's an apostate!" I am closer to the Lord at this moment, than I've been at any time when I was a member of the church. I know His will more today, and I understand it better than I have ever understood it before. It is not a different spirit than the one that brought me into the church, and it is not a different spirit than the one that informed *The Second Comforter, Conversing with the Lord Through the Veil*. At the time I wrote that, I was keenly aware of the fact that from among us, there were only a few who were the humble followers of Christ. I understood that we were nevertheless, led, that in many instances, we err.

Working within the system, I did everything I could to preserve the doctrine, to preserve the truth, to testify of Christ, to teach the precepts, to remember the covenant. I would still do that today if I had been left alone by the church's highest leadership.

Clearly, those of you who think I am a rebel don't get it. God knew exactly what He was doing. I would have taken a bullet for Spencer Kimball. I was among the most devoted of Latter-day Saints. I viewed the church as a source that had rescued me from a life headed into something terrible. I had friends I grew up with who became alcoholics, drug abusers, whose lives are now in tattered ruins. One of my good friends in elementary, junior high, and high school, died. He stopped his heart with cocaine abuse when he was only 26. The LDS church introduced me to a form of cleanliness in living for which I have nothing but high regard. If every one of you chooses to remain active in the LDS Church while you do these other things, you will not hear me complaining or criticizing. You will hear me praising you and respecting your standards. It is a community trying to do good, but *"they are led, that in many instances they do err,"* and you should not partake of the errors. Accept whatever is good, and hold onto whatever is good, but continually seek for something higher and better.

Nephi speaks of the kinds of precepts that are toxic. "Hearken to our precepts," "hear my precept." This is where we get into all the mischief. The precepts, if they are not true, are not worth having. And it is the doctrine above all, that saves.

Go to Isaiah chapter 29, this is beginning at verse 13. *"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me [that is what the Holy Ghost must reside, in your heart] and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men."*

Fear is one of religion's tools. Particularly among fundamentalist Mormons, but you see it also among LDS Mormons. You better stay in line! You better get approval! If the bishop hasn't authorized that you can't do that! You cannot pass the Sacrament! You are an apostate! You are just an apostate! Fear taught by the precepts of men! Be free. Be free to worship God according to the dictates of your conscience. *"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among*

*this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."*

Their precepts are nonsense, and they don't save. They change from handbook to handbook, and leader to leader and with the fundamentalists from strongman to strongman. It is so unstable a reed that if you lean on it, it will break and pierce your hand, to use Isaiah's analogy.<sup>283</sup>

Now, let me remind you of what a false precept might include. This is an example Christ gave. This is Mark chapter 10, beginning with verse 2. *"And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."*

One of the reasons why a wife should sustain an order for man to be worthy, and the talk given in St. George, is because divorce is a false precept. I hasten to add, however, if you've read *The Second Comforter* you know that I had a wife divorce me. At the time I viewed myself as an absolute failure. I was still worthy for a temple recommend, but I had the words of President McKay echoing in my mind. "No other success can compensate for failure in the home." While I teach this, and while I know this to be true, the only thing I can be thankful for is that it was not I who set her aside, but it was she who chose to do so. I am not able, however, to say my own life has been free from divorce.

Zion will require a worthy people. There was a Second General Epistle, from Peter, 2 Peter chapter 1, where he talks about what he would like to see Christ's followers seek. I am going to begin at verse 5. *"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

This was a great admonition, and a great path to follow. I think Peter thought this through. He knew this was a progression that follows in almost this exact order, in almost every well-lived life. However, those Saints did not have Zion, despite this admonition. Therefore, if we are going to see it we have to do something more. We have to be more holy than they were. We have to be more disciplined than were they. You see the word "discipline" and the word "disciple" come from the same word. We need to have greater virtue than they did.

I've read this before. This is Joseph Smith writing from confinement in Liberty jail. This is after Joseph, in Liberty Jail, had months to reflect upon what happened among the Saints before his imprisonment. He wrote: *"The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity--thou must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart! None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations--too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God."*

Do not waste your time when you are with one another! Learn, study, testify, search the scriptures, and worship God. If you are still LDS, use whatever good you find there. Do not waste time. Use it in the serious pursuit of the mysteries of God. Search deeply. Reflect quietly. Ponder and pray with purpose.

I will tell you the definition of an active member of the LDS Church used while I was on the High Council, and I believe still used now. Anyone who has attended one meeting every 90 days is considered "active." They measure it every

<sup>283</sup> Isa. 36: 6.

three months and submit a report. The church only reports a measure of church-wide activity based upon two quarters: the Easter quarter, and the Christmas quarter. If anyone comes to one meeting during those quarters of the year, they are counted in the church measurement of “active” members. Actual activity rates are skewed and overstated.

The LDS Church claims it has approximately 16,000,000 members today. They claim activity to be somewhere between 4 and 5 million. That is less than 33% activity. People who self identify, depending on which poll you look at, are between 3 and 4 million. That means there are less than 22% who self identify as LDS. Therefore, the greatest majority of Latter-day Saints don't support the Church or its programs. When the Lord invites us to renew fellowship, there are some 12 to 13 million inactive LDS Mormons who are ideally prepared to come and participate. They once believed enough to join. Some have had their hearts broken. Some are bitter. But they are still remembered by God and should be invited to believe and act on the Doctrine of Christ.

The Restoration has never been a majority group. Even when Joseph lived, the majority was inactive or disaffected, even hostile. Although LDS Mormonism is the most successful, it cannot hold onto anything close to a majority of its members. It pretends to be THE voice of God and sole possessor of the “keys” restored to Joseph. But the reality is that LDS Mormonism is a small minority of even its own claimed “members.” If new life can be breathed into the Restoration by your fellowship with one another, even the LDS Church should welcome it (assuming they were interested in people worshipping Christ). This fellowship among yourselves has no opportunity for abuse, no chance of amassing wealth, no possibility of getting political influence, and no hope of controlling people’s lives. It can only invite, entice and persuade.

If you choose to remain an active Latter-day Saint, and you are a minimalist going once every 90 days, just remember you cannot delegate the responsibility to someone else to teach your children. You have a duty to teach your children, and it is a duty imposed upon the “parents in Zion,” it is nondelegable. You have to do it. In many respects, what I am doing in these talks is addressed to my own children who no longer live in my home. You and I cannot delegate the responsibility we have. You do not need buildings to hold meetings. Joseph Smith only built one building. He completed the Kirtland temple. He got the Nauvoo temple started, but Joseph Smith only built one building.

Tithing is for the poor. It is not designed to pay for a professional clergy class. If we have no buildings more money can go to assist with the needs of people. In this day, and in this economy, anything that can be done to assist with the poor is a good thing.

If Joseph Smith were here today, looking at the Latter-day Saint Church, he would have, and I am quoting from his last vision, *“no desire to live upon it in its present state.”*

Previously we have looked at Joseph's admonition: “the people should each one stand for himself, and depend on no man or men in that state of corruption... applied it to the present state of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—said if the people departed from the Lord, they must fall—that they were depending on the Prophet, hence were darkened in their minds, in consequence of neglecting the duties devolving upon themselves.”<sup>284</sup> Ask yourself this: If Joseph Smith had it all to do over again, and if Joseph had no desire to “live upon it in its present state,” and wanted to avoid the problem that darkened the minds of believers, how could it best be accomplished? There seems to be an obvious conclusion: he should just refuse. Just refuse to do what causes their dependence.

If Joseph handicapped us by taking too much on himself, but the believers refused to let him alone and continued to require him as an answer-man, then the best thing would have been for him to have kept riding when he crossed the Mississippi River with Hyrum. He had his horse; he should have just kept riding to the Rocky Mountains.

God always prefers the weak things. It requires faith for the weak things to succeed. It is only when you are placed in the most vulnerable spot that you realize that you have got to rely on God. The only way you can become strengthened is if you rely on God, and not some other man. When you depend upon a man, what you do to that man weakens him as well. Even “righteous persons can only deliver their own souls.”<sup>285</sup> Each person is accountable before God.

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<sup>284</sup> TPJS, 287-238.

<sup>285</sup> TPJS, 238.



It is by sad experience we learn, that when men get a little authority as they suppose, they will immediately began to do things that are inappropriate.<sup>286</sup> I am personally tired of all the past (and present) sexual misconduct in the name of religion. I hate all the wealth accumulated in the name of religion that has been diverted from the poor to build instead “fine sanctuaries” including unnecessary LDS Temples. I am tired of all of the abuse of man’s freedom to choose imposed on congregations by corporate religions. I am weary all of the nonsense that has gone on in the name of religion. I am repulsed by people claiming they are to be respected as some giant, freaking, priesthood key holding, omni-competent replacement for God! I am tired of that! I don't want any more of that! I've had enough!

That is what you get when you submit to the rule of a man. If you submitted to me, that is what you would eventually turn me into. Slowly but surely, even the best of us will be tempted to cut corners, gratify our pride, and ultimately abuse others. Consider King David in his youth, and again in his old age. He was the same man. Making him king corrupted him. The only wise course, therefore, is to never ask for it, and never tolerate it when offered. Christ refused it.<sup>287</sup> He knelt to serve others.<sup>288</sup> Since He is “more intelligent than them all”<sup>289</sup> I think I will choose to follow His example and kneel rather than seek a chief seat. I dare not tell you what the Lord offered me, and you would not believe me if I did. I have refused things I think other men would crave. As I have reflected on it, I believe the Lord has trusted me with some things because I did not seek for them. Critics will not believe that, but those who know I have not misled you in anything I have said will realize this to be true.

The church has been damaged by correlation. President McKay predicted it would lead to apostasy. If I were to “lead” and standardize things it would be a return to correlation. Why return to what has damaged Mormonism? It is the system that has done the damage. You cannot improve that flaw by choosing to make me your new correlator. I will not do it. It will darken your minds and would corrupt me. I am no better than you, and I believe some of you to be better than I. We need hundreds of independently functioning believers adapting the Gospel to their needs. Doctrine does not change, and the scriptures are constant. Your needs will vary. Therefore you apply what is changeless to your peculiar circumstances. You can do it better than any distant authority could possibly do it for you.

When you submit to the rule of God, you then place yourself in a position where you must be dependent upon Him. Then every one of you will immediately realize your own weakness. You will be tempted to have others tell you how to please God. You must resist that temptation. You must arise and seek Him directly.

Every one of you has to grapple with the uncertainty of, “is this right or is this wrong?” Every one of you has to grapple with the fact, that in answer to some questions, there is silence. You all must be forced to choose. If you choose right, you do not know you chose what was right, because He refused to answer you. Then you act in reliance on your own decision, going forward to do what is right, only later to be told, “If you had have made the mistake, I would have corrected you. But you needed that experience.”

God answers prayers. Sometimes He forces you to make choices, and very often, I can't tell you how often, but very often I make the wrong choice. It is almost like I got a compass pointing south. I often choose wrong and then I get an answer correcting me. But I got an answer because I made a mistake.

I have no clue why, other than the fact I was so converted and faithful to the LDS Church, the Lord chose me to accomplish what He has now done. I sincerely believe most of you here are just genuinely better people than I am. I have nothing but weakness to offer. God uses weak things because they must have faith to act while knowing they are unequal to the assignment. Faith requires we have a correct belief, and then we take action. That is from *The Lectures on Faith*: A correct belief, and then we take action.

If you are converted to everything said in this meeting today, and in all nine of the preceding sessions of this one talk, and you do not take action, then you do not have faith. But if you do take action, then you will receive the reward from your faith.

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<sup>286</sup> D&C 121: 39.

<sup>287</sup> Matt. 4: 8-10.

<sup>288</sup> Matt. 20: 25-28.

<sup>289</sup> Abr. 3: 19.

You need to be baptized and offer baptism to others because the LDS Church no longer preaches the doctrine of Christ, and have added to it the commandments of men. In the baptismal interview, the second question asked is, "Do you believe that [current Church President] is a prophet of God? What does this mean to you?" You can find that on page 206 in *Preach My Gospel*. As a condition of being baptized into the LDS Church, you must offer up as a catechism, your confession that the current church president is a prophet of God, and then explain what that means to you. This is been added, and therefore does not conform to the Doctrine of Christ. It "cometh of evil" according to Christ's doctrine. Therefore, you need, as part of preserving the Restoration, to practice in the way outlined today.

I am asked: "What do you do if you are alone and there is no priest available to administer the Sacrament?" It is a commandment that we partake of the Sacrament. It is a commandment we do it, and do it often. And in fact, if you read the record in 3 Nephi, one of the things the Lord did was to administer the Sacrament with surprising regularity. One time He did it in a miraculous manner, because it was that important an ordinance to have take place. I think if I were alone and I did not have any authority, I think I would bless the Sacrament and partake, and ask to be forgiven afterwards. I think it is like the fruit of the Tree of Life; it is probably one of those things that ought to be done. But that is my personal view, and I leave it to you to choose wisely.

I was also asked, "What do we do to get started?" I mentioned conferences. You can call conferences in your home, anytime, anyplace. All you need is to have a minimum to sustain that will sign and say that they are sustaining as part of the fellowship. In terms of those who are already ordained? You can function as a priest in the LDS Church, it is just if you are going to function under this system with others in a fellowship, among this community with these people, have a conference, and get sustained first. You do not need to be re-ordained, if you were ordained before April 2014. If you were ordained after April 2014 you should get ordained again among this community. So, there are two categories: If ordained before April 2014, get sustained by the required number in a fellowship before you perform any priestly function, including baptism and the Sacrament. If ordained after April 2014 do the same thing, but have someone ordain you again. Keep a record of that, as already explained.

There is nothing special about us YET. But there can be. We do not need numerous temples, but we will need one to which Christ can come. We will not need to perform endless work for the dead until first there has been a covenant made for us. We must be first connected to the fathers in heaven. Only then can we do something to liberate the dead. I've written so much on that, I won't repeat it.

There are so many opportunities for believers to go off the rails that I want to remind you of some of the early problems in Kirtland. In Doctrine and Covenants section 50, verse 2. *"Behold, verily I say unto you, that there are many spirits which are false spirits, which have gone forth in the earth, deceiving the world. And also Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he might overthrow you. Behold, I, the Lord, have looked upon you, and have seen abominations in the church that profess my name. But blessed are they who are faithful and endure, whether in life or in death, for they shall inherit eternal life. But wo unto them that are deceivers and hypocrites, for, thus saith the Lord, I will bring them to judgment. Behold, verily I say unto you, there are hypocrites among you, who have deceived some, which has given the adversary power; but behold such shall be reclaimed [not the hypocrites, He's going to reclaim those that are deceived]. But the hypocrites shall be detected and shall be cut off, either in life or in death, even as I will; and wo unto them who are cut off from my church, for the same are overcome of the world. Wherefore, let every man beware lest he do that which is not in truth and righteousness before me. And now come, saith the Lord, by the Spirit, unto the elders of his church, and let us reason together, that ye may understand; Let us reason even as a man reasoneth one with another face to face. Now, when a man reasoneth he is understood of man, because he reasoneth as a man; even so will I, the Lord, reason with you that you may understand. Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained? To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth. And then received ye spirits which ye could not understand, and received them to be of God; and in this are ye justified? Behold ye shall answer this question yourselves; nevertheless, I will be merciful unto you; he that is weak among you hereafter shall be made strong. Verily I say unto you, he that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the Spirit of truth, doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way? And if it be by some other way it is not of God. And again, he that receiveth the word of truth, doth he receive it by the Spirit of truth or some other way? If it be some other way it is not of God. Therefore, why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth? Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together. And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is*

*light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day. And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you; He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all."*

This is what we should be. This is how we should teach. This is how we should edify one another. This is how we should be preparing our children. This is what we should be laying hold upon: truth, light. We need to seek for understanding. Growing in knowledge of the principles of truth by the power of the Holy Ghost. There is so much left undone. There is so little understanding of the scriptures.

False spirits will be among you. Prideful and pretentious people will want to impress you to give them honor. Honor God instead. Do not let a new revelation displace your attention away from the scriptures. They are sufficient for our day, as these ten sessions have demonstrated, I hope. I have expounded the scriptures as Moroni did to Joseph; and as Christ did on the road to Emmaus the day of His resurrection. We must first remember and observe. Preserving the Restoration requires us to be very familiar with the scriptures of the Restoration. At present we should fear most our ignorance of the scriptures.

You should not waste another three-hour block of time fiddling around with nonsense, because you don't have permission from God to do that. Preach the principles to one another. If you spend time in LDS meetings, as some of you will do, then study your scriptures, comment with the truth, and improve your moments with the Latter-day Saints. If a fellowship has significant numbers who still attend meetings, then meet in your own fellowship before or after the three-hour block, or on another day of the week.

