

Power in the Priesthood: The Keys of the Kingdom

By John R. Crane

Introduction

This paper isn't just an idle discussion for a Sunday afternoon, or talking points for social media. This paper is not an attempt to teach you the fundamentals of the Gospel. You can receive this elsewhere.

This paper is for those who have felt the call to be servants of the Lord and are wondering what to do next: how to obtain power and authority to serve Him by learning what power and authority is, how to obtain it, and what to do with it once you have it,

We will discuss what keys are and what they are not. At the end of the paper, we will discuss what happens if you bypass the Lord's way and try to do things your own way.

Let's ask ourselves some questions. The purpose of these questions is to get you interested in the subject of keys, and give you some questions to take to the Lord. You may not have thought of some of these questions before, and hopefully, just thinking about these questions will be informative and help you see things you never thought of before.

What are keys? Why do we have keys? Why do we need keys? Do you have any keys? How do you know if you have keys? Which keys do others have? Are keys tied to an office or tied to a specific individual? How did you receive those keys? What's the difference between giving keys and committing keys? Are keys exclusive or shared? Can keys be delegated, commissioned, shared, forfeited, given? Who holds the keys to all the keys? Can keys be revoked? If so, how does this happen? Can you convey keys to others? What is the relationship between keys, authority, power, Priesthood, and our standing with the Lord? What is the Sealing Power? Who holds the keys to it? What is the Holy Spirit of Promise? Who holds the keys to it? How are keyholders held accountable? To whom are they accountable. Why?

- Uses of keys:
 - Admit/bar
 - Obtain Knowledge/remain in ignorance
 - Power/weakness
 - Bind or Seal/loose
 - Reveal/hide
 - Open/close
 - Bless/curse
 - Obtain blessings/receive curses
 - Permit/prohibit
 - Expand/contract
 - Retain/forfeit
 - Bestow/withhold
 - Delegate or Commit/withdraw
 - Perform ordinances such as: blessings, cursings, baptisms, ordinations, sealings, resurrection, atonement, translation, condescension, dispensation, creation

God's love is unconditional, and His power lies in what He can bestow, not in what He can withhold. God desires to give us as much knowledge and power as fast as we can receive it.

If all this is true, why are there different degrees and offices in the Priesthood then why is Priesthood divided up into "keys"? And why do we need keys in order to cross certain boundaries or barriers? There are a lot of reasons for this. One reason is we are only given as much as we can receive, and we are held accountable only for what we have received. To obtain more from God and not be able to receive it (i.e., reconcile our thoughts and actions to be in conformity with the additional light, knowledge, and power) would only condemn us. So, we have to ascend one small degree at a time. To God power, keys, and Priesthood are one continuous whole, as is time. Just as time is measured only by man, keys are measured out to man, according to our faith in God. As we develop more faith, our trust in God deepens. God already knows how much He can trust us, but we have to know how much we can trust God, and have an approximate idea of His trust for us. This is coming to know God. This is developing a relationship with God.

Another purpose of these levels is to give us a measurable gauge of our progress in developing faith. Alma compared faith to planting a seed. If it is a good seed, and if we nourish it, the seed begins to swell, and sprout, and grow and become knowledge. But this is just one seed. We have to plant and nourish many more.

These keys (knowledge) give us power to act for ourselves and on behalf of others: family, community, and church, for example. When it comes to exercising keys to lead an organization, natural men tend to crave the power and authority that they suppose accompanies the keys. Men will fight for that control, claiming exclusive right to governing keys while denying the right to those governing keys to others. A situation like this occurred within the LDS church. It was known as the "succession crisis". A crisis is a decision point. And decision points force us to study and ponder the true nature of keys and ask the questions we asked above.

After I give a general discussion of keys, including plenty of quotes from the scriptures, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and others. I will dig into the succession crisis and explain the critical role that keys played. It was this crisis that prompted the original idea for this paper, and it is this crisis that the Lord can use, whether by this paper, or by any available source, to help us to understand the nature of keys, and to seek them from the Lord in order to fulfill His purposes on the earth. In order to fully understand how a process works, we have to observe it with all the parts in motion, and also when it breaks down.