If in your fellowship you don't think you know enough to do anything else, get together and read the scriptures out loud. Have your children study scripture. Teach them to use *written* copies of the scripture, not electronic devices. Studies show comprehension is greatly reduced by using electronic versions instead of printed books. Do not cripple your children by having them use computer-based scriptures. Get them their own copies and have them study them. Ask them to research subjects using their scriptures. Walk them through the parables of Christ and teach them to see symbolism as something familiar. Get them to consider analogies and types as tools used in scripture. Help them to reason a problem through using the scriptures as a guide.

In the early church, in this dispensation, when they got together, one of the things done regularly was everyone in the meeting prayed in turn. *Everyone* prayed. The meeting would last until all present had prayed. They called it a "Prayer Meeting," oddly enough. One of the early brethren didn't like that. He didn't feel like he could pray vocally around other people. There is a revelation admonishing him that he needs to pray.

If you don't have any wisdom to impart to one another, get together and pray. Get together and read the scriptures, but don't get together and read out loud out of any recent publication from Deseret Book. It has become little more than a vanity press, offering bright covers to serve up hollow slogans inside.

If we are going to begin again, it must be in conformity with the Doctrine of Christ, it must be taught by the spirit of truth, and it must follow the pattern and warnings given in Kirtland for us to follow.

Now, having said all that, let me read to you some things which the Lord said concerning this moment, because He is talking about an event that will happen.

This is from Matthew chapter 22, beginning at verse 2. *"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,* [This marriage is how the Lord describes His Second Coming. Therefore this parable is about the very end times. They are now approaching.]

*And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.* [This invitation is directed to a group the "King" first asked to come. But the first invited decline.]

*Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their*

*ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:* [The cares of this world overcome the first invited guests. They are busy with commerce and cannot be troubled to obey the Doctrine of Christ. They turn to their great commercial endeavors and decline the King's invitation.]

*And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.* [All that remain in any dispensation is a "remnant." The remnant was among the first invited, or in other words among the latter-day Gentiles, who were first invited; these will kill the servants. Both Joseph and Hyrum were killed by the conspiracy of the first invited Gentiles.]

*But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.* [Navuoo fell, the temple was destroyed, and the Gentiles driven into the wilderness to suffer, and many were destroyed.]

*Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.* [Another group will come from the highways, which are "both good and bad." They are not the same as the first, but they will be the guests. Provided, however, they choose to accept the invitation and respond.]

*And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."*

Several things about this: This is one of those places in scripture where "remnant" is used in a negative way. The Gentile "remnant" from the first invitation are portrayed by Christ as capable of killing God's servants. God invites all to come to the wedding feast of his Son. This is when the kingdom is going to be established in the last days. He invites all to come. From among all those people who had been invited there is a remnant of those who still hold onto the Restoration, and they are the worst of all. They have the hardest hearts. They are the ones who will not come.

After the Lord deals with them, He sends servants to invite everyone found on the highways to come. Everyone! Come in to the wedding feast! No matter your faith tradition, your religious identity, all are invited to come receive the Doctrine of Christ. Christ has now begun that. If you will carry the message to the highways, let all know that everyone is now invited.

Included among those who are invited in, are "*as many as they found, both bad and good.*" They are all to be invited to come in. There is no excluding the bad, speaking after the judgment of this world. Bad people get invited in to the wedding feast! But when they come it is not whether they are a bad person or a good person that determines if they get to stay. According to Christ, it is the presence or absence of a wedding garment that determines if they are allowed to stay. What is a "wedding garment?"

Well, turn to Luke chapter 18. This is Luke chapter 18, beginning at verse 10. "*Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

In this parable did not matter the publican was a "bad man." It did not matter the Pharisee was a "good man." I tell you at the wedding feast, it will be the publican who wears a "wedding garment." The first wedding garment, if I can call it that, is the original garment given to Adam and Eve in the Garden to cover their nakedness, and to cover their shame before God. All of which is an allegory.

The covering of skins given our first parents required the sacrifice of an animal to teach them the principle of sacrifice. It was also to foreshadow the death of our Lord that would be required in order to restore us back to God's presence. Therefore, the covering given to Adam and Eve in the Garden represented the sacrifice of our Lord. It was our

Lord's atoning sacrifice that makes it possible for us to be covered, so that our shame is no longer there. Instead of seeing our shame, God looks upon the righteousness of His Son represented by the covering of skins we have been clothed with, and not upon our own guilt, weakness, and shortcomings. He beholds the image of His Son in the garment that we have put on.

It is that garment, the atonement of Christ. Those who will remain in the wedding feast must obey the Doctrine of Christ. Exactly as Christ commanded. Exactly as outlined today. Remember, the first who were invited would not come. But even the bad ones who are out in the highways, if they will put on the wedding garment you can offer, they can come to the feast. There are about 13 million inactive Latter-day Saints. There are a lot of "bad ones" out there, who are only kept from the truth because they have not heard it yet.<sup>290</sup>

If I had the financial means, I would buy an ad space in the Los Angeles Times and I would publish a full page add saying: "This is the Doctrine of Christ." Then I would quote Christ's language from 3 Nephi where He declares His doctrine. I would say below that, "If you believe this doctrine and you want to be baptized and get the Holy Ghost, meet me at..." and I would put a location and time. I would hope that included among those who came would be gang members, inner-city people who live lives of desperation and violence, who want a way out. Can you imagine what would happen if you sent someone back into an abusive neighborhood, clothed with the power of repentance and the Holy Ghost? I would hope ministers of other faiths would come to be baptized. I would invite everyone, from the high to the low, and hope as many as possible would come.

We can't fix this world by legislating, but we can fix anything by changing hearts. Those Gentiles that were first invited ultimately will not come. They will even abuse those who try to take them in. But there are plenty of folks in the highways and byways who are only kept from the truth because they don't know where to find it. This is your responsibility. This is your work to do. This is the day in which these things need to be done.

Oddly enough, in our own day, the Lord tells a slightly different version of exactly the same story, prophesying how it is going to happen among us in our day.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 58, beginning in verse 7. *"And also that you might be honored in laying the foundation, and in bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand."*

I am going to put this into the footnotes when I finally get around to publishing in book form the talk given in Grand Junction. I will add it here because we have now encountered the words, *"the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand."* I pointed out in Grand Junction all the historical reasons why Zion could exist somewhere other than on property owned in Jackson County, Missouri, and could in fact, be constructed elsewhere.

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, in their first trip to Jackson County, Missouri, came to confirm and ratify that was the place where Zion would be built. There, a revelation said this was "the land of Zion." And so everyone since then until now, relies on that language to say, 'it is going to be Jackson County, Missouri.' That same month, Sidney Rigdon gave an explanation of the meaning of "the land of Zion." He said it began Kirtland, Ohio and it ran to the Pacific Ocean. So the land of Zion is rather flexible in where the Lord might choose ultimately to locate it.

So there's going to be some land where Zion will stand. *"And also that a feast of fat things might be prepared for the poor."*[so the feast to be prepared has a highly specific audience in mind in the revelation, it is "the poor."]

*"Yea, a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined, that the earth may know that the mouths of the prophets shall not fail; Yea, a supper of the house of the Lord, well prepared, unto which all nations shall be invited. First, the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble; And after that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come. Behold, I, the Lord, have spoken it."*

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<sup>290</sup> D&C 123: 12.

Did you get that? First they invite “the rich” and then “the learned,” and the “wise” and the “noble” and then the nations shall all be invited. It does not say, however, that any of them will enter in for the feast. It does not say any of them will partake. It was prepared after all for “the poor,” and the people who will enter in, who do finally make it into Zion will get to partake.

*“Then shall the poor [that is who it was prepared for after all] the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come.”*

Every time you partake of the Sacrament it is a reminder of the promise there will at last be some great wedding feast. It is not just in remembrance of the blood and of the body, but it is also a preliminary to the final feast the Lord intends to offer in which His blood and His body achieve success in redeeming some few! His atonement was to redeem. The wedding feast is a celebration of the Lord’s triumph. But His triumph produces saved souls. The redeemed are His great trophy!

Well, ask yourselves, who are “the rich?” Who are “the learned?” Who are those that are presently considered “wise?” And who are those who make the claim that they are “the noble,” the elect, the royal priesthood? Whoever they are, they do not enter into the wedding feast in Zion.

And who are “the poor?” Who are derided, even in today’s vocabulary, and accused of being “lame”? Who are considered “blind” and misled? Who are “deaf” because they cannot hear and respect all the great wisdom that pours forth from these empty cisterns, having nothing but drivel to offer? Quoting one another endlessly, as if one misled man on a false path can offer light to a fool following after him.

I hope we are “the poor.” I hope I am speaking to “the lame.” I hope you are counted among those that are considered “blind,” and I hope that you have ears not for what any man has to say, but for what the Spirit alone has to confirm to you. I hope that you are “deaf” to everything in this world, but have ears for what our Lord has to say.

Mormonism is so compelling a religion that the original great light given by God through Joseph Smith has supplied the energy to keep it going. All the many sects that sprang from the original ministry of Joseph have been able to survive because of it. The great work needed before God’s return requires more light to be given. God will not give it until we are grateful enough to remember what He gave before. We have been foolish stewards for three and four generations. God is speaking again.

This is the day in which, at long last, what God promised would happen before His return is now actually beginning. The Gospel does not consist merely of a record of how God dealt with another people at another time. Joseph Smith talked about how we must have our own covenant: “Search the Scriptures, search the Prophets and learn what portion of them belongs to you and the people of the nineteenth century. You, no doubt, will agree with us, and say, that you have no right to claim the promises of the inhabitants before the flood; that you cannot found your hopes of salvation upon the obedience of the children of Israel when journeying in the wilderness, nor can you expect that the blessings which the apostles pronounced upon the churches of Christ eighteen hundred years ago, were intended for you. Again, if others’ blessings are not your blessings, others’ curses are not your curses; you stand then in these last days, as all have stood before you, agents unto yourselves, to be judged according to your works.”<sup>291</sup> The Gospel must live with us, or we have no hope. Joseph also said: “[W]e cannot claim these promises which were made to the ancients for they are not our property, merely because they were made to the ancient Saints, yet if we are the children of the Most High, and are called with the same calling with which they were called, and embrace the same covenant that they embraced, and are faithful to the testimony of our Lord as they were, we can approach the Father in the name of Christ as they approached Him, and for ourselves obtain the same promises.

These promises, when obtained, if ever by us, will not be because Peter, John and the other Apostles, with the churches as Sardis, Pergamos, Philadelphia, and elsewhere walked in the fear of God, and had power and faith to reveal and obtain them; but it will be because we, ourselves, have faith and approach God in the name of His Son Jesus Christ; even as they did; and when these promises are obtained, they will be promises directly to us, or they will do us no good.”<sup>292</sup>

<sup>291</sup> TPJS, p. 12.

<sup>292</sup> TPJS, p. 66.

This is as true of words and promises given through Joseph as the words and promises made in the New Testament. We cannot rely on the sacrifices of Joseph and Hyrum to save us, nor claim a covenant long since changed and broken by all of the sects arising from Joseph's covenant as ours. We must, like them, have the faith to renew and then keep a covenant given to us by God.

This is really apparent when you read the revelations given to Joseph in their original transcripts. In our scriptures there are headings, footnotes, cross references and additional insertions advocating we read those revelations as ours. But when you read them as they were written in *the Joseph Smith Papers*, it really becomes clear that when God was talking about how the church was "living" and "alive" and "approved," it was because He was talking to Joseph Smith. At the time the church was listening to what Joseph Smith revealed. The declaration that the work was "rolling forth" was voice of God in that day to those people. Joseph Smith was called to lead those people to go and take it to the world. They took it and they went out and preached it, and when they preached it, others were converted. People who were converted by them actually had experiences and came to know God. That was because God empowered it and set it in motion through His servant Joseph Smith. Joseph had a covenant given to him by God. Therefore, Joseph could testify to these words, and they were true, and God owned them. People who follow them received the wages of those who follow God. It worked! We cannot mimic that and have the same effect. We must do the work, seek God's voice to us, and when we have His word to proceed.

God has to say to us, "This is what I want you to do." If no one else will say it to you, I am saying it to you. Everything that has been said in this talk, which began in Boise and concludes here today, everything that has been said is, in fact, exactly what happened when God offered something to an earlier generation through Joseph. He, God, is offering something again, right now, in our day, to you, to any that will hear, to any that will listen. The work is beginning again.

I suppose it was necessary that what began in Joseph's time had to run down to the condition it is in at present. It had to become a leaky ruin of a farm, that Joseph himself no longer even wanted, before it was possible for the Lord to say, "At this moment we turn a new leaf." Can't you see the signs of the times? Can't you look about and see the whole world is waxing old like a garment? Can't you see there is now a balance of things kept at bay only to preserve the possibility of a remnant being claimed by God? God promised He would do this. If this can bear fruit, the Lord may give more time and keep the angels from beginning the harvest. That will depend on what we do.

I really have not done anything more than read scriptures and bear testimony to you they are true. This was not my idea, and I can't tell you how happy my wife and I will be when we conclude this project. There will be this transcript, and I'll edit all the transcripts from all ten lectures and put them into a book.

To be readable the book needs to have run on sentences and grammar fixed to a degree I am not undertaking in the transcripts. That is still left to do and I will do it before a book is in print. But the real project and the labor needing to be done, will be by you.

If you don't lay hold upon this, if you don't move this forward, if you don't rise up, I suppose He will find another people. But you ought to accept this invitation, and then come to the feast He offers us. You should want to be numbered among those who choose to have the Gospel live again. The Gospel should not be the words of an old book. The Gospel should be alive in you, rolling forth with new vigor. Every new day should be a new revelation to you of His involvement in your life, and in the lives of those around you.

I know it is not easy to let yourself stand out. For some of us it is really unpleasant. I am a trial lawyer, but you have to understand that what that means is that I am usually engaged in an intellectual fight in a room with six or seven people in it. If we have a jury, we may have up to 18 in the room. What I do, I don't do in front of big crowds. This speaking to hundreds at a time has not been a pleasant thing for me. I enjoy the law, I particularly enjoy appellate argument, because there it is just a three-judge panel, or a five-judge panel depending on which court I am in. It is just a small intellectual undertaking in which you are trying to reason something through.

This kind of venue has not been pleasant for me, but I suppose what you are being asked to do will be even more unpleasant for you. All of you have your families, your friends, your neighborhoods, and your wards. Many of you are faithful members of the church and I commend you for that. And I wouldn't want to be the source of creating a problem there, but

the Lord has in His mind a way of doing things, in which, if we follow the pattern we get power from Christ. We may get ordained by a line of authority that comes down through another man laying hands on our head but authority to activate that comes from heaven, by the voice of God. If you follow that pattern the fruits will follow.

When I say “unpleasant” it is probably an understatement. If there are a thousand different fellowships, each will have a unique challenge. You are asked to proceed without being correlated, free to work out your own way to follow the Lord. There will be some people who are “complainers” who will bring complaints with them into your groups. They need your love and patience. You may be able to help them overcome a life-long personality issue that can be cured only by your kindness to one another. Do not be discouraged by the problems. Prayerfully confront them. Do not ignore or hide them. Confess them openly and be patient with one another in finding the solution. Some people have suffered from lifelong abuse by religious authorities, including their parents. They have never had a healthy religious experience. The fact they remain willing to try is itself cause for hope and encouragement. Help them. Love them. Let them find peace among you, for that is what we are asked to do: Be willing to mourn with those that mourn, comfort those that stand in need of comfort, stand as a witness to one another of God at all times and of all places, and bear one another's burdens that they may be light. Suspend judgment and give such assistance as you can to one another. Maybe what they will need most is your listening ear and open heart.

Whether or not these talks make any difference at all does not depend on how well I have spoken them. They depend entirely upon what you now do. If there is any fruit to be produced, the fruit will not be me talking, or the CDs, or a book, ultimately. That is not the fruit. The fruit is to be found in your lives. The fruit is to be found in your influence, in your family, with your children, in the Light that comes into your lives and the lives of those who know you.

All of this is only an opportunity, and no guarantee. We must rise up in faith to take advantage of the opportunity. In the beginning of Joseph Smith's dispensation, when the opportunity was given by heaven some given the greatest of opportunities did very little. A church conference on October 25-26, 1831 allowed several additional men to receive the high priesthood. During the first day of the conference Joseph taught them that “the order of the High priesthood is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life.” Sidney Rigdon who spoke afterward added this caution about those who were to receive the “privilege... to be ordained to the High Priesthood, telling them if they then should doubt God would withdraw his Spirit from them.” Following Rigdon, Joseph again addressed those who would be ordained and said “he had a testimony that each had one talent [sic] and if after being ordained they should hide it God would take it from them.” On the second day, following an opening prayer by David Whitmer, Sidney Rigdon again spoke and warned them “the Lord was not well pleased with some of them because of their indifference to be ordained to that office, exhortation to faith and obedience setting forth the power of that office.”<sup>293</sup> We can likewise show indifference or we can proceed in faith. We can fail or through our humility and genuine desire we can connect with heaven.