Keys in the Bible

"Law of First Mention"

We can study some basic verses which lay out our understanding of *keys* and *sealing power*, what they are and how they are to be properly used. You might want to read the entire chapter to get the full context, but briefly, here is what is happening. King Hezekiah's presumptuous servant, Shebna, is to be replaced by the faithful servant, Eliakim.

Isa 22:20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah:

Isa 22:21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and

Isa 22:22 And the key [**an opening instrument, from a root meaning to free or to loosen**] of the house [**family, lineage**] of David will I lay upon his shoulder [**He will bear this burden.**]; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Isa 22:23 **And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place;** and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

This is the first mention of “keys”, other than literal keys, in the Bible. We can take this reference as a baseline for all other references to keys in scripture. Along with the first discussion of keys is the first discussion of the **misuse of keys**.

Avraham Gileadi’s comment on this and the surrounding verses.

Using the imagery of a negligent steward as a prophetic allegory, **Isaiah predicts his replacement by Jehovah’s “servant”**. **Jehovah rebukes Shebna—calling him “that steward”—for assuming he will receive a lavish burial when he passes away. As a part of the reversal of circumstances between Greater Babylon and Zion, this passage reiterates how that which exalts itself ends up humiliated and that which humbles itself Jehovah exalts.** Jesus predicts this very scenario prior to his second coming, when “a faithful and wise servant” succeeds “an evil servant” (Matthew 24:44-51).

As an allegory that prefigures an end-time fulfillment, this dramatization of a presumptuous servant’s demise paints a painful picture of how one who rises to a position of privilege among Jehovah’s people falls and becomes a disgrace. The higher the authority Jehovah bestows on an individual—for the purpose of fulfilling an honorable stewardship in his house—the greater the paradox **when that person forgets he is called for others’ sake, not his own**. When he considers himself entitled and offends God, Jehovah’s justice requires him to release that person from office and to appoint another in his stead.

As prefigured by Eliakim’s succession of Shebna, Jehovah appoints his end-time servant as an integral part of the reversal of circumstances that occurs in Jehovah’s Day of Judgment. The verbs “commission” or “call” (*qara’*) and “appoint” (*natan*) form word links to Jehovah’s “calling” and “appointing” his servant (Isaiah 41:27; 42:6; 48:15; 49:1, 6, 8; 55:4). While the word “servant” denotes a vassal relationship to Jehovah under the terms of the Davidic Covenant, the word “father” signifies the servant’s role as a proxy savior. That role here involves **sealing keys** that pertain to Isaiah’s seraph category.

<https://www.isaiahexplained.com/commentary/22>

The Book of Isaiah is full of imagery about the end-time servant, and Chapter 22 is yet another example of this. It is always instructive to look up the Hebrew meaning of each name for additional insight. The name of the “wise and faithful servant” is “Eliakim”. This name is a combination of “Elia”, meaning God, and “kim” or “chaim”, meaning life. “Chaim” is the male equivalent of “hava” (Eve), which means “life” or “living”. Together the name “Eliakim” means “the living God”, or “God arising” or “the resurrection of God”. Could this returning servant actually be one of the gods, condescending to the earth to perform

one great mission among mankind prior to the establishment of Zion? One author, who claims to have seen the Davidic Servant in vision describes him as “the mirror image of God”.

In the context of the next verse, Jesus asked the apostles, who had just returned from their missions to report back to Him who **the people** said that He was, then He asked the apostles to tell Him who **they** say that He was. We only have the reply from Peter, who said that He was “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Peter obtained that knowledge through revelation by faith. The Lord told him that this principle of knowledge through revelation by faith was the bedrock principle to be followed by all those who believe on Him. This is his church: “those who repent and come to me” (D&C 10:67). These are they who exercise faith on His Name, who repent, and come to him. His church is not some monolithic institution or some corporate entity.