This process can be so informal that when we conclude today, if there is still time left, everyone who wants to can call a conference and begin doing some things today. It is that informal. There are at least seven women here. And some of you brought your wives.

Let me end by testifying to you that, however improbable or unlikely all of this may seem to those of you who spend any time at all thinking about this, it was just as improbable when John was baptizing. It was just as improbable when Christ taught. It was just as improbable when Joseph Smith said, “I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it.”<sup>294</sup> It may seem improbable. But it is true!

Now, in order to conform to the burden laid down by God and scripture, I need to turn time over to Keith Henderson. He has something which must necessarily be added as part of all this. So Keith, it is all yours.

## A Second Witness:

Keith Henderson speaking:

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<sup>293</sup> The minutes of the conference are found at *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents Vol. 2: July 1831- January 1833*, pp. 80-87.

<sup>294</sup> JS-H 1: 25.



52 years ago, I came to this area on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I came to bear testimony of Jesus Christ and *the Book of Mormon* and the Prophet Joseph Smith. Today I stand before this people again of this area, to again bear testimony. My growth in these 52 years has been great, but my testimony still remains very simple. My name is Keith Henderson. At the time I bear this testimony, I am still an active member in good standing with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I am grateful for this opportunity that I've received to lift up my voice and bear my witness and testimony before the Most High God, before His holy angels, and before all of you, who would be witnesses with me that this talk given this day, by our friend and God's servant, is a message given from God to all men and women everywhere, who will hear or read. I so witness that I know that it is. I have attended every portion of this talk, making 10 in total. I have listened time after time to the recordings and I've read every transcript made up until this one. I bear solemn testimony that I have received the message by God's voice of their truthfulness, and also of His desire for us to believe in and act upon these things that have been spoken.

I stand as another witness with Denver, in the law of witnesses, that these things are true. And I expect to be held accountable for this in the days and the eternity to come, before God and my Father and to all men. I bear this testimony humbly and solemnly, but in the power of the most holy priesthood. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

## APPENDIX

(Transcription of Appeal Letter)  
September 13, 2013

### Appeal of Disciplinary Council Decision

The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
In Care of Truman Hunt, President of the Sandy Crescent Stake  
[Hand delivered]

Dear Presidents Monson, Eyring and Uchtdorf:

I have been excommunicated. The proceeding was initiated by Elder Russel M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve on the day he called President Truman Hunt to be the Stake President of the Sandy Crescent Stake. Elder Nelson took control by handing my membership records to President Hunt in the hallway of the Stake Offices and told him that I “needed to be disciplined.” The issue involved a book I wrote titled *Passing the Heavenly Gift*.

Over the next months I met with President Hunt in a series of interviews, answering his questions. He and I were meeting when a phone call came in from one of the Seven Presidents of the Seventy. I was asked to leave the room. When I was invited back in I was informed that the Seventy and Elder Christofferson of the Twelve were going to review the book and President Hunt was to “stand down” until he heard further. As a result President Hunt did stand down and we had no further meetings for several months.

President Hunt called me in again after he had received further direction from the hierarchy and told me there was church ordered compulsion to withdraw the book from publication or face discipline. I agreed to investigate what it would take to withdraw the book. I investigated and learned I could revise the book, but could not take it out of print. I informed President Hunt of that. He said I could be paid for any damages and asked me to investigate it again. I did so and found that payment would not be acceptable.

When we met again I urged President Hunt to look at a number of letters I had received from alienated and disaffected church members who had returned to activity as a result of reading the book. I had dozens of these letters. He considered the information. He said he would get back with me.

When we met again he said it didn’t matter what anyone thought of the book because it was “faith destroying.” I responded that there were actual people whose faith had been rescued and whose activity in the church had revived because of reading it. He responded to me: “What makes you think the church is interested in having such people anyway?” I took that response to be coming (as everything else) from higher up.

I was shown a section of the Church Handbook of Instructions that mandated discipline for criticizing the church’s leaders. I explained I hadn’t done that. I quoted from past church leaders’ diaries, journals, talks, letters or writings. But I did not criticize. To the extent I have ever spoken about living church leaders I have praised them. I denied this accusation and after giving the explanation President Hunt agreed. He said he would look further into the matter. Sometime later I was given notice of a proposed Church Disciplinary Council based on three things. A copy of the notice is attached.

I asked if the council could be delayed until Thanksgiving so all my children could be present. He considered the request but declined it. He asked who I would have attend with me, I said I would bring my family.

When the date arrived my family came with me to the event. President Hunt refused to allow the children into the room. All of my children agreed they would say nothing. All of them agreed they would not disrupt in any way. All of them had my permission to be present. President Hunt refused to allow me to enter with my children. I asked if I could make a statement to the High Council with my children present. He denied the request. My wife explained that she had read the Church

Handbook of Instructions, had prayed about the matter, and believed it was very important for her children to be in attendance. President Hunt refused.

I was prevented from entering the room with my children. Therefore I was unable to speak with the High Council about the matter. They used their dominion over me to sustain the charges and ratify all that went on before.

I have honored my covenants. I was and am worthy of a Temple Recommend. There is nothing amiss in my behavior involving my family, the community or the church. I have written an honest account of what our history might look like if viewed from the perspective of scripture and prophecy. In it I make no conclusions, merely suggesting a different possible narrative. On almost every topic I leave it to the reader to decide after bringing out a "tie" in the material. The book has helped dozens, perhaps hundreds, of individuals retain their membership. It is an inspiring book and has done actual good for many wounded individuals.

The course of events makes it clear that the Stake, the Seventy and the Twelve have all been involved and bear some responsibility for this outcome. I need to afford the First Presidency the opportunity to bear responsibility as well. Therefore I am appealing the decision to you.

I would appreciate it if you would consider reversing the outcome. But if not then you should add your own "Amen" to this proceeding. This is an important moment in the restoration. I hope you take it with the appropriate seriousness required by the trust given you, the importance of restraint by those holding priesthood office, and the measure required of you in judgment by The Lord.

Sincerely, your obedient servant;  
Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

## Cutting Down the Tree of Life to Build a Wooden Bridge

By Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

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There are four topics discussed in this paper. They are plural wives, ordination of black African men, pressure to ordain women, and same sex marriage. The history of changing LDS doctrine, past, present and the likely future, are illustrated using these four subjects to show doctrinal changes required to build a necessary bridge between LDS Mormonism<sup>295</sup> and the American public.<sup>9</sup>

Religion moves through two stages. In the first, God reveals Himself to man. This is called “restoration.” It restores man to communion with God as in the Garden of Eden. In the second, man attempts to worship God according to His latest visit. This stage is always characterized by scarcity<sup>296</sup> and inadequacy. This is called “apostasy.” Apostasy always follows restoration.

Abraham, Moses and Isaiah ascended the bridge into God’s presence.<sup>297</sup> God descended the Celestial bridge to live with man through Jesus Christ. They all show God wants to reconnect with us. Unfortunately, the witnesses of a restoration leave only an echo of God’s voice. Unless we remain with God through continual restoration, we lapse back into scarcity and apostasy.

Whether the echo is preserved through a family organization, like ancient Israel, or churches,<sup>298</sup> like Christianity,<sup>299</sup> some organization acts as a substitute for God’s presence during the apostasy. Unfortunately, organizations can only imitate God’s involvement.<sup>300</sup>

Though Moses helped Joshua into the abundance of restoration, through Joshua’s own direct contact with God,<sup>301</sup> Israel forfeited their opportunity to do likewise.<sup>302</sup> Abraham established a restored dynasty in Isaac,<sup>303</sup> Jacob<sup>304</sup> and Joseph.<sup>305</sup> Abraham’s success was the greatest since the time of Adam.<sup>306</sup> Apostasy is the rule, restoration the exception. It is a curious failure, since God declared His works and words never cease.<sup>307</sup>

Institutions cannot control God.<sup>308</sup> As faith in God is institutionalized, it becomes part of this world and necessarily influenced by cultural, social, legal and economic pressure. Those forces erode faith. Religious institutions are where the ideal comes into conflict with the less-than-ideal.

LDS Mormonism illustrates this dynamic.<sup>309</sup> Through compromises of its ideals we see the pattern unfolding in our lifetime.

<sup>295</sup> I refer to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as “LDS Mormonism” or “the LDS Church.” It is the most successful of the offshoots claiming Joseph Smith as a founder. I belonged to that denomination until 2013, when I was excommunicated for “apostasy” because I did not withdraw from publication the book *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, Mill Creek Press, (Salt Lake City, 2011).

<sup>296</sup> See, e.g., 1 Sam. 3: 1: “And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was on open vision.” Omni 1; 11: “I know of no revelation save that which has been written, neither prophecy; wherefore, that which is sufficient is written.”

<sup>297</sup> Each of them was the subject of an “ascension” text (*The Assumption of Moses*, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, and *The Apocalypse of Abraham*) as a testimony it is possible for man to ascend to God’s presence.

<sup>298</sup> Contrary to the claims of “Restorationist” movement, out of which both Mormonism and the Stone-Campbell churches (both Sidney Rigdon and Parley Pratt belonged to this movement prior to their conversion to Mormonism), there was no single form of New Testament Christianity. The apostles left behind various churches, not a single organization. For a discussion of this see S.S. Raymond E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, Paulest Press, (New Jersey, 1984).

<sup>299</sup> The New Testament word (“ekklesia”) would be better rendered “assembly” or “congregation” rather than “church.”

<sup>300</sup> If it is impossible to serve both God and mammon (Luke 16: 13), religions administering tithes and offerings seem invariably to hate the first and love the second.

<sup>301</sup> Exo. 24: 13-17.

<sup>302</sup> See D&C 84: 21-25; Exo. 20: 18-21.

<sup>303</sup> Gen. 26: 24.

<sup>304</sup> Gen. 28: 12-15.

<sup>305</sup> Gen. 37: 5-7, 9.

<sup>306</sup> Adam was able to hand down a living connection to God through eleven generations: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, and Shem/Melchizedek. Abraham was second, with only half that number.

<sup>307</sup> Moses 1: 4.

<sup>308</sup> D&C 1: 31; D&C 38: 11-12.

<sup>309</sup> LDS leaders assert their status has not changed, and their version of Mormonism preserves the ideal, unchanged. However, two

Religion has always frustrated good men. Churches fail to practice the ideal. This frustration produces reformers who reject the inevitability of scarcity and long for the return of a revelatory God. St. Francis lived the ideal inside the institutional church.<sup>310</sup> It is gratifying to see Pope Francis chose his Papal name, and then follow St. Francis' example.

Martin Luther,<sup>311</sup> John Calvin, Roger Williams, John Wycliffe and other Protestant fathers thought the church compromised, and sought God outside the dominant church body. They formed offspring churches, but failed to restore God's presence.

Joseph Smith claimed to have bridged the gulf and entered God's presence again. Some few, myself included, believe his claim. I regard him the equal of Abraham, Moses and Isaiah. But the various denominations claiming Joseph Smith as their founder again suffer scarcity and struggle to cope with God's silence.

Man is born and then dies. In this world entropy overtakes everything, including religion. Faith does not pause between restoration and apostasy. There can be no stasis in religion. God's voice is heard anew when restoration is underway and scarcity ends.<sup>312</sup> But it returns as the influences of this world take over.

With time, all religious bodies confront the complex challenge of holding onto God's word. The ever-changing present causes cracks in every church. The church will try to patch the cracks. This leads to fractures, then defections. Former believers either lose faith in the religion altogether, or faith in the church. Without a restoration's abundance, pragmatic choices become first policy, then doctrine. God's silence does not curtail doctrine, but often compels it.

After nearly a millennium-and-a-half,<sup>313</sup> there was a great gulf between God's last revelation and Catholic doctrines. When Gutenberg's 1439 press and an increasingly literate population made it impossible for the Roman hierarchy to control information, Catholicism fractured. The Internet is to LDS Mormonism what Gutenberg's press was to Catholicism. It is no longer possible for an institution to control the narrative.<sup>314</sup>

Catholicism attempted to regain control in two ways. First, the "Dogs of God"<sup>315</sup> were unleashed to confront heresy and suppress dissent. After two-and-a-half centuries of pursuing this ill-advised course, the failure was recognized even in Rome.<sup>316</sup> Pope Paul III

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quotes illustrate the difference between its founding generation of leaders and today's. Oliver Cowdery admonished the first Quorum of Twelve their ordination as an Apostle was not complete until Christ visited and laid hands on them. (*DHC* 2:194-198.) This charge was dropped in 1911. In this year's Priesthood and Relief Society Manual, LDS Church President Joseph Fielding Smith is quoted, "I did not live in the days of our Savior; he has not come to me in person. I have not beheld him. His Father and he have not felt it necessary to grant me such a great blessing as this. But it is not necessary." *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith*, (LDS Church, 2013) p. 49.

<sup>310</sup> Toward the end of his life, St. Francis said an angel visited him on September 14, 1224.

<sup>311</sup> Luther began as a reformer inside the Catholic Church, but ultimately became the father of the Lutheran Church.

<sup>312</sup> This is because God's voice is heard through the minister. See, John 10: 27.

<sup>313</sup> The 10<sup>th</sup> Century split between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism is not relevant to the point in this paper, and therefore not considered.

<sup>314</sup> LDS Church Historian Marlin K. Jensen entertained questions at Utah State University. In response to a question about people leaving the church, he compared current events to the Kirtland Apostasy. A transcript and recording of that interview was posted on the Internet on a site titled "Simple Mormon Spectator" ([www.simplemormonspectator.blogspot.com](http://www.simplemormonspectator.blogspot.com)). The site subsequently took it down putting up a notice, which read, in part: "This audio and commentary has been removed out of respect for friends, most especially Elder Jensen. This audio was not fulfilling the purpose I had hoped it would: of inspiring more good, respect, tolerance, and love in the church." Despite removing the material, a cached copy was posted on another site "New Mormon Apostasy" ([www.newmormonapostasy.blogspot.com](http://www.newmormonapostasy.blogspot.com)) where it presently remains available.

<sup>315</sup> This nickname for the Dominicans was used by historian James Reston, Jr. in the title to his 2005 book, *Dogs of God: Columbus, the Inquisition, and the Defeat of the Moors*, (Doubleday, New York). Saint Dominic founded the Order in 1216, with approval by Pope Honorius III, to combat heresy. This order was responsible for later leading the Inquisition, an attempt to forcibly compel orthodoxy and convert Jews. Torquemada, a Dominican, was the First Grand Inquisitor.

<sup>316</sup> The outcome of this struggle was inevitable. Power has its limits that those in power seem to ignore. Throughout history, those in power lose their claim to legitimacy through their abuse. The theme is embedded in LDS scripture. D&C 121: 34-42. Therefore it would seem much easier for LDS Mormonism to avoid making Catholic mistakes, but the allure of power is blinding. As one writer recently put it: "'It has been said that most revolutions are not caused by revolutionaries in the first place, but by the stupidity and brutality of governments,' Sean MacStiofain, the provisional IRA's first chief of staff once said, looking back on those early years. 'Well, you had that to start with in [Northern Ireland], all right.'" Malcom Gladwell, *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the*

reversed course and launched the Counter-Reformation. A new order called the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was established at the Council of Trent to focus on needed reforms. The LDS Church is following this pattern. Their first approach is to suppress dissent. The Correlation infrastructure of the LDS Church has been put into place to protect doctrine and practice. An LDS group of “Dominicans,” the Strengthening the Members Committee,<sup>317</sup> has been empowered to find and then remove perceived threats.<sup>318</sup> Ironically, the original targets of the Strengthening the Members Committee were fundamentalist groups advocating the practice of plural marriage. At one time this practice was the hallmark of orthodoxy for the LDS Church. The juxtaposition of advocacy first, followed by prohibition of plural marriages, illustrates a passage. Brash confidence in God’s restoration makes the organization brave. Then faced with opposition, a quiet and distant God no longer fortifies the church. They appease the worldly forces of government and economics. From heaven’s silence men conjure “doctrines” they attribute to God. Plural marriage bespeaks this larger dynamic.