Matt 16:19 And I will give unto thee the **keys** of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

This verse is used to claim exclusive authority for popes and priests, who like the unjust steward in Isaiah 22, forget their role as servants and put themselves in the place of the king. Nephi foresaw this happening in the church in the latter days.

2 Nephi 28:3 For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other: Behold, I, I am the Lord's; and the others shall say: I, I am the Lord's; **and thus shall every one say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord--**

2 Nephi 28:4 And they shall **contend one with another**; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall teach with their learning, and **deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance.**

2 Nephi 28:5 And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and they say unto the people: Harken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God **[No living, active God who is concerned with the affairs of men.]** today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and **he hath given his power unto men;**

The power of God still resides with God, and we only use it at His good pleasure. A more accurate and modern translation of Matt. 16:19 is given in the Amplified version.

I will give you the keys (**authority**) of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind [**forbid, declare to be improper and unlawful**] on earth will have [**already**] been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose [**permit, declare lawful**] on earth will have [**already**] been loosed in heaven.” (Comments in the original. Emphasis mine.)

And how are matters decided in heaven? This is a deep subject and beyond the scope of this paper, but God does all his business in heaven through councils. You have heard of the so-called “grand council” in the pre-earth life. You may also be familiar with the event described in Job where all the sons of God gathered together. There are many descriptions of “the sod (secret council or the decisions of that council) of God” in the Old Testament. (Google “the sod of god”.), but Biblical translators want to hide this fact from the reader in order to promote the notion of monotheism. There are Gods (plural) in

heaven, and They are spoken of in the very first verse of the Bible. But, let's deal with the verse that those who declare themselves "prophets" use to claim exclusive right to know and speak God's will.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do [**davar: any word or work of God**] nothing, but he revealeth [uncovering, disclosing] his secret [**sod: the deliberations of his council, his plan**] unto his servants the prophets.

The words and works of God originate with God, and are revealed to and reported by the prophets. If these prophets are privy to the works and words of God, why are they not revealing them? Has God done or said nothing in the past 150 years? The Lord condemns fake prophets who claim to speak in the name of God, yet God has revealed nothing to them. If they had sought the counsel of God and would have told it to the people, the people would have repented.

Jer 23:21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

Jer 23:22 But if they had stood in my counsel [**sod, council**], and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

A "prophet" is a description of what a person **does**, not what he is **called** to do. And you are only a prophet when you are manifesting prophetic gifts of the Spirit.

But this is not an exclusive right reserved only for the designated prophets. Jesus built his church on knowledge from the Father, obtained by faith, through revelation, and far from being exclusive to Peter, or restricted to the apostles, this is available to all disciples of Christ, and He tells how.

KJV:

Matt 18:18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Amplified Version:

I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, whatever you bind [**forbid, declare to be improper and unlawful**] on earth shall have [**already**] been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose [**permit, declare lawful**] on earth shall have [**already**] been loosed in heaven. (Comments in the original. Emphasis mine.)

This places the responsibility on the servant to discern through revelation what has already been decreed in heaven. He does not arbitrarily issue his own decrees or pretend to speak for God when God has not spoken. D&C 63:61-63.

Matt 18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

Matt 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

We shall see that Joseph Smith understood this principle and used it many times as he gathered the latter-day servants around him, unitedly sought the word of the Lord in prayer, and received revelation.

Jesus spoke of keys being **knowledge**, which we gain by seeking and obtaining revelation and entering into His kingdom.

Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! **for ye have taken away the key of knowledge**: ye entered not in **[into the kingdom of God by entering into covenants with God through faith, repentance, and so forth]** yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

I want to give complete coverage of all the keys as mentioned in the Bible, so I am including this for completeness.

Rev 1:18 I [am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the **keys** of hell and of death.

These keys are not within our reach at present, but are available to us as we obtain eternal life,

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, ... 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.** ... (Joseph Smith)

Joseph Smith is not speaking of just being resurrected by others, but by having such life within yourself that you are able to resurrect yourself and others, just as Christ did. (John 5:26) Then, it can be said of you that you possess “the keys of death and hell”.