Because LDS Mormonism has “correlated” a great deal of what it once was has been trimmed away. History and doctrine have been forgotten or rejected. By reworking history, the LDS Church has managed to brand even those who believe in Joseph Smith, and accept the same scriptures, as nevertheless “apostate” if they also challenge the newly correlated part-truths. Within LDS Mormonism a short memory is necessary to accept the history and doctrine now taught. Long memories get its members into trouble.

For LDS Mormonism, the Internet is a bastion of unsettling or unwanted information. Some of it is inaccurate. The more effective challenges, however, come from on-line sources telling the truth. When the false narrative perpetuated by the institution<sup>319</sup> is confronted by truth, the institution loses. To deal with this, the LDS Church uses “search engine optimization,”<sup>320</sup> meaning the LDS Church pays money to have their sites come up first on search engine result pages. This directs traffic to church approved sources.<sup>321</sup> LDS websites recount history designed to soothe the troubled Saint. It is not effective.<sup>322</sup> All an inquirer need do is press through the first page or so of LDS Church website referrals to locate other independent sources.

On their webpage, “mormonchurch.org,” the church states plural wives “was not mandatory and not required for salvation[.]”<sup>323</sup> This is both true (artfully using the term “salvation”) and false. It is true that plural wives are not necessary for salvation according to LDS Mormonism. But, then again, neither is faith in Christ, repentance, baptism or a good life. All are “saved” in Mormon theology, other than sons of Perdition.<sup>324</sup> Therefore, this LDS Church

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*Art of Battling Giants*, Little, Brown and Company, (New York, 2013), p. 204. “And when the law is applied in the absence of legitimacy, it does not produce obedience. It produces the opposite. It leads to backlash.” *Id.*, at p. 222. Often it is the most reluctant who are drawn into battle with the powers wrongly seeking to control what is not their right to even influence, much less dictate, like the conscience of a man. Religion in particular is ill fitted to do more than give advice, letting men and women govern themselves.

<sup>317</sup> We await LDS “Jesuits” still. Apparently significant damage must be done first to LDS Mormonism, as with Catholicism, before the lessons of history can be learned anew. Sad experience will teach when nothing else will.

<sup>318</sup> The Counter-Reformation was Pope Paul III’s effort to reform the church and deal with corrupt bishops, indulgences and financial abuses. Strengthening the Members Committee presently attempts to “reform” only targeted dissidents by compelling them to retract, obey or be cast away.

<sup>319</sup> It doesn’t matter if the false narrative misstates history or merely gives an incomplete account. The effect is the same. The institution breaks the trust of its followers, and cannot be repaired.

<sup>320</sup> This was the term LDS Church Historian Marlin Jensen used in his discussion at Utah State University. The Jensen interview is described in footnote 13, *supra*. The “search engine optimization” subject is discussed in the blog entry: [mormon-chronicles.blogspot.com/2011/08/lds-church-and-search-engine.html](http://mormon-chronicles.blogspot.com/2011/08/lds-church-and-search-engine.html).

<sup>321</sup> Additionally the church employs a form of on-line “astro-turf” by having paid employees or volunteer missionaries post to discussion groups and blogs to present the church’s position or direct discussions to be favorable by posting more sympathetic contributions.

<sup>322</sup> The bureaucracy of the Church Office Building (“COB”) has a large paid staff whose livelihoods are dependent upon such ill-advised experimentation. A former COB employee, Daymon Smith, wrote an amusing account of his tenure in this costly, inefficient and foolish system (*The Book of Mammon: A Book About A Book About the Corporation That Owns The Mormons*, CreateSpace Publisher, (2010)). It was written as a fictional account in order to avoid a violation of the “non-disclosure agreement” required of COB employees.

<sup>323</sup> See the LDS Church owned website [www.mormonchurch.org/mormon-beliefs/mormon-polygamy](http://www.mormonchurch.org/mormon-beliefs/mormon-polygamy).

<sup>324</sup> See, e.g., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, “Salvation,” p. 1256; [mormon.org/beliefs/plan-of-salvation](http://mormon.org/beliefs/plan-of-salvation) has this explanation: “IMMORTALITY—ONE OF GOD’S GREATEST GIFTS: If you could have one wish, what would it be? Most of us would probably say we want to live forever. That’s exactly what God gave to each of us when He sent His son, Jesus Christ, to earth to die for us and to atone for our sins. It’s called resurrection and everyone born on earth, even wicked people, will receive this gift of immortality (1 Corinthians 15:22). On the third day after His Crucifixion, Jesus Christ became the first person to be resurrected. His spirit was

on-line assertion is true enough. But the LDS Church once claimed, as a matter of doctrine, plural wives was an absolute requirement for exaltation.<sup>325</sup> A reader lacking familiarity with LDS vocabulary will get the wrong impression. To those who are familiar with the vocabulary, this appears to be purposeful in some church announcements.<sup>326</sup>

Multiple wives doctrine was so secretive during Joseph Smith's life that his widow could deny it was actually practiced.<sup>327</sup> It was not until 1852 that the LDS Church publicly advocated belief in this form of marriage.<sup>328</sup> The announcement caused national outrage, with Abraham Lincoln's upstart Republican Party denounced it as one of the "twin relics of barbarism," the other being slavery.<sup>329</sup> Beginning with the Morrill Act signed by President Lincoln in 1862, the full weight of national ire was brought to bear against the LDS Church. The dispute lasted three decades before the church surrendered. The final victory was achieved through the draconian measures imposed on the institution by the Edmunds-Tucker Act. The act dis-incorporated the

LDS Church and the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, giving their assets to the public schools of the territory. It mandated an oath denouncing polygamy to be taken before any person could vote, sit on a jury, or serve as a public official. It removed local judges (who were LDS) and replaced them with federally appointed judges (certain to be anti-polygamy). The act rearranged family law by requiring marriage licenses, disinheriting illegitimate children, and abrogating the spousal privilege that prevented wives from testifying against their husbands in polygamy prosecution cases.

Although the LDS Church fought these laws through appeals to the US Supreme Court, they lost the fight. Faced with the dire prospect of remaining an outlaw organization, the church relented. The struggle and surrender inform LDS Church conduct in ways that remain part of the institution's psyche.<sup>330</sup>

We begin the story five years after Joseph Smith's death, when the doctrine of taking plural wives was first made public.<sup>331</sup> Wisely, Joseph deliberately limited the practice and kept it secret.<sup>332</sup> Personally, I believe plural wives should never have been publicly

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reunited with His glorified, perfected body and He could no longer die. When Christ's friends went to visit His tomb, angels said, 'He is not here: for he is risen, as he said' (Matthew 28:6). 'WILL I GO TO HEAVEN?' Yes! God will judge all men fairly and reward them appropriately with a place within His kingdom."

<sup>325</sup> Exaltation means to become "like God" and inherit Celestial glory. See, e.g., D&C 76, D&C 132 and *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, "Exaltation," p. 479.

<sup>326</sup> LDS Mormonism has employed evasive language throughout its history of public statements. That is too broad a topic to be addressed here. Language distinctions like "Celestial Marriage" allowed the church for years to deny the practice of "polygamy" for example. A series of recent press releases and editorials about church disciplinary councils likewise seeks to distance the hierarchy from responsibility for excommunications driven by the top of the LDS Church. The "truthfulness" of their announcements depends upon whether the necessary final act (which must be done locally) can be said to be outside of the hierarchy's control (even when the impetus for discipline originated and was sustained by constant pressure from above).

<sup>327</sup> "No such thing as polygamy, or spiritual wifery, was taught, publicly or privately, before my husband's death, that I have now, or ever had any knowledge of ... He had no other wife but me; nor did he to my knowledge ever have." (*History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 3, pp. 355-56.)

<sup>328</sup> The LDS canon of scripture added *Doctrine and Covenants* Section 132 (allowing plural wives) in 1876, and at the same time Section 101 (requiring only one wife) was deleted from their scripture. Section stated, in part: "we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband."

<sup>329</sup> The Republican platform adopted in Philadelphia in 1856 included this language: "It is the duty of Congress to prohibit in the territories those twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery."

<sup>330</sup> For a discussion about law and social change, see Scott L. Cummings, *Empirical Studies of Law and Social Change: What is the Field? What are the Questions*, Wisconsin Law Review, 2013:171. In the article he discusses the whole approach of litigation as a shortcut tool to achieve societal change rather than through slower political processes. In the case of LDS Mormonism, both political will and litigation united to achieve change within the church.

<sup>331</sup> Dealing with this subject during Joseph Smith's lifetime is too complicated and adds too much to the discussion. From Fanny Alger in the early 1830's to John C. Bennett's activities in Nauvoo, the history is too great to deal with cursorily. The three volume series by Brian C. Hales is the most recent and extensive effort to preserve the events. (*Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Volume 1: History, Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Volume 2: History and Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Volume 3: Theology* are published by Greg Kofford Books.)

<sup>332</sup> Young explained: "'But were you not persecuted for teaching that odious doctrine called polygamy?' No. We were planted in these valleys before it was publicly made known to the people. Only a few of Joseph Smith's intimate friends knew it previous to its being published to the world, which was several years after his death." *The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Volume 4, p. 2044 (hereafter "CDBY 4:2044"), Smith-Pettit, (Salt Lake, 2009). "When we left Nauvoo did they drive us for polygamy? No. It was not publicly known of." CDBY 4:2259.

adopted<sup>333</sup> and preached by the LDS Church, and was never essential to “exaltation.” Much of the content when preaching it publicly was based on advice Brigham Young received from a US Senator. To win protection under the First Amendment, it was necessary to portray plural wives as essential to the religion, which it was not. But it was portrayed as salvific as part of a strategy to win in the courts. When the LDS Church lost the fight, they were faced with the conundrum of undoing an oversold doctrine. However, this paper does not deal with those questions.<sup>334</sup>

President Brigham Young asserted the practice was constitutionally protected if it was a fundamental part of the Latter-day Saint religion. When he presided, Brigham Young, made plural wives essential to the church.<sup>335</sup> He was encouraged in this view by an unnamed US

Senator. He explained it was protected by:

...the sacred liberty which the Constitution of our country guarantees unto us... The world have known, long ago, even in brother Joseph’s days, that he had more wives than one. One of the senators in Congress knew it very well. Did he oppose it? No, but he has been our friend all the day long, especially upon that subject. He said pointedly to his friends, “If the United States do not adopt that very method—let them continue as they are now—pursue the precise course they are now pursuing, and it will come to this—that their generations will not live until they are 30 years old. They are going to destruction; disease is spreading so fast among the inhabitants of the United States, that they are born rotten with it, and in a few years they are gone.” Said he, “Joseph has introduced the best plan for restoring and establishing strength and long life among men, of any man on earth; and the Mormons are a very good and virtuous people.”

Many others are of the same mind, they are not ignorant of what we are doing in our social capacity. They have cried out, “Proclaim it.” But it would not do, a few years ago; everything must come in its time, and there is a time to all things. I am now ready to proclaim it.<sup>336</sup>

The unidentified Senator was likely Steven A. Douglas, who had been elected to the Senate in 1846.<sup>337</sup> Mormon leaders defended the right to practice plural marriage as constitutional,<sup>338</sup> and delivered sermons for three decades to define the practice as a fundamental part of their religious beliefs. Young continually asserted it was both “wholesome” and constitutionally protected.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Even in Joseph’s day the full meaning and practical mechanics of sealing together families to effect salvation was elusive. The doctrinal basis did not roll out in a single revelation, but began perhaps as early as 1828 and continued periodically thereafter. Section 132 is an amalgamation, consisting of perhaps five or more different revelations spanning 1828 to 1843. Even with Section 132, there are questions and mechanics, which are not clarified by what we received from Joseph Smith.

<sup>334</sup> Fundamentalist Mormons have more faithfully preserved observance of this faulty practice and therefore claim to be of superior purity than LDS Mormonism. However, I believe them to only be perpetuating an LDS mistake.

<sup>335</sup> Brigham Young’s latest biographer writes: “Young also connected plural marriage with exaltation into the celestial kingdom.” John G. Turner, *Brigham Young, Pioneer Prophet*, p. 205, Harvard University (Cambridge, 2012).

<sup>336</sup> CDBY 1:582.

<sup>337</sup> Steven A. Douglas had a long association with LDS Mormonism, beginning in Illinois. He was among the delegation sent by Governor Ford to negotiate the departure from Nauvoo. The assignment was to persuade the Mormons to leave the state quickly and peacefully. See *Brigham Young—Pioneer Prophet*, supra, at p. 125.

<sup>338</sup> Three years later, while Congress was considering a resolution against polygamy, Young added an additional constitutional restraint on outlawing the practice: Such legislation would be ex post facto, and therefore invalid: “True we have more wives than one, and what of that? They have their scores of thousands of prostitutes, we have none. But polygamy they are unconstitutionally striving to prevent: when they will accomplish their object is not for me to say. They have already presented a resolution in Congress that no man, in any of the Territories of the United States, shall be allowed to have more than one wife, under penalty not exceeding five years imprisonment, and five hundred dollars fine. ...the Constitution of the United States forbids making an ex post facto law. The presenting of the resolution alluded to shows their feelings, they wish the Constitution out of existence, and there is no question but that they will get rid of it as quickly as they can, and that would be by ex post facto law, which the Constitution of the United States strictly forbids. ...If we introduce the practice of polygamy it is not their prerogative to meddle with it; ...it is not their prerogative to meddle with these affairs, for in so doing they would violate the Constitution.” *CWBY* 2:1160-61.

<sup>339</sup> “In all the revelations God has given it does not infringe in the least upon the laws of our land, and when he reveals to Joseph Smith it is the privilege of a man to raise up posterity to the name of God, that a holy nation may rise and a royal priesthood a mighty kingdom may spring up before him, where is the constitutional laws against it? They are not to be found. It is just as wholesome a doctrine as any other wholesome doctrine promulgated by any Christians sect in this Government, and the constitution is bound to protect us.” *CWBY* 3:1883.



Orson Pratt first announced why the church was confident of their right to engage in the practice. As the talk began, he declared:

I think, if I am not mistaken, that the constitution gives the privilege to all the inhabitants of this country, of the free exercise of their religious notions, and the freedom of their faith, and the practice of it. Then, if it can be proven to a demonstration, that the Latter-day Saints have actually embraced, as a part and portion of their religion, the doctrine of plurality of wives, it is constitutional. And should there ever be laws enacted by this government to restrict them from the free exercise of this part of their religion, such laws must be unconstitutional.<sup>340</sup>

The preceding month President Brigham Young made a similar declaration; “There is not a single constitution of any single state, much less the constitution of the Federal Government, that hinders a man from having two wives; and I defy all the lawyers of the United States to prove the contrary.”<sup>341</sup>

President Young frequently declared this practice was essential. He claimed his sermons were “as good Scripture as is couched in this Bible.”<sup>342</sup> Taking him at his word, the following quotes show what the LDS Church believed during its second phase<sup>343</sup> following Joseph Smith’s death.

“Now if any of you will deny the plurality of wives, and continue to do so, I promise that you will be damned,”<sup>344</sup>

“The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy.”<sup>345</sup>

Young preached it was monogamy that was a great evil, imposed by the Romans who, you will recall, were responsible for killing Peter and Paul. Romans were a band of robbers who imposed monogamy to further the Empire’s lust for prostitution. But polygamy was, according to Young, the only religion practiced in heaven.<sup>346</sup>

This Roman imposed monogamy had at its foundation the objective of producing an excess of unmarried women. According to Young this was responsible for prostitution and whoredom throughout the Christian world.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> *Journal of Discourses*, Volume 1, p. 54, (hereafter “JD 1:54).

<sup>341</sup> CDBY 1:552.

<sup>342</sup> JD 9:312. At another time Pres. Young declared: “I am here to answer. I shall be on hand to answer when I am called upon, for all the counsel and for all the instruction that I have given to this people. If there is an Elder here, or any member of this Church, called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who can bring up the first idea, the first sentence that I have delivered to the people as counsel that is wrong, I really wish they would do it; but they cannot do it, for the simple reason that I have never given counsel that is wrong; this is the reason.” JD 16:161.

<sup>343</sup> I have previously broken LDS Church history into four phases, the second phase beginning at Joseph Smith’s death and lasting until polygamy was abandoned. My position is set out in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, Mill Creek Press, (Salt Lake City, 2012). The transition between these phases was not clean. The Manifesto ostensibly ending plural wives was issued in 1890, but letter issued a second “manifesto” from Pres. Joseph F. Smith in 1904. During the fourteen-year interim, plural marriages continued to be performed by church leaders in quiet. (See, *LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904*, D. Michael Quinn, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Spring 1985, pp. 9-105.)

<sup>344</sup> JD 3:266.

<sup>345</sup> JD 11: 269. The LDS Church today denies this was ever a teaching: “Polygamy was openly practiced during the time of Brigham Young. It was not mandatory and not required for salvation, unlike the teachings of some modern offshoots.” See [www.mormonchurch.org/mormon-beliefs/mormon-polygamy](http://www.mormonchurch.org/mormon-beliefs/mormon-polygamy).

<sup>346</sup> “Monogamy, or restrictions by law to one wife, is no part of the economy of heaven among men. Such a system was commenced by the founders of the Roman empire....Rome became the mistress of the world, and introduced this order of monogamy wherever her sway was acknowledged. Thus this monogamic order of marriage, so esteemed by modern Christians as a holy sacrament and divine institution, is nothing but a system established by a set of robbers.... Why do we believe in and practice polygamy? Because the Lord introduced it to his servants in a revelation given to Joseph Smith, and the Lord’s servants have always practiced it. “And is that religion popular in heaven?” it is the only popular religion there,...” CWBY 4:2031.

<sup>347</sup> “Since the founding of the Roman empire monogamy has prevailed more extensively than in times previous to that. The founders of that ancient empire were robbers and women stealers, and made laws favoring monogamy in consequence of the scarcity of women among them, and hence this monogamic system which now prevails throughout Christendom, and which had been so fruitful a source of prostitution and whoredom throughout all the Christian monogamic cities of the Old and New World, until rottenness and decay are at the root of their institutions both national and religious.” (JD 11:128.) In another talk Young declared:

Young warned women they risked servitude in eternity if they objected to their husband taking plural wives in this life. They would serve those who live polygamy in this life and will be elevated into godhood in the afterlife.<sup>348</sup>

Even speaking against plural wives could imperil your eternal reward: “those who spoke against a Plurality of wives & in there [sic] feelings will not receive it will never inherit the Celestial Kingdom of God, for it has always been practiced there and always will be.”<sup>349</sup>

Young saw God’s plural wives implied in Isaiah’s description of the Lord: “The Scripture says that he, the Lord, came walking in the Temple, with his train;<sup>350</sup> I do not know who they were, unless his wives and children;...”<sup>351</sup>

This was as “Christian” a doctrine as Martin Luther’s Reformation. According to Young, Martin Luther preached it as Biblical and true.<sup>352</sup> Polygamy, according to Young, should unite all who believe the Bible. In particular, all who oppose Rome should welcome its return.

For Mormonism, it was an essential part of the “royal priesthood” advocated by Young: “the Lord instituted Polygamy to raise up a royal Priesthood a kingdom of Priest[s]. It is an institution of heaven.”<sup>353</sup> Plurality of wives was obligatory, not optional. If you rejected it, you were damned.<sup>354</sup>

Young absolutely rejected the idea of surrendering to government pressure. Doing so would be surrender to the devil. Polygamy was God’s command and could not be disobeyed.<sup>355</sup>

“Just ask yourselves, historians, when was monogamy introduced on to the face of the earth? When those buccaneers, who settled on the peninsula where Rome now stands, could not steal women enough to have two or three apiece, they passed a law that a man should have but one woman. And this started monogamy and the downfall of the plurality system. In the days of Jesus, Rome, having dominion over Jerusalem, they carried out the doctrine more or less. This was the rise, start and foundation of the doctrine of monogamy; and never till then was there a law passed, that we have any knowledge of, that a man should have but one wife.” (CWB 5:2582.)

<sup>348</sup> “But if the woman is determined to not enter into plural marriage, that woman, when she comes forth, will have the privilege of living in single blessedness through all eternity. Now sisters, do not say, ‘I do not want a husband when I get up in the resurrection.’ You do not know what you will want. If, in the resurrection, you really want to be single and alone and live forever and ever and be made servants, while others receive the higher order of intelligence, and are bringing worlds into existence, you can have the privilege. They who will be exalted cannot perform all the labor, they must have servants, and you can be servants to them.” (JD 16:166.) The idea of servitude in eternity remains a Mormon expectation. Joseph Fielding Smith said in the April, 1968 General Conference: “[T]he Lord is going to make a great segregation after the resurrection of mankind, and many—in fact, the greater part of the inhabitants of this earth—will not be called the sons and daughters of God, but they will go into the next world to be servants.” (Conference Report, April 1968, p. 11.)

<sup>349</sup> CWB 5:2671, all as in original.

<sup>350</sup> Isaiah 6: 1: “...I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.”

<sup>351</sup> JD 13:309.

<sup>352</sup> “The Protestant reformers believed the doctrine of polygamy. Philip, Landgrave of Hess, one of the principal lords and princes of Germany, wrote to the great reformer Martin Luther and his associate reformers, anxiously imploring them to grant unto him the privilege of marrying a second wife, while his first wife, the princess, was yet living. He urged that the practice was in accordance with the Bible, and not prohibited under the Christian dispensation. Upon the reception of this letter, Luther, who had denounced the Romish church for prohibiting the marriage of priests, and who favored polygamy, met in council with the principal Reformers to consult upon the letter which had been received from the Landgrave. They wrote him a lengthy letter in reply, approving this taking a second wife[.]” (CWB 4:2281-82; citing to *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*, a book written by Jacques Benigne Bossuet, and printed by Richard Coyne Publisher to the Royal College of St. Patrick (Dublin, 1836).)

<sup>353</sup> CDB 4: 2290.

<sup>354</sup> “I will now give you, in short, my opinion with regard to plural marriage. It is of God, and He has revealed it from the Heavens and made it obligatory upon the Saints in the last days. ...It is obligatory upon me to tell them the truth, to teach them correct doctrine, and leave them to take their choice, whether they receive it and live by it, and be saved, or reject it and be damned.” (CDB 4: 2313.)

<sup>355</sup> “We are told that if we would give up polygamy—which we know to be a doctrine revealed from heaven and it is God and the world for it—but suppose this Church should give up this holy order of marriage, then would the devil, and all who are in league with him against the cause of God, rejoice that they had prevailed upon the Saints to refuse to obey one of the revelations and commandments of God to them.” (CDB 4: 2333-34.)

Only God's law could save. Ideals governed, and anything less than the ideal would lead to damnation.

Young called out the hypocrisy of the society condemning the Saints. LDS women were wives and mothers. Congress was against that, but tolerated adultery and illegitimacy. Young replied, "I would say to Congress that if they will pass a law, making it death for any man to hold illicit intercourse with any woman but his lawful wife, we would meet them half way on that ground."<sup>356</sup> He went on to discuss Queen Victoria's approval of a bigamist son-in-law.<sup>357</sup> It was the inconsistency of society's reaction, a generation of adulterers who wanted to make polygamy illegal, that Brigham Young rightly condemned.<sup>358</sup>

This doctrine was essential for the faithful to practice. Mormonism held forth the promise man could become like God. But becoming gods in the afterlife demanded polygamy here and now. The only men who would qualify as "sons of God" were those whose quiver was filled with children<sup>359</sup> produced by multiple women bearing offspring for him.<sup>360</sup>

Brigham Young died August 29, 1877 and was succeeded by John Taylor. When Taylor took over the LDS Church, history was more the product of Young than Joseph Smith. Smith led the church for 14 years, Young for 33. The doctrine of plural wives had become public and essential under Young. Whatever price had to be paid,<sup>361</sup> the doctrine had been carved in stone as the necessary ideal.

As the president of the church, Taylor was just as emphatic about the necessity of plural wives to qualify for exaltation. He had a full quiver from nine wives,<sup>362</sup> who bore him thirty-four children. Taylor preached it was apostasy to oppose polygamy.<sup>363</sup>

Facing Federal prosecution under anti-polygamy legislation, Taylor spent years of his presidency in hiding. He wrote a revelation on

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<sup>356</sup> *CWBY* 4: 2353.

<sup>357</sup> "A recent case occurred in Europe which illustrates this point. Prince Christian of Holstein, who has recently married one of the daughters of Victoria, Queen of England, has what is termed a morganatic wife in Germany, by whom he has several children, yet the first lady in Europe is not shocked by an alliance of this kind, no more than is the first society of this country by similar occurrences in the cities east. Men may do as they please with women, have numerous children by them, and take as many liberties with them as if they were wives, and yet not call them wives, and modern society smiles upon them. But whenever a man applies the sacred name of wife to the mother of his children, if he happen to have more than one, then the world professes to be wonderfully shocked at the idea. What inconsistency!" (*Id.*, p. 2353-54.)

<sup>358</sup> Congress has distinguished itself by its inability to live up to standards it imposes on others, both in Brigham Young's day and ours.

<sup>359</sup> "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." Psalms 127: 3-5.

<sup>360</sup> "I wish here to say to the Elders of Israel, and to all the members of this Church and kingdom, that it is in the hearts of many of them to wish that the doctrine of polygamy was not taught and practiced by us. It may be hard for many, and especially for the ladies, yet it is no harder for them than it is for the gentlemen. It is the word of the Lord, and I wish to say to you, and all the world, that if you desire with all your hearts to obtain the blessings which Abraham obtained, you will be polygamists at lest [sic] in your faith, or you will come short of enjoying the salvation and glory which Abraham has obtained. This is as true as that God lives. You who wish that there were no such thing in existence, if you have in your hearts to say: 'We will pass along in the Church without obeying or submitting to it in our faith or believing this order, because, for aught that we know, this community may be broken up yet, and we may have lucrative offices offered to us; we will not, therefore, be polygamists lest we should fain obtaining some earthly honor, character and office, etc,' —the man that has that in his heart, and will continue to persist in pursuing that policy, will come short of dwelling in the presence of the Father and the Son, in celestial glory. The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. Others attain unto a glory and may even be permitted to come into the presence of the Father and the Son; but they cannot reign as kings in glory, because they had blessings offered unto them, and they refused to accept them." *CWBY* 4:2357.

<sup>361</sup> As Turner put it: "The church had managed to carve out a measure of sympathy from other Americans because of its forced expulsion from Illinois, but the open practice of polygamy made the narrative of the 'suffering Saints' viable no longer." *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet*, supra, p. 205.

<sup>362</sup> His wives included Leonora Cannon, Elizabeth Kaighin, Jane Ballantyne, Mary Ann Oakley, Sophia Whitaker, Harriet Whitaker, Margaret Young, and Josephine Elizabeth Roueche.

<sup>363</sup> "Where did this commandment come from in relation to polygamy? It also came from God...When this commandment was given, it was so far religious, and so far binding upon the Elders of this Church that it was told them if they were not prepared to enter into it, and to stem the torrent of opposition that would come in consequence of it, the keys of the kingdom would be taken from them. When I see any of our people, men or women, opposing a principle of this kind, I have years ago set them down as on the high road to apostasy, and I do today; I consider them apostates, and not interested in this Church and kingdom." *JD* 11:221.

September 27, 1886 confirming to his mind the necessity of complying with the practice of plural wives. The revelation does not mention “plural wives” but refers instead to “the New and Everlasting Covenant” which he and Mormon fundamentalists, regard necessarily to include plural wives.<sup>364</sup> He died in exile, firmly defending the practice, and preaching its continuation.

Taylor was succeeded by Wilford Woodruff, likewise a full-quivered polygamist, having seven wives (or more)<sup>365</sup> and fathering thirty-three children. He was equally adamant about the indispensable practice of plural wives. Mormons would practice it “come life or come death” he declared.<sup>366</sup>

Like Taylor before him, Woodruff wrote a revelation confirming polygamy was not to be abandoned<sup>367</sup> The document was read to the Twelve on December 19, 1889 and Apostle Abraham H. Cannon recorded: “The word of the Lord was for us not to yield one particle of that which He had revealed and established.”<sup>368</sup> First Presidency Secretary John Nuttall recorded in his diary: “As I wrote at his dictation, I felt better all the time and when I completed I felt as light and joyous as it is possible to feel, for I was satisfied that Prest. Woodruff had received the word of the Lord.”<sup>369</sup>

Despite heaven urging them to continue, both society and the US Government were pulling in the opposite direction. Legal setbacks continued to accumulate. *Reynolds v. United States*<sup>370</sup> upheld the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act. The polygamist church leadership was guilty of a federal crime. *Davis v. Beason*<sup>371</sup> upheld the Idaho test oath designed to disqualify Mormons from jury duty and public office. *The Late Corporation of the Mormon Church v. United States*<sup>372</sup> upheld Federal seizure of LDS Church property. It was expected the government would take possession of all LDS Temples.

When *The Late Corporation of the Mormon Church* decision was announced on May 19, 1890, a member of the Twelve Apostles recorded the internal reaction:

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<sup>364</sup> The text is as follows: “My son John: You have asked me concerning the New and Everlasting Covenant, and how far it is binding upon my people. Thus saith the Lord: All commandments that I give must be obeyed by those calling themselves by my name unless they are revoked by me or by my authority and how can I revoke an everlasting covenant. For I the Lord and everlasting and my covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with; but they stand forever. Have I not given my word in great plainness on this subject? Yet have not great numbers of my people been negligent in the observance of my law and the keeping of my commandment, and yet have I borne with them these many years and this because of their weakness because of the perilous times. And furthermore, it is more pleasing to me that men should use their free agency in regard to these matters. Nevertheless I the Lord do not change and my word and my covenants and my laws do not. And as I have heretofore said by my servant Joseph all those who would enter into my glory must and shall obey my law. And have I not commanded men that if they were Abraham’s seed and would enter into my glory they must do the works of Abraham. I have not revoked this law nor will I for it is everlasting and those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof, even so Amen.” (A photocopy of the handwritten document is in possession of this author.)

<sup>365</sup> Phoebe Whittemore Carter, Mary Ann Jackson, Mary Meek Giles Webster, Emma Smoot Smith, Sarah Elinore Brown, Sarah Delight Stocking and Eudora Young Dunford. Post-Manifesto marriages were possible, but concealed, and therefore cannot be adequately confirmed from available records. Diaries make cryptic and ambiguous references I am not willing to use as clear enough proof to decide the matter.

<sup>366</sup> “If we were to do away with polygamy, it would only be one feather in the bird, one ordinance in the Church and kingdom. Do away with that, then we must do away with prophets and Apostles, with revelation and the gifts and graces of the Gospel, and finally give up our religion altogether and turn sectarians and do as the world does, then all would be right. We just can’t do that, for God has commanded us to build up His kingdom and to bear our testimony to the nations of the earth, and we are going to do it, come life or come death. He has told us to do thus, and we shall obey Him in days to come as we have in days past.” *JD* 13:165-66.

<sup>367</sup> In the November 24, 1899 revelation among other things Woodruff wrote: “If the Saints will hearken unto my voice, and the counsel of my Servants, the wicked shall not prevail. Let my servants, who officiate as your Counselors before the courts, make their pleadings as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit, without any further pledges from the Priesthood, and they shall be justified.” For a complete transcript, see *In the President’s Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879-1892*, pp. 395-96, Edited by Jedediah S. Rogers, Signature Books (Salt Lake City, 2007).

<sup>368</sup> *Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889-1895*, p. 38, Edward Leo Lyman, editor, Signature Books (Salt Lake; 2010).

<sup>369</sup> *In the President’s Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879-1892*, p. 393, Edited by Jedediah S. Rogers, Signature Books (Salt Lake City, 2007).

<sup>370</sup> 98 US 145 (1878).

<sup>371</sup> 133 US 333 (1890). This was a particularly clear loss for the LDS Church. In a 9-0 decision the opinion stated, “Few crimes are more pernicious to the best interests of society, and receive more general or more deserved punishment.”

<sup>372</sup> 136 US 1(1890).

The U.S. Supreme Court today rendered one of the most important decisions of its existence. By the provisions of the Edmunds Tucker act the property of the Church was ordered escheated for the use of the schools. In pursuance of this provision some \$750,000 worth of church property was seized and placed in the hands of a receiver. ...Justice Bradley read the decision in which the law is upheld, and the property is confiscated. The principal ground for this unjust ruling is that the Church upholds polygamy, and doubtless uses this means for the promotion of its doctrine.<sup>373</sup>

Events unfolded quickly once the church lost its property. US Secretary of State, James G. Blaine prepared a document June 12<sup>th</sup> for church leaders to sign renouncing plural marriage. In the only existing document referring to a pre-Manifesto policy change (prepared two months prior to the Manifesto), Apostle Abraham H. Cannon's diary records on July 10<sup>th</sup>: "The resolution of the First Presidency of June 30/90 in regard to plural marriages was read. It is to the effect that none shall be permitted to occur even in Mexico unless the contracting parties, or at least the female, has resolved to remain in that country."<sup>374</sup>

The church's worst fears were confirmed August 26<sup>th</sup> when the former Federal receiver, Frank Dyer related the US would soon attempt "to confiscate the Logan, Manti and St. George temples on the grounds that they are not used for public worship."<sup>375</sup>

On September 24<sup>th</sup> Wilford Woodruff issued the press release now called the "Manifesto" in which he denied plural marriages were taking place. The LDS Church would continue to perform plural marriages until a second "Manifesto" issued by President Joseph F. Smith in 1904.<sup>376</sup> Plural marriage began in the LDS Church in secret. It remained secret after the 1890 Manifesto, ultimately dying out sometime after 1904. It is now denounced<sup>377</sup> and those who practice it are excommunicated.