This following verse in Revelation hearkens back to Isaiah 22:22. In contrast to the false servant, Christ is the true servant.

Rev 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; **[He doesn't just claim to possess the keys. He demonstrates that he has them.]**

The anonymous author of the “Pure Revelations” blog, who has received his second comforter, stood in the Presence of the Lord, and been taught by Him, teaches that the angel referred to in the following verses is John the Beloved. But we read above that a person must have “eternal life” and be able to “dwell in everlasting burnings” in order to possess the keys of hell and death. “Anonymous” also teaches that many great servants of the Lord in the latter days are, indeed, exalted persons who have condescended to assist in the “great and marvelous work”. They possess all of the keys necessary to do the work God has commanded them to do. Indeed, all the hosts of heaven are focused and involved in what is happening here.

Rev 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the **key** of the bottomless pit.

Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the **key** of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Let me just add a personal note here. We are commanded not only to read, but to **search** the scriptures. Much of what I wrote about here came to me out of a result of a prompting to search the Bible for the use of *keys*. It is marvelous to me how everything came together so clearly and consistently, and is and will later in this document shown to be borne out by the teachings of Joseph Smith, and by others who, as Jeremiah wrote, have truly stood in the councils of the Lord, and who not only learn the *devarim* (the works and words of the Lord), but actually speak and do the works of the Lord in His Name.

Keys in the Book of Mormon and Pearl of Great Price

The only mention of keys in the Book of Mormon is Laban's key to the treasury. However, we see in 1 Nephi and in Helaman 10, in the use of the "word" of God, given to Moses and Nephi, evidence that they received keys to not only execute on earth what was decided in heaven, but to influence what was decided in heaven.

1 Nephi 17:26 Now ye know that Moses was commanded of the Lord to do that great work; and ye know that by his **word** the waters of the Red Sea were divided hither and thither, and they passed through on dry ground.

1 Nephi 17:29 Yea, and ye also know that Moses, by his **word according to the power of God which was in him**, smote the rock, and there came forth water, that the children of Israel might quench their thirst.

1 Nephi 17:31 And it came to pass that according to his **word** he did destroy them; and according to his **word** he did lead them; and **according to his word he did do all things for them; and there was not anything done save it were by his word.**

Helaman 10:5 And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I 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.

In the Pearl of Great Price, we read how and why the Lord granted keys and authority to Moses.

Mos 1:25 And calling upon the name of God, he beheld his glory again, for it was upon him; and he heard a voice, saying: Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters; **for they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God.**

Keys in the Restoration

This is where we read the most about keys. Before a general discussion of keys mentioned in the D&C, by Joseph Smith, and by Brigham Young, I am going to single out topics for special attention: Aaronic Priesthood, the "Return of the Servants", the "Keys to the Mysteries of God", and the "Keys to Ask and Receive".

Aaronic Priesthood

Also, in the Pearl of Great Price, we have the discussion of the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, or more precisely, the restoration of the **keys** (understanding) of the Aaronic Priesthood.

JS 1:69. Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, 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 **[the keys; the knowledge]** shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.

JS 1:72. The messenger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of **Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek**, which Priesthood, he said, would in due time be conferred on us, and that I should be called the first Elder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second. It was on the fifteenth day of May, 1829, that we were ordained under the hand of this messenger, and baptized.

OC 5. **[Oliver Cowdery in a letter to W.W. Phelps.]** "This was not long desired before it was realized. The Lord, who is rich in mercy, and ever willing to answer the consistent prayer of the humble, after we had called Him in a fervent manner, aside from the abodes of men, condescended to manifest to us His will. On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us. While the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, **and the keys of the Gospel of repentance**. What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world was racked and distracted--while millions were groping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld, our ears heard, as in the 'blaze of day'; yes, more--above the glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, **'I am thy fellow-servant,'** dispelled every fear. We listened, we gazed, we admired! 'Twas the voice of an angel, from glory, 'twas a message from the Most High! And as we heard we rejoiced, while **His love enkindled upon our souls, and we were wrapped in the vision of the Almighty! [They saw God.]** Where was room for doubt? Nowhere; uncertainty had fled, doubt had sunk no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever!