Finally, the LDS Church was motivated by popular disapproval and federal legislation to abandon plural wives. In a sacrament meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, on April 2, 1891, President Woodruff defended the Manifesto by claiming he had been "inspired" by God to issue the document, but polygamy would yet be restored in the Church.<sup>378</sup>

Resistance to the popular will and federal legislation had proven impossible. The LDS Church would not have survived as a legal enterprise if their members could not vote, serve on juries, hold public office, and if their temples were taken, their property escheated to the government, and their officials jailed. If the church wanted to remain a corporate entity, possess property, and practice their religion, there was no other choice. Polygamy had to go. The church chose to keep its corporate status and property. It wanted to continue as it had developed. Likewise, today the LDS Church wants to retain its tax preference, and keep its considerable property. A recent acquisition of property in Florida resulted in one newspaper headline: "*Mormon Church purchases 2% of the state of Florida for half a billion dollars.*"<sup>379</sup>

The likelihood of the LDS Church ever becoming embroiled in a similar battle of wills with the US government is improbable. The church will always find some way to bridge the gulf between its teachings and governmental ire. It has much more at stake today than the estimated \$750,000 taken at the time of Edmunds-Tucker. It would lose more than that perhaps weekly if its tax-exempt status were now revoked. The LDS Church must be more nimble regarding public opinion than ever before because today it has more at risk than ever before.<sup>380</sup>

<sup>373</sup> *Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889-1895*, supra, p. 95.

<sup>374</sup> *Id.*, p. 104.

<sup>375</sup> *Id.*, p. 124.

<sup>376</sup> This topic has been discussed by others including D. Michael Quinn in *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, Signature Books, (Salt Lake City, 1997), Richard Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, Signature Books, (Salt Lake City, 1989), and Drew Briney, *Apostles on Trial: Examining the Membership Trials of Apostles Taylor and Crowley*, Hindsight Publications, (Salt Lake, 2012), among many others.

<sup>377</sup> "Today, the practice of polygamy is strictly prohibited in the Church, as it has been for over a century." (LDS.org website, mormonnewsroom.org in the article titled "Polygamy.")

<sup>378</sup> "In the name of Jesus Christ I say that God has not forsaken the Presidency or Twelve. He inspired me to issue the manifesto and if he had not done so I should never have taken that course even though all ordinances for the living and the dead had ceased, and our temples had fallen into the hands of our enemies. The principle of plural marriage will yet be restored to this Church, but how or when I cannot say. God will hold this nation responsible for the wrongs done this people." *Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889-1895*, supra, p. 196.

<sup>379</sup> See, Home/USA/rt.com article dated November 8, 2013.

<sup>380</sup> NBC News estimated the LDS Church earns \$7 billion annually from tithing and owns \$35 billion in temples and meeting houses. *Mormon Church Earns 7 Billion A Year From Tithing Analysis Indicates*, Peter Henderson, NBC News.com, August 13, 2012. In

Another abandoned LDS doctrine involves the status of black Africans. While welcomed as members, blacks were denied ordination. Brigham Young propounded,<sup>381</sup> and other leaders echoed, teachings relegating black Africans to doctrinally inferior status.

Slavery in America began centuries before the United States was a nation. From the late 1400's African slaves<sup>382</sup> were transported to the Americas. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century there had been five times as many Africans in the Americas than Europeans. African slavery was a fact of life in the English colonies before the American Revolution. Once the US was independent, it had an economic infrastructure wherein African slavery was a fact of life. Before considering or condemning teachings of the LDS Church, the larger social, legal and economic setting should be remembered. Context is everything. Allowing black membership, integrated congregations, and opposition to slavery shows early Mormonism was more racially tolerant than the nation at large.

In 1856 the Republican Party was formed, in part to oppose the spread of slavery into the western territories acquired through the Mexican-American war that ended in 1846.<sup>383</sup> In 1857, the US Supreme Court issued the *Dred Scott* decision.<sup>384</sup> The ruling established that blacks free or slave, have no citizenship rights and therefore no standing to sue in federal courts.

On January 16, 1852, Young explained to the Utah Territorial Legislature Africans were the “seed of Cain” and could not hold priesthood. He described them as black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable, wild, and unintelligent members of the human family. “[A]ny man having one drop of the seed of [Cain] ... in him cannot hold the priesthood and if no other Prophet ever spake it before I will say it now in the name of Jesus Christ I know it is true and others know it.”<sup>385</sup>

The curse was not just to protect the right to priesthood; it was also to prevent intermarriage. Said Young, “If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot. This will always be so.”<sup>386</sup>

The nation fought the Civil War to resolve the national debate on slavery. In 1863 Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation (arguably an illegal and unconstitutional<sup>387</sup> decree) to begin the process. The end of slavery came by adoption of the

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addition to church property, the business holdings include the 14<sup>th</sup> largest radio chain in the US (Bonneville International), 228,000 acres in Nebraska, 51,600 acres in Oklahoma, 312,000 acres in Florida (Farmland Reserve, Inc. with a dba Deseret Cattle and Citrus), properties in Hawaii including pineapple orchards and the Polynesian Cultural center (Hawaii Reserves, Inc.), the largest nut production in the US (AgReserves, Inc.), and the over \$2 billion City Creek Center in downtown Salt Lake City. Other retail/office and condominium development projects similar to City Creek are underway or planned for Philadelphia and Arizona. Newspaper Agency Corporation, Deseret Book, Zions Securities, Deseret Digital Media, Brigham Young University and divisions of the university in Hawaii and Idaho, as well as other investments managed by Deseret Management Corporation are all part of the church asset portfolio.

<sup>381</sup> There are certainly reasons to associate the ban on ordination to Joseph Smith, who was clearly against interracial marriage between whites and blacks. (See, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 269, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City). However, during his lifetime there were ordinations of black church members. These included Elijah Able and Walker Lewis. But Zebedee Coltrin, who ordained Elijah Able, later claimed Joseph Smith had Elijah cease exercising priesthood authority. Two scriptures through Joseph Smith also add to the conclusion the ban originated at the time of Joseph Smith: Moses 7: 22 and Abraham 1: 27.

<sup>382</sup> Slavery was not limited to the African race, but included Europeans and Native Americans, as well. However, that issue is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>383</sup> This resulted in a Democratic Party reaction to woo Mormon votes, and many southern Democrats opposed the anti-polygamy legislation. See *Brigham Young—Mormon Pioneer*, supra, p. 247. It did not last, however, and a few years later the national popularity of suppressing polygamy resulted in even the Democratic Party getting aboard. *Id.*, at p. 268.

<sup>384</sup> *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393.

<sup>385</sup> *JD* 7:290. He continued: “You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind .... Cain slew his brother. Cain might have been killed, and that would have put a termination to that line of human beings. This was not to be, and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin. Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race—that they should be the ‘servant of servants’; and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree.” (On the bright side, he did describe them as fellow members of the human family.)

<sup>386</sup> *JD* 10: 104.

<sup>387</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution prevented taking “property” (and slaves were regarded at the time as property) without “just compensation.” Lincoln relied upon a claim of wartime authority under the constitutional war powers given to the Commander-in-Chief to justify the Proclamation. Then post-war amendments ended any need for resolving the question of Lincoln’s

13<sup>th</sup>

Amendment in 1865.<sup>388</sup> To make the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment a restriction on State conduct, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was likewise adopted. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment reads, in relevant part:

No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

The post-Civil War constitutional amendments were only the beginning of the process to establish equality for former slaves and their descendants. Segregation in post-Civil War America was legal, having been approved by the Supreme Court.<sup>389</sup>

Although Brigham Young's comments about interracial marriage seem offensive in 2014, the United States had widespread laws making such marriages illegal. These were referred to as "Anti-Miscegenation" statutes. In 1948, California became the first state to strike down an anti-miscegenation statute.<sup>390</sup> The US Supreme Court did not decide the issue until 1967, making all State statutes against interracial marriages illegal.<sup>391</sup>

The Civil Rights movement, establishment of the NAACP,<sup>392</sup> Rosa Parks,<sup>393</sup> Martin Luther King<sup>394</sup> and the Civil Rights Acts<sup>395</sup> were all required to change the social status of the descendants of former slaves in America. Notwithstanding these events, racial disharmony remains a persistent source of continuing antagonism in the United States.

While the Civil Rights Movement was gaining momentum, LDS Church leaders remained committed to their racial teachings. Apostle Mark E. Peterson defended the church's position on race and priesthood in an address to BYU audience of Institute and Seminary teachers in 1954 at Brigham Young University. He said:

The reason that one would lose his blessings by marrying a negro is due to the restriction placed upon them. 'No person having the least particle of negro blood can hold the priesthood' (Brigham Young). It does not matter if they are one-sixth negro or one-hundred and sixteenth, the curse of no Priesthood is the same. If an individual who is entitled to the priesthood marries a negro, the Lord has decreed that only spirits who are not eligible for the priesthood will come to that marriage as children. To intermarry with a negro is to forfeit a "nation of priesthood holders."<sup>396</sup>

The question was so well settled that when LDS Church leader Bruce R. McConkie assembled an encyclopedic summary of Mormon beliefs titled *Mormon Doctrine*, he could state with authority the beliefs of the church. Under the entry "Negroes" he summarized:

The negroes are not equal with other races where the receipt of certain spiritual blessings are concerned, particularly the priesthood and the temple blessings that flow therefore, but this inequality is not of man's origin. It is the Lord's doing, is based on his eternal laws of justice, and grows out of the lack of spiritual valiance of those concerned in their first estate.<sup>397</sup>

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actual right to order slaves be freed.

<sup>388</sup> The Amendment reads, in relevant part: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

<sup>389</sup> *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

<sup>390</sup> *Perez v. Sharp*, 198 P.2d 17 (Cal 1948).

<sup>391</sup> *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967).

<sup>392</sup> Founded in 1909

<sup>393</sup> She refused to move to the back of a public transportation bus in Montgomery, Alabama on December 1, 1955 and was arrested for her refusal. Her act of defiance became a national symbol. Congress passed a resolution calling her "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of a freedom movement." (Public Law 106-26.)

<sup>394</sup> Martin Luther King became a national figure with the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and slain in 1968 at age 39.

<sup>395</sup> One adopted in 1964 banned discrimination in employment practice and public accommodations, followed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, then a second Civil Rights Act in 1968 that banned discrimination in housing.

<sup>396</sup> *Race Problems—As They Affect The Church*, copy available at [lds-mormon.com/racism.html](http://lds-mormon.com/racism.html).

<sup>397</sup> *Mormon Doctrine*, "Negroes", p. 527-28, Deseret Book (Salt Lake City, 1966). My copy was in the 12<sup>th</sup> printing in 1973.

However, clearly the legal trends were against discrimination. Institutional racial discrimination had been targeted by civil rights organizations for years. As would be expected, the LDS Church came to the attention of the NAACP, and efforts were made to negotiate for change. In 1963 the NAACP leadership attempted to meet with LDS Church leaders, but the church refused. A meeting took place two years later in 1965 when the LDS Church agreed to support civil rights legislation pending in the Utah legislature. They agreed to publish an editorial in the church-owned newspaper, the *Deseret News*. The church failed to keep the agreement. N. Eldon Tanner explained “We have decided to remain silent.”<sup>398</sup>

By March 1965, the NAACP took more public means to pressure the LDS Church. They organized an anti-discrimination march in Salt Lake City to protest church policies. The next year the NAACP issued a statement criticizing the church, complaining it “maintained a rigid and continuous segregation stand” and has made “no effort to counteract the widespread discriminatory practices in education, in housing, in employment, and other areas of life.”<sup>399</sup>

Although the institution was hesitating, its membership was increasingly willing to see more racial equality.<sup>400</sup> The culture was changing, and it began to exert pressure inside the LDS Church.<sup>401</sup> In addition, Brigham Young University offered a visible target for protests. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) was confronted with a protest by their track team. “After the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, black members of the track team approached their coach and expressed their desire not to compete against Brigham Young University in an upcoming meet. When the coach disregarded the athletes’ complaint, the athletes boycotted the meet.”<sup>402</sup> In 1969 members of the University of Wyoming football team intended to protest during a BYU football game by wearing black armbands. The protest was aborted when the university suspended the players, which in turn resulted in a lawsuit in Federal Court. One of the athletes testified, “they were protesting against racial policies” referring to “the Mormon Church.” Others likewise testified they intended to “protest the views of the Mormon Church.”<sup>403</sup>

In November 1969, Stanford University’s President Kenneth Pitzer suspended all athletic relations with BYU.<sup>404</sup> Legal pressure on this issue was reminiscent of earlier conflicts with the federal government.<sup>405</sup>

There were rumors the LDS Church faced a threat to remove its tax-exempt status. These rumors were denied by an LDS spokesman.<sup>406</sup> However, the issue of racial discrimination was before the US courts years prior to the LDS announcement of a

<sup>398</sup> See, Glen W. Davidson, *Mormon Missionaries and the Race Question*, *The Christian Century*, September 29, 1965, pp. 1183-86.

<sup>399</sup> *Deseret News*, May 3, 1966.

<sup>400</sup> Newell G. Bringham and Darron T. Smith, *Black and Mormon*, pp. 94-97, University of Illinois Press (Urbana, 2004).

<sup>401</sup> In this year’s Mormon History Association meeting there was a good deal of praise for the LDS Church’s recent essay on the history of blacks and the priesthood. (See Tad Walch, *LDS Blacks, Scholars Cheer Church’s Essay on Priesthood*, *Deseret News* June 8, 2014.) The collective relief from changing the position is palpable. Prior doctrinal teachings have been first reduced to “theories” and then condemned by “a crystal-clear disavowal of those theories.” Now LDS Mormons get to join ranks with others in decrying racism, with little regard for their history or their ancestor’s beliefs. BYU Professor Randy Bott was interviewed by the Washington Post and truthfully restated earlier teachings of the LDS Church: “Bott points to the Mormon holy text the Book of Abraham as suggesting that all of the descendants of Ham and Egyptus were thus black and barred from the priesthood. ...church leaders suggested that the ban on blacks resulted from consequences of the ‘conduct of spirits in the pre-mortal existence.’ As a result, many Mormons believed that blacks were less valiant in the pre-Earth life, or fence sitters in the war between God and Satan. ...‘God has always been discriminatory’ when it comes to whom he grants the authority of the priesthood, says Bott, the BYU theologian.” (Jason Horowitz, *The Genesis of a Church Stand on Race*, Washington Post, February 28, 2012.) The LDS Church responded less than a day later denouncing Bott: “Bott’s comments, the church, said, ‘absolutely do not represent the teachings and doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.’ It went on to say that ‘the church’s position is clear—we believe all people are God’s children and are equal in his eyes and in the church. We do not tolerate racism in any form.’” (Peggy Fletcher Stack, *Mormon Church Disputes BYU Prof’s Remarks About Blacks*, Salt Lake Tribune, February 29, 2012.)

<sup>402</sup> Gil Fried & Michael Hiller, *ADR in Youth and Intercollegiate Athletics*, *BYU Law Review*, pp. 631-32, Vol. 1977, Issue 3.

<sup>403</sup> See *Williams v. Eaton*, 468 F.2d 1079 (10<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1972).

<sup>404</sup> James J. Kilpatrick, *A Sturdy Discipline Serves Mormons Well*, December 11, 1969, *Evening Independent*.

<sup>405</sup> Outside the US there were legal challenges as well. In Costa Rica a lawsuit by a black lawyer sought to disenfranchise the church under the law of that country prohibiting racial discrimination by a church in its proselyting. The missionaries were using a “genealogical survey” as a technique to determine if the contact had African ancestry. (See Edward L. Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood*, *BYU Studies* 47, no. 2, (2008), p. 42.

<sup>406</sup> “It’s one thing to distort history, quite another to invent it. Kathy Erickson (Forum, March 11) claims that the federal government threatened The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with its tax-exempt status in 1978 because of the church’s position regarding blacks and the priesthood. We state categorically that the federal government made no such threat in 1978 or at any other time. The decision to extend the blessings of the priesthood to all worthy males had nothing to do with federal tax policy or



change in positions. Because of institutional opposition to interracial marriage, Bob Jones University only admitted black students if they were married. The IRS threatened to revoke their tax exemption in 1970. The university sued in 1971 and the US District Court granted an injunction against the IRS. The Fourth Circuit reversed for lack of jurisdiction, and the US Supreme Court affirmed. In 1975 the IRS notified the university their tax exemption was revoked. The university paid \$21 and sued for a refund in US District Court. The IRS counterclaimed for \$489,675.59 in back taxes. The case was pending in 1978 and decided by the District Court in December, six months after the LDS Church changed its policy.

The case ultimately decided by the US Supreme Court, allowed the IRS to revoke tax-exempt status because of racial discrimination.<sup>407</sup> A direct threat by the US Government would not have been unnecessary in the circumstances. At the time the case was pending in the US District Court, it came to the attention of law students at BYU, myself included. When the case was finally argued, Rex E. Lee, former law school Dean at BYU, was the US Solicitor General.<sup>408</sup> Lee undoubtedly was aware of the case and its implications for BYU and ultimately the LDS Church. Former BYU President Dallin H. Oaks was on the Utah Supreme Court when *Bob Jones University* was decided.

The threat of taxation can ultimately destroy any institution, including the LDS Church. Chief Justice John Marshall coined the truism: "The power to tax involves the power to destroy."<sup>409</sup>

Faced with the obvious national trend against institutional racism, and with the memory of its past conflict with the US, the LDS Church changed its teaching June 8, 1978. Prior to this, efforts to make the change were unsuccessful because church leaders were unable to get approval from God. President Spencer W. Kimball turned the problem around. He wanted to make the change, pondered for months, had a growing conviction it would be a good thing to accomplish. He consulted carefully with the Twelve, taking their comments and seeking their advice. When the day came to decide the matter, he did not pray to have Divine approval, instead he presumed it to be time for the change and asked to be clearly told not to proceed if the Lord objected.<sup>410</sup>

Hearing no objection from the Twelve, his counselors or heaven, the change was adopted. It was implemented in 1978 and announced in Official Declaration 2, now part of the Doctrine & Covenants.<sup>411</sup>

It is obvious the LDS Church could not admit forfeiting priesthood because African Americans are now ordained. It is equally obvious this change is incompatible with prior teaching. To bridge this gulf, the church issued a press release titled *Race and the Church: All Are Alike Unto God*. The contradiction is accounted for by "the absence of direct revelation" to guide previous leaders. The return of scarcity is blamed: "The origins of priesthood availability are not entirely clear. Some explanations with respect to this matter were made in the absence of direct revelation and references to these explanations are sometimes cited in publications. These previous

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any other secular law." Bruce L. Olsen, Public Affairs Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Distorted History*, Salt Lake Tribune, April 5, 2001.

<sup>407</sup> *Bob Jones University v. US*, 461 U.S. 574 (1983). Bob Jones University prohibited interracial dating. The IRS revoked tax-exempt status because of this policy. The majority opinion read, in part: "The governmental interest at stake here is compelling. As discussed in Part II-B, *supra*, the Government has a fundamental, overriding interest in eradicating racial discrimination in education – discrimination that prevailed, with official approval, for the first 165 years of this Nation's constitutional history. That governmental interest substantially outweighs whatever burden denial of tax benefits places on petitioners' exercise of their religious beliefs. The interests asserted by petitioners cannot be accommodated with that compelling governmental interest, see *United States v. Lee*, *supra*, at and no 'less restrictive means,' see *Thomas v. Review Board of Indiana Employment Security Div.*, *supra*, at 718, are available to achieve the governmental interest."

<sup>408</sup> Rex E. Lee was the Dean while I attended the J. Reuben Clark Law School. He served as Dean until 1981, when President Reagan appointed him US Solicitor General. The *Bob Jones University* case was argued in October 1982. Rex Lee recused himself from arguing the case because of his prior involvement with BYU at a time when a racially discriminatory policy was in place with the school's sponsoring church.

<sup>409</sup> *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 17 U.S. 327 (1819).

<sup>410</sup> See *Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood*, BYU Studies 47, n0.2 (2008), pp. 54-56; in relevant part: "He had reached a decision after great struggle, and he wanted the Lord's confirmation, if it would come. They surrounded the altar in a prayer circle. President Kimball told the Lord at length that if extending the priesthood was not right, if the Lord did not want this change to come in the Church, he would fight the world's opposition."

<sup>411</sup> Interestingly the language of OD2 reflects the Civil Rights vocabulary, rather than scriptural terminology. The Declaration refers to lifting the ban "without regard to race or color." The scriptures refer to either "lineage" (Abr. 1: 27) or "seed" (Moses 7: 22) when the subjects of disqualification for priesthood, or inclusion with believers are mentioned. The choice of language suggests the Civil Rights Movement was on the minds of the committee who drafted the declaration.

personal statements do not represent Church doctrine.”<sup>412</sup> This describes the process. Scarcity forces the institution to substitute man’s doctrinal innovations for God’s voice. Restoration ends and apostasy begins.

In addition to now denigrating earlier prophets, seers and revelators for not having revelation to guide them, the LDS Church also unequivocally condemned them in an editorial on their [lds.org](http://lds.org) website:

Over time, Church leaders and members advanced many theories to explain the priesthood and temple restrictions. None of these explanations is accepted today as the official doctrine of the Church. ...Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else. Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form.<sup>413</sup>

They attribute their earlier missteps to US history, including legal slavery when the LDS Church began. The conversion of Africans in Brazil had an effect on the timing. These black members donated to build a temple in Sao Paulo but would be barred from entry without a policy change.

Latter-day Saint history has surprisingly few teachings addressing homosexuality. It is a topic of recent importance. There is a timeline published on the website “No More Strangers: LGBT Mormon Forum,”<sup>414</sup> which retells many of the events. The issue did not emerge into direct and regular discussion until the 1950’s.

Under traditional LDS doctrine recently articulated, homosexuality is sinful, requiring repentance. In Spencer W. Kimball’s book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, he wrote, “the seriousness of the sin of homosexuality is equal to or greater than that of fornication or adultery; and that *the Lord’s Church will as readily take action to disfellowship or excommunicate the unrepentant practicing homosexual as it will the unrepentant fornicator or adulterer.*”<sup>415</sup>

In a chapter titled *Crime Against Nature*, Spencer Kimball called it “unnatural and wrong.” He elaborated “All such deviations from normal, proper heterosexual relationships are not merely unnatural but wrong in the sight of God. Like adultery, incest and bestiality they carried the death penalty under the Mosaic law.”<sup>416</sup>

A grim milestone occurred in 1965 when five young Mormons, all homosexual and all counseled by Apostle Spencer W. Kimball for homosexual sin, committed suicide. All were in their early 20’s. Three had recently returned from missionary service. All had been BYU students.<sup>417</sup> “Their continued education at BYU and their precious membership in the Mormon church were made contingent upon their complete repentance and their willingness to provide names of other gay people.”<sup>418</sup>

In the *Guide to the Scriptures* published by the LDS Church, there is a section titled “Sexual Immorality.” This section includes a list of scriptures under the general description: “Willful participation in adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, or other unholy, unnatural, or impure sexual activity.” What follows includes this statement and citation: “Homosexuality and other sex perversions are an abomination: Lev. 18: 22-23.” Also, “In the last days men shall be without natural affection: 2 Tim. 3: 1-3.”

In the United States there is a tidal wave of legal activity regarding homosexual rights underway. Since 2003 every state has either

<sup>412</sup> [Mormonnewsroom.org/article/race-church](http://Mormonnewsroom.org/article/race-church)

<sup>413</sup> [lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng](http://lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng)

<sup>414</sup> Seth Anderson, *Timeline of Mormon Thinking About Homosexuality*, [Nomorestrangers.org](http://Nomorestrangers.org), posted December 9, 2013, also posted at [RationalFaiths.com](http://RationalFaiths.com). The article does not attempt to be exhaustive, but appears to be representative.

<sup>415</sup> *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 81-82, Deseret Book, (Salt Lake City, 1969), italics in original.

<sup>416</sup> *Id.* at p. 79.

<sup>417</sup> In 1965 (the year of these suicides), BYU President Ernest Wilkinson gave a devotional talk in which he declared: “Nor do we intend to admit to our campus any homosexuals. If any of you has this tendency and have not completely abandoned it, may I suggest that you leave the University immediately after this assembly ...we do not want others on this campus to be contaminated by your presence.” See Allie Rae Treharne, *History of BYU & Homosexuality*, [thestudentreview.org/history-of-byu-homosexuality](http://thestudentreview.org/history-of-byu-homosexuality).

<sup>418</sup> Robert I. McQueen, *Outside the Temple Gates—The Gay Mormon*, *The Advocate*, August 13, 1975. See also *History of BYU & Homosexuality*, supra, which confirmed: “some students who were caught faced the ultimatum of providing names of other gay students or expulsion from school.” (Citing Connell O’Donovan, *The Abominable and Detestable Crime Against Nature: A Revised History of Homosexuality and Mormonism, 1840-1980*, Signature Books, (Salt Lake, 1994); now revised as of 2004 and available online at [connelldonovan.com/abom.html](http://connelldonovan.com/abom.html).)

legalized same-sex marriage or adopted laws prohibiting it.

The Utah legislature is overwhelmingly LDS. In 1977, the Utah legislature amended Utah Code §30-1-2 to state marriages “between persons of the same sex” were “prohibited and declared void.” In 2004, the Utah legislature passed Utah Code §30-1-4.1 which stated: “it is the policy of this state to recognize as marriage only the legal union of a man and a woman as provided in this chapter.” In anticipation of same-sex marriages in other states, it nullified them in Utah.<sup>419</sup> Then, as a precaution against the rising tide of changing attitudes regarding same-sex marriage,<sup>420</sup> the legislature also adopted a proposed amendment to the Utah State Constitution. The amendment was put on the November 2, 2004 ballot and passed with approximately 66% of the vote favoring the amendment to Article I, §29, adding the following language: “Marriage consists only of the legal union between a man and a woman. No other domestic union, however denominated, may be recognized as a marriage or given the same or substantially equivalent effect.”<sup>421</sup> This provision took effect January 1, 2005. It was declared unconstitutional in December 2013 by the US District Court,<sup>422</sup> and again in June 2014 by the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals.<sup>423</sup>

The year before this amendment to the Utah Constitution, the US Supreme Court invalidated Texas’ criminalization of homosexual acts.<sup>424</sup> In Massachusetts the State Supreme Court ruled the state’s constitution protected the right of same-sex couples to marry.<sup>425</sup> Utah’s statutes and amendment to the state constitution was struck down in December of last year.<sup>426</sup>

In California the issue of same-sex marriage was voted on in November 2008. The ballot fight was aided by the LDS Church providing both vocal support, and assisting with facilitating door-to-door campaign efforts. Before the vote was taken, church leaders David A. Bednar, Russell M. Ballard and Quentin L. Cook (of the Twelve Apostles) and Whitney Clayton (of the Seventy) broadcast video into California urging church members to be involved in supporting Proposition 8. When the vote was counted, the LDS effort had proven decisive and Proposition 8 passed. In a post-election statement the LDS Church said this: “The Church expresses deep appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the many Latter-day Saints and others who supported the coalitions in efforts regarding these amendments.”<sup>427</sup>

Opposition to Proposition 8 in California resulted in an organized effort seeking to revoke the LDS Church’s tax exempt status. A website was established to instruct those willing to protest on how to approach removing the 501c3 status of the church.<sup>428</sup> The protest focused on the IRC provision which limited favorable tax treatment to institutions “organized and operated exclusively for religious” purposes and in which “no part of the net earnings” are used nor “no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.”<sup>429</sup> The IRS has now agreed to investigate politically active churches.<sup>430</sup>

The LDS Church has been publicly softening its position on homosexuality since winning the Proposition 8 battle. The Boy Scouts

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<sup>419</sup> “Except for the relationship of marriage between a man and a woman recognized pursuant to this chapter, this state will not recognize, enforce, or give legal effect to any law creating any legal status, rights, benefits, or duties that are substantially equivalent to those provided under Utah law to a man and woman because they are married.”

<sup>420</sup> In 1998 36% of the US population believed sexual orientation could not be changed. By 2012 58% believed sexual orientation was unchangeable. In 2001 40% of the US believed homosexuality was acceptable. In 2013 59% believe it acceptable. (See, *Public Opinion Polls on Two Key LDB Questions*, [religioustolerance.org/hom\\_poll2.htm](http://religioustolerance.org/hom_poll2.htm).) In 1993 the Hawaii Supreme Court struck down the Hawaiian statute prohibiting same-sex marriage. In 1999 the Vermont Supreme Court held same-sex marriage was likewise constitutionally protected.

<sup>421</sup> Depending on how the Utah Supreme Court interpreted this language, it appears on the face of the bill to outlaw civil unions in Utah as well as marriage.

<sup>422</sup> *Kitchen, et. al. v Herbert, et. al.*, Case No. 2:13-cv-217, US District Court for the District of Utah, Memorandum Decision and Order filed December 20, 2013.

<sup>423</sup> *Kitchen, et. al. v Herbert, et. al.*, Case No. 13-4178, Decision filed June 25, 2014.

<sup>424</sup> *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003).

<sup>425</sup> *e v. Dep’t of Pub. Health*, 798 N.E.2d 941 (2003). *Goodridg*

<sup>426</sup> *Derek Kitchen, et. al., v. Gary R. Herbert, et. al.*, supra.

<sup>427</sup> See [mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-responds-to-same-sex-marriage-votes](http://mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-responds-to-same-sex-marriage-votes), November 5, 2008.

<sup>428</sup> See <http://lds501c3.wordpress.com/>

<sup>429</sup> The website quotes IRC §501c3.

<sup>430</sup> See Deseret News article, *The IRS agrees to investigate churches that preach politics after settling with atheist lobbying group*, July 31, 2014 at [national.desnews.com/article/2016/The-IRS-agrees-to-investigate-churches-that-preach-politics-after-settling-with-athies-lobbying.html](http://national.desnews.com/article/2016/The-IRS-agrees-to-investigate-churches-that-preach-politics-after-settling-with-athies-lobbying.html)

change to accept homosexuals was immediately approved by the LDS Church<sup>431</sup> as a visible mea culpa.<sup>432</sup> This is also true of others involved with Proposition 8.<sup>433</sup> One LDS writer has advocated same-sex temple sealing in a popular Mormon journal.<sup>434</sup>

The LDS Church is necessarily attentive to legal trends. Its existence was once hanging by the thinnest of threads because of laws targeting it. Lawyers are consistently among the highest leadership of the LDS Church.<sup>435</sup> At the time of writing this paper, the Quorum of Twelve includes lawyers Dallin H. Oaks, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson and Neil L. Anderson. The legal and social environment in which LDS Mormonism has evolved cannot be divorced from its evolving doctrine, because many changes were adaptations to this environment.

When Joseph Smith was alive, women had limited property rights. When married their property became their husband's under the common law doctrine of coverture. It was not until the 1840's that state legislatures in the United States first began to modify the common law by adopting statutes to protect women's property from their husbands and their husbands' creditors.

Women's right to vote in the US began in 1869 when Wyoming passing the first suffrage law. The following year women began to serve on Wyoming juries. In 1893 Colorado granted women the right to vote. In 1896 Idaho and Utah did likewise. Remember this as you consider how different a world you live in when it comes to women's place in society.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) was created in 1966 to pursue equal rights. They fought for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to amend the constitution to add: "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex." The amendment died in 1982 because enough states failed to adopt it.

The ACLU announces on its website "Forty years ago, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) board of directors determined that women's rights should be the organization's highest priority. Then-executive director Aryeh Neier, created the ACLU Women's Rights Project and named Ruth Bader Ginsburg as the first director. Since then, Ginsburg has become a justice on the United States Supreme Court, and the Women's Rights Project (WRP) has won many landmark court decisions, achieved significant legislative successes, and shifted public awareness and understanding of women's equality."<sup>436</sup>

Reproductive rights and the ability of women to access birth control was decided in 1965. Connecticut had a statute which prohibited any person from using "any drug, medicinal article or instrument for the purpose of preventing conception." The Supreme Court decided this kind of law violated the "right to marital privacy" and was therefore unconstitutional.<sup>437</sup> The effect was to change the nation's outlook on sexuality so radically that by 1967 the "Summer of Love" was underway in the San Francisco Haight-Ashbury district. Hunter S. Thompson wrote about it in *The New York Times Magazine* which helped attract widespread attention. Soon the national media was fascinated and began to report daily of events there. In June, 1967 the Monterey Pop Festival happened, with 60,000 people attending by the last day. If you were going to San Francisco at the time you needed to wear some flowers in your hair.<sup>438</sup> Sexual promiscuity seemed the perfect antidote for the relentless tension of the compulsory draft and service in the Vietnam War. Timothy Leary admonished us to "turn on, tune in, drop out" and become one with the movement.