Nowhere does it say that the Aaronic Priesthood was restored. The Aaronic Priesthood was already on the earth in a corrupt form, but lacking the power thereof, because the keys of knowledge were taken away. John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver and restored the keys **[the knowledge and authority]** inherent in this order of Priesthood. Now, having the keys to the ministry of angels, the way was clear for the visitation of other angels to declare and reveal their Priesthoods to Joseph and Oliver.

The Aaronic Priesthood administers the preparatory gospel of repentance and baptism of water, all in preparation for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost. Joseph Smith considered faith and repentance to be ordinances. The restoration of the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood took place at the same time the Book of Mormon was being translated, which contains the keys to understanding these ordinances, and knowing how to come to the Lord with full purpose of heart: namely with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. This was the Lord's condemnation of the "sons of Levi" in Malachi: their offerings of flesh were flawed because they withheld their best from the Lord, both in their sacrifices and in their tithes. On a personal level, one way in which we can be true "sons of Levi" and "daughters of Zion" under the

preparatory Gospel is to offer the Lord our very best, so that when He comes to try us and purify us still further, we will be prepared to abide that day, and enter into His rest.

This is the most important key to us personally because it is the key to everything else – including the key to the knowledge of God and to eternal life, which is an even greater key, and the greatest of all the gifts of God.

Notice, also, that Oliver mentioned **they heard the voice of the Lord**, and while John ordained them, they were **“wrapped in the vision of the Almighty”**. No further details were given, but these few details which are given are usually omitted when LDS speakers and writers describe this experience.

The Keys of the Aaronic Priesthood

68:17. For the firstborn holds the right of the presidency over this priesthood, and the **keys or authority** of the same. **[When it comes to performing ordinances and preparatory teaching, the Book of Mormon discusses authority. When it comes to prophesying and teaching the fullness of the Gospel, the Book of Mormon discusses the Holy Order of God (aka Melchizedek Priesthood).]**

68:18. No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant and the firstborn of Aaron.

107:15. The bishopric **[a bishop and his counselors]** is the presidency of this priesthood, and holds the **keys or authority** of the same. **[This is speaking of the Presiding Bishop.]**

107:16. No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the **keys** of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant of Aaron. **[To truly hold the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, one must be a literal descendant of Aaron. Just being a bishop is not sufficient. For the sons of Levi to offer a righteous and acceptable offering to the Lord on behalf of the church, one must actually be a son of Levi.]**

107:68. Wherefore, the office of a bishop is not equal unto it; for the **office of a bishop is in administering all temporal things; [The D&C makes it clear what the duties of a Bishop are. The LDS church is having bishops administering in spiritual things and apostles administering in temporal things.]**

107:69. Nevertheless a bishop must be chosen from the High Priesthood, unless he is a literal descendant of Aaron;

107:70. For unless he is a literal descendant of Aaron he cannot hold the keys of that priesthood. [The Lord says this three times. I think He really means it.]

107:76. But a literal descendant of Aaron has a legal right to the presidency of this priesthood, to the keys of this ministry, to act in the office of bishop independently, without counselors, except in a case where a President of the High Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, is tried, to sit as a judge in Israel.

Again, it wasn't the Aaronic Priesthood that was restored. It was the **Keys** to the Aaronic Priesthood that were restored. The forms were already upon the earth, but what was missing was the power (derived from faith and knowledge) that needed to be restored.

From the golden plates Joseph learned that power [and authority] was necessary to perform ordinances including baptism (3 Nephi 11:22) the sacrament (3 Nephi 18:5) and conferring the holy ghost (3 Nephi

18:37, Moroni 21:3), that this power was conferred by the laying on of hands (3 Nephi 18:38, Moroni 2:2, 3:2), that one could be ordained to the calling of disciple or elder who in turn could ordain priests and teachers (Moroni 3:1) and that elders or disciples, unlike priests and teachers, could confer the gift of the holy ghost by the laying on of hands (Moroni 2:1-2). Additionally, a passage in Alma 13 discusses the calling and ordination of high priests including Melchizedek to the high priesthood of the Holy Order of God (Alma 13:6, 14, 18). This calling as we learn in Genesis 14 JST and in D&C 84 is not by the laying on of hands (as is the case with deacons, teachers, and priests), or by descent (as is holding the keys to the Aaronic Priesthood, or the Patriarchal Priesthood), the calling to the Holy Order of God, is by the calling of God's own voice, out of the heavens.

Since one is ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood by the calling of God's own voice out of the heavens, it means nothing to trace your Priesthood back through men who possess no keys and no authority to pass it on. We can argue all day about whether Brigham Young was the legitimate successor of Joseph Smith (I will demonstrate that he was not.), or whether Joseph Smith disqualified himself because of a supposed secret practice of polygamy, to say nothing of shady bank and land deals. In the end, it all depends on your faith, knowledge, and relationship with the Lord.

Keys of the Aaronic Priesthood: knowledge of the various offices, functions, qualifications, duties, and outcomes flowing from the Aaronic Priesthood, coming through the gifts of the Spirit, via the Gift of the Holy Ghost. This order of Priesthood can survive through apostasy and is handed down from man to man, by the laying on of hands. The Aaronic Priesthood may seem minor, but it is the key to everything else, through the ministry of angels. Joseph and Oliver experienced the keys of this Priesthood by baptizing one another and by receiving the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost (aka Gift of the Holy Ghost).

The Patriarchal Blessing from Hell

This paper was done a week ago, but I have been waiting to post the paper for about a week. I didn't know why until last night. I ran across this true story on You Tube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMxlqucfPG0> Radio Free Mormon (RFM) is a trusted source and this story comes from a long-time trusted friend. About 12 years ago, a stake Patriarch in Austin, TX gave a blessing to the son of the friend of RFM. The blessing said that the son was a literal descendant, not only of the tribe of Levi, but of Aaron, himself. The Patriarch knew what this meant when he received the blessing from our Heavenly Father. He hesitated three times in pronouncing this portion of the blessing, but then decided to go ahead and pronounce the blessing. Earlier that day, the Patriarch received the impression that this evening he would be pronouncing a very special blessing, but he didn't know what at the time. This prompting was the fulfillment of that promise.

I have given Patriarchal Blessings and received two blessings, myself. If ever there is revelation in the church, it most likely comes through the Patriarchs. These men have to be constantly in touch with the Lord, and are pretty much free to act independently. They have no quorum, no president presiding over them. (The church abolished the office of Presiding Patriarch. Don't get me started.)

So, Patriarchs are generally free from outside review, except in this one case, the Stake President took it upon himself to review every Patriarchal Blessing given in the stake. (This is an overreach of power.) The Stake President was aware of the implications of being a literal son of Aaron. (See the scriptures, above.) He notified the general authorities, and the information went as high as Boyd K. Packer, who instructed

the Stake President to instruct the Patriarch to add an “addendum” to “clarify” this blessing. With this blessing as it read, this son of the friend would have the **legal right** (according to Sections 68 and 107) to serve in the office of Presiding Bishop of the church without counselors. This threatened the power of the presiding apostles, so without authorization and without revelation, they arbitrarily ordered the change in the blessing, to drop the part about being a descendant of Aaron. All of this happening without the knowledge of the recipient of the blessing.

The Return of the servants

The Gentiles (including early Latter-day Saints) are the firstfruits of those saved in the last-days, as they were the first to receive the fullness of the Gospel. Scripture says the Saints will later reject this “fullness” (see 3 Ne. 16:10 & D&C 124:28).

The scriptures talk about servants in the last days who will gather Zion and prepare for the return of Christ. Many often speculate on the identity of these servants. Speculation, however, is unnecessary. The Doctrine and Covenants makes it clear who these servants are. The only question is, do we believe the promises in the Doctrine and Covenants?