<sup>431</sup> *The Christian Post* reported the news with alarm (*LDS Church Accepts New Boy Scout Policy on Gay Members*, May 24, 2013).

<sup>432</sup> LDS Church owned Deseret News quoted church spokesman Michael R. Otterson in an article titled *LDS Church Public Relations Official Writes About Scouting Decision for Washington Post*, May 31, 2013, as saying: "'For the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this was never about whether the BSA or local scout leaders should try to discern or categorize ill-defined and emerging sexual awareness of pre-pubescent boys and early pubescent young men who make up 90 percent of scouting. Sexual orientation has not previously—and is not now—a disqualifying factor for boys who want to join Latter-day Saint scout troops. Rather, it has always been about teaching moral behavior to *all* boys, and instilling the core values that are part of responsible adulthood,' according to Otterson."

<sup>433</sup> Expert witness David Blankenhorn recanted his view in a New York Times editorial on June 22, 2012 titled *How My View on Gay Marriage Changed*. He announced in the editorial: "I took a stand against gay marriage. But as a marriage advocate, the time has come for me to accept gay marriage and emphasize the good that it can do."

<sup>434</sup> See Taylor Petrey, *Toward a Post-Heterosexual Mormon Theology*, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Vol. 44, No. 4, December 8, 2011. In the 2011 Sunstone Symposium Brad Carmak presented a paper, *Why Mormonism can Abide Gay Marriage*, which is viewable on YouTube at: [youtube.com/watch?v=E1jDUCBKml0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1jDUCBKml0)

<sup>435</sup> At the time of changing the policy in 1978, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve included lawyers Marion G. Romney, Howard W. Hunter and Bruce R. McConkie, as well as N. Eldon Tanner who, although not a lawyer, was a former legislator in Canada.

<sup>436</sup> See, [aclu.org/womens-rights](https://www.aclu.org/womens-rights).

<sup>437</sup> *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965).

<sup>438</sup> John Phillips penned the song *San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)* that promoted both the Monterey Pop Festival and the movement in San Francisco generally.

Sexual liberation proved alluring indeed.<sup>439</sup>

In the *Griswold* case, although the Bill of Rights does not mention privacy, Justice William O. Douglas wrote the right was found in the “penumbras” and “emanations” of the other rights enumerated. That innovation would produce another dramatic emanation in Justice Blackmun’s landmark abortion ruling eight years later.

In the newly found constitutional “penumbra” Justice Harry Blackmun found the right to privacy also gave women the right to an abortion. Writing for a 7-2 majority in *Roe v. Wade*,<sup>440</sup> he stated: “the right to privacy, whether it be founded in the Fourteenth Amendment’s concept of personal liberty and restrictions upon state action, as we feel it is, or, as the district court determined, in the Ninth Amendment’s reservation of rights to the people, is broad enough to encompass a woman’s decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy.” At the time of the decision all states limited abortion, and the majority of the states prohibited abortion altogether. The dissenting opinion of Justices Byron White and William Rehnquist declared the majority exercised improvident and extravagant power to fashion a new constitutional right.<sup>441</sup>

Whether it was improvident or not, the culture of the United States has been shaped by *Roe v. Wade* from 1973 to the present. At present it is estimated over 56 million Americans do not live today, having been aborted. That holocaust was designed to target an unwanted population, and has worked as intended.<sup>442</sup>

In 1986 the US Supreme Court found that sexual harassment is a form of illegal job discrimination.<sup>443</sup> In 1999 the Supreme Court ruled punitive damages for sex discrimination was permitted if the anti-discrimination law was violated with malice or indifference to the law, even if the conduct was not especially severe.<sup>444</sup> In 2009 President Obama signed the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act allowing victims of pay discrimination to file a complaint against employers within 180 days of their last paycheck, instead of within 180 days from the date of the first unfair paycheck.

In 2013 Defense Secretary Leon Panetta lifted the ban on women serving in combat roles, reversing a 1994 rule.

All these larger national events affected views of Latter-day Saints. From imposing short haircuts on missionaries<sup>445</sup> and BYU

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<sup>439</sup> During the Summer of Love, LDS General Conference included a sermon stating: “In this day when modesty is thrust into the background, and chastity is considered an outmoded virtue, I appeal to parents especially, and to my fellow teachers, both in and out of the Church, to teach youth to keep their souls unmarred and unsullied from this and other debasing sins, the consequences of which will smite and haunt them intimately until their conscience is seared and their character becomes sordid.” Gordon B. Hinckley, *Conference Report*, April 1967, p. 54.

<sup>440</sup> 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

<sup>441</sup> “I find nothing in the language or history of the Constitution to support the Court’s judgment. The Court simply fashions and announces a new constitutional right for pregnant women and, with scarcely any reason or authority for its action, invests that right with sufficient substance to override most existing state abortion statutes. The upshot is that the people and the legislatures of the 50 States are constitutionally disentitled to weigh the relative importance of the continued existence and development of the fetus, on the one hand, against a spectrum of possible impacts on the woman, on the other hand. As an exercise of raw judicial power, the Court perhaps has authority to do what it does today; but, in my view, its judgment is an improvident and extravagant exercise of the power of judicial review that the Constitution extends to this Court.” *Roe v. Wade*, dissent by Rehnquist, White.

<sup>442</sup> As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg explained in an interview with the *New York Times*: “Frankly I had thought that at the time *Roe* was decided there was concern about population growth and particularly growth in populations that we don’t want to have too many of.” (Emily Blazelon, *The Place of Women on the Court*, an interview published in the *New York Times* on July 7, 2009.) The results included effects which only recently have been noted by two economists: “Perhaps the most dramatic effect of legalized abortion, however, and one that would take years to reveal itself, was its impact on crime. In the early 1990’s, just as the first cohort of children born after *Roe v. Wade* was hitting its late teens—the years during which young men enter their criminal prime—the rate of crime began to fall. What this cohort was missing, of course, were the children who stood the greatest chance of becoming criminals. And the crime rate continued to fall as an entire generation came of age minus the children whose mothers had not wanted to bring a child into the world. Legalized abortions led to less unwantedness; unwantedness leads to high crime, legalized abortion, therefore, led to less crime.” Steven D. Levitt & Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics*, William Morrow, (New York, 2009), pp. 139-140. See generally Chapter 4, *Where Have All the Criminals Gone*, pp. 115-145 for their statistical analysis supporting this conclusion.

<sup>443</sup> *Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson*, 477 U.S. 57.

<sup>444</sup> *Kolstad v. American Dental Association*, 527 U.S. 526

<sup>445</sup> LDS standards are at “[missionary.lds.org/dress-grooming/elder/grooming/hair/?lang=eng](http://missionary.lds.org/dress-grooming/elder/grooming/hair/?lang=eng)” and states: “Always maintain a conservative hairstyle. Keep your hair short and evenly tapered on the top, back, and sides. Sideburns should reach no lower than

students,<sup>446</sup> warning about “hippies” and drug use,<sup>447</sup> advocating large families and not artificially limiting births,<sup>448</sup> to denouncing rock and roll music,<sup>449</sup> the LDS Church has been reactionary, trying to slow cultural changes.<sup>450</sup> Whether viewed as progress or decay, LDS leaders have fought it.

The Ordain Women organization maintains a website ([ordainwomen.org](http://ordainwomen.org)) in which Mormons are given a place to advocate change in LDS Church policy. They hope to end “gender inequality” by “calling attention to the need for the ordination of Mormon women to the priesthood.” The public has responded with numerous profiles pleading for change by the LDS Church. The church responded through the *Deseret News* in an article March 17, 2014 titled *LDS Church: Aims of ‘Ordain Women’ Detract from Dialogue*. The article begins with this sentence: “A small activist women's organization is detracting from thoughtful discussions about women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a church spokeswoman said Monday in a letter to the group.” The article goes on to assert “LDS leaders are listening to women and responding. The recent changes you have seen, most notably the lowering of missionary age for sisters, serve as examples and were facilitated by the input of many extraordinary LDS women around the world.” It declares: “Ordaining women to the priesthood, as the letter says, is contrary both to church doctrine and the view of the vast

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the middle of the ear.”

<sup>446</sup> *BYU Honor Code*, “Dress and Grooming Standards,” reads: “A clean and well-cared-for appearance should be maintained. Clothing is inappropriate when it is sleeveless, revealing, or form fitting. Shorts must be knee-length or longer. Hairstyles should be clean and neat, avoiding extreme styles or colors, and trimmed above the collar, leaving the ear uncovered. Sideburns should not extend below the earlobe or onto the cheek. If worn, moustaches should be neatly trimmed and may not extend beyond or below the corners of the mouth. Men are expected to be clean-shaven; beards are not acceptable. Earrings and other body piercing are not acceptable. Shoes should be worn in all public campus areas.”

<sup>447</sup> Here is an example from the Second Counselor in the First Presidency given in General Conference: “Just before conference a bishop called me from California to make an appointment to bring in a young man from his ward who was involved with hippies. He felt I might be able to help him. They came in just after conference. His long hair, dress and general appearance left no doubt that he was a hippie. I asked him to tell me his story. Briefly, this is what he said: ‘I am a returned missionary, a married man, and I have a child; and here I am, a hippie, a drug addict, and I am guilty of many misdemeanors and even felonies. I am most unhappy. This is not what I want.’ I asked him how it was that a man with his background ever got mixed up with these people. He said that one day when he was feeling despondent and discouraged, he decided that he wanted to be free, that he did not want to be bound by any traditions or Church restrictions in any way. He went out with some of these fellows in a spirit of rebellion, and then he said, ‘Here I am. Instead of being free, I’m a slave.’” N. Eldon Tanner, *Conference Report*, April 1968, p. 109.

<sup>448</sup> See, e.g., Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, Deseret Book (Salt Lake City) pp. 278-79: “I regret, I think it is a crying evil that there should exist a sentiment or a feeling among any members of the Church to curtail the birth of their children. I think that is a crime wherever it occurs, where husband and wife are in possession of health and vigor and are free from impurities that would be entailed upon their posterity. I believe that where people undertake to curtail or prevent the birth of their children that they are going to reap disappointment by and by. I have no hesitancy in saying that I believe that this is one of the greatest crimes of the world today, this evil practice.”

<sup>449</sup> Boyd K. Packer, October 1973 General Conference talk, *Inspiring Music—Worthy Thoughts*, included this warning: “In our day music itself has been corrupted. Music can, by its tempo, by its beat, by its intensity, dull the spiritual sensitivity of men. Studies citing physiological effects from some of the extreme music of today neglect the most serious thing concerning it. Our youth have been brought up on a diet of music that is loud and fast, more intended to agitate than to pacify, more intended to excite than to calm. Even so, there is a breadth of it, some soft enough to be innocent and appealing to our youth, and that which is hard, and that is where the problem is. One of the signs of apostasy in the Christian churches today is the willingness of their ministers to compromise and introduce into what had been, theretofore, the most sacred religious meetings the music of the drug and the hard rock culture. Such music has little virtue and it is repellent to the Spirit of God.” Thomas S. Monson’s October 1990 General Conference talk, *That We May Touch Heaven*, stated: “[M]usic can, by its tempo, beat, intensity, and lyrics, dully your spiritual sensitivity. You cannot afford to fill your minds with unworthy music.”

<sup>450</sup> See, e.g., Richard G. Scott’s April 2004 General Conference talk, *How to Live Well Amid Increasing Evil*, which said, in part, “You have a choice. You can wring your hands and be consumed with concern for the future or choose to use the counsel the Lord has given to live with peace and happiness in a world awash with evil. If you choose to concentrate on the dark side, this is what you will see. Much of the world is being engulfed in a rising river of degenerate filth, with the abandonment of virtue, righteousness, personal integrity, traditional marriage, and family life. Sodom and Gomorrah was the epitome of unholy life in the Old Testament. It was isolated then; now that condition is spread over the world. Satan skillfully manipulates the power of all types of media and communication. His success has greatly increased the extent and availability of such degrading and destructive influences worldwide. In the past some effort was required to seek out such evil. Now it saturates significant portions of virtually every corner of the world. We cannot dry up the mounting river of evil influences, for they result from the exercise of moral agency divinely granted by our Father. But we can and must, with clarity, warn of the consequences of getting close to its enticing, destructive current.”

majority of Latter-day Saints, especially women.”<sup>451</sup>

The following month in General Conference, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks gave a talk titled:

*The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood* in which he stated: “The Lord has directed that only men will be ordained to offices in the priesthood.” He continued to add, however:

We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be? When a woman—young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood. Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties.<sup>452</sup>

And so according to Oaks, women can use the authority of the priesthood, although not necessarily ordained. Extending this reasoning to its logical conclusion, women will one day be able to baptize with “authority” borrowed from a male key-holder. If institutional discrimination on the basis of sex ever threatens the LDS Church tax-exempt status, this seminal General Conference talk by a former Justice on the Utah Supreme Court can be the basis to permit the first female Bishop to serve, using authority borrowed from a male key-holder.

LDS Mormonism claims Joseph Smith as its founder. Joseph thought his restoration would one day revolutionize the world. It was a “stone cut out of the mountain without hands” that would roll forth and grind to dust all other institutions.<sup>453</sup> Brigham Young thought one of the necessary obstacles needing grinding was the US Government.<sup>454</sup> However, LDS Church history is filled with the contrary process: The US culture has been grinding away at LDS Mormonism’s peculiar doctrines, and pushing it to conform with national cultural changes. It is not difficult to foresee how the present legal and social environment will influence future position changes on women’s rights and more open acceptance of homosexuality.

There are two possibilities to account for the LDS Church’s history of compromise on their doctrine. The first possibility is these teachings, although once proclaimed to be fundamental, even necessary to obtain exaltation in the afterlife, were falsely portrayed in the first place. The Book of Mormon seems to support this view.<sup>455</sup> If this is so, then contrary to LDS past claims, no soul was ever damned by refusing to accept the doctrine of plural wives. Nor was God going to take away all priesthood from the church as soon as the church attempted to ordain black African descendants. Nor has Almighty God banned women from the priesthood. Nor is homosexuality a serious moral offense before God. God’s silence led the LDS Church to oversell these teachings and therefore they were, and are, free to “correct” them.

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<sup>451</sup> Leaders in the Ordain Women movement have been threatened with excommunication. See Peggy Fletcher Stack, *Founder of Mormon Women’s Group Threatened with Excommunication*, Salt Lake Tribune, June 11, 2014. History informs us the LDS Church will only move to accommodate social change when sufficient legal and economic pressure has been applied. Beforehand, posturing by the church’s leadership to seem unmovable is to be expected.

<sup>452</sup> Dallin H. Oaks is a former editor for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, which would later publish the doctrinal explanation for sealing same-sex marriages.

<sup>453</sup> See, Daniel 2: 31-45; D&C 65: 2.

<sup>454</sup> As the US Army approached Utah territory to remove Brigham Young as Governor, he defiantly proclaimed: “You need have no fear but the fear to offend God. If you have any trembling in your hearts, or timid feelings with regard to our present situation, let me tell you one thing, which is as true as that the sun now shines, that whatever transpires with us, with our enemies, with the world here or there, will still more promote the kingdom of God on earth, and bring to a final end the kingdoms of this world. ...The world are determined to destroy the kingdom of God upon the earth; they wish to obliterate it. The kingdoms of darkness are determined to destroy this kingdom. In their feelings they are fighting against you and me, and do not know that they are contending against Jehovah. They have not the least idea of that, but think they are contending against the ‘Mormons.’ They are not contending against you and me— they are contending against the God of heaven.” *CDBY* 3:1289-90.

<sup>455</sup> See 3 Ne. 11: 31-40 where Christ declares His “doctrine.” The explanation has no mention of plural wives, priesthood or priesthood bans, or homosexuality. It concluded with the warning, “whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil.” (*Id.* v. 40.) The LDS Church appears now to back away from earlier teachings. Through abandoning earlier doctrinal positions and condemning those leaders who advanced them, current LDS Church leaders appear convinced it is appropriate to fix “errors,” and therefore none of these discarded teachings were ever true or important.

The other possibility is they got the doctrine right before, and by accommodating American legal and cultural demands LDS Mormonism has been cutting down the Tree of Life to build a wooden bridge. If this is the case, then popular will, federal legislation and the US Supreme Court will have more to say in the future about LDS Mormon doctrine than the church's "prophets, seers and revelators," just as they have exerted the primary influence after Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.