I will quote and comment on the sections of the D&C which name and foretell the mission of certain men who were the early intimate associates of Joseph Smith. I will quote extensively to add context, and highlight and add commentary as needed. Section 1 was revealed in November 1831, as the church was preparing to submit the then set of revelations to be published under the name *Book of Commandments*. Section 1 is the preface.

1:1. Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

1:2. For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated.

1:3. And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed.

1:4. And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of **my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days. [Who are these men?]**

1:5. And they **[these servants]** shall go forth and **none shall stay them**, for I the Lord have commanded them.

1:6. Behold, this is **mine authority, and the authority of my servants**, and my preface unto the book of my commandments, which I have given **them** to publish unto you, O inhabitants of the earth. **[The servants are the ones who publish the book of commandments. See 70:1.]**

1:7. Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I the Lord have decreed in them **[these servants]** shall be fulfilled.

1:8. And verily I say unto you, that they **[these servants]** 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;

1:9. Yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure--

1:10. 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.

1:11. Wherefore the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear:

1:12. Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is nigh;

1:13. And the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth.

1:14. And the arm **[Isaiah imagery describes the “arm” as the Lord’s principal end-type servant.]** of the Lord shall be revealed; and the day cometh that they **who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people;**

1:15. For they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant; **[The servants are going to restore the keys (knowledge) of the ordinances and the Lord’s true everlasting covenant.]**

1:16. They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall.

1:17. Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, **called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.**, and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments;

1:18. **And also gave commandments to others**, that they should proclaim these things unto the world; and all this that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets--

1:19. The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh— **[Has this happened yet?]**

1:37. **Search** these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall **all be fulfilled**.

1:38. What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same. **[Shall all be fulfilled by the voice of the Lord or by His specifically-named servants. See 1:6, 1:14.]**

Section 1 was given within 11 days of Section 70. These are the names of the Lord’s servants to whom Section 1 referred.

70:1. Behold, and hearken, O ye inhabitants of Zion, and all ye people of my church who are afar off, and hear the word of the Lord which I give unto my servant **Joseph Smith, Jun.**, and also unto my servant **Martin Harris**, and also unto my servant **Oliver Cowdery**, and also unto my servant **John Whitmer**, and also unto my servant **Sidney Rigdon**, and also unto my servant **William W. Phelps**, by the way of commandment unto them. **[Also, David Whitmer.] [Jan. 6, 1833, also named Frederick G. Williams.]**

70:2. For I give unto them a commandment; wherefore hearken and hear, for thus saith the Lord unto them--

70:3. I, the Lord, have appointed them, and **ordained them to be stewards over the revelations and commandments which I have given unto them**, and which I shall hereafter give unto them;

70:4. And an account of this stewardship will I require of them in the day of judgment.

70:5. Wherefore, I have appointed unto them, and this is their business in the church of God, to manage them and the concerns thereof, yea, the benefits thereof.

Section 29, and other significant revelations were given to Joseph Smith and 6 others. These were likely the 6 servants named in Section 70.

29:3. Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that at this time your sins are forgiven you, therefore ye receive these things; but remember to sin no more, lest perils shall come upon you.

29:4. Verily, I say unto you that ye are chosen out of the world to **declare my gospel with the sound of rejoicing, as with the voice of a trump. [This is future prophecy, as are many others which I have quoted and will quote.]**

29:7. And ye are called to bring to pass **the gathering of mine elect**; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts;

29:8. Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be **gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, [as opposed to being scattered all over the world]** to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked.

Section 84, given in September 1832, again to Joseph Smith and six elders. God confers the Melchizedek Priesthood upon them by His own voice out of the heavens,

84:1. A revelation of Jesus Christ unto his servant **Joseph Smith, Jun.**, and **six elders, as they united their hearts and lifted their voices on high [Notice the connection between these seven and the gathering, and Zion].**

84:2. Yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem.

84:42. And wo unto all those who come not unto **this priesthood [Melchizedek]** 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.

84:63. And as I said unto **mine apostles**, even so I say unto you, **for you are mine apostles, even God's high priests**; ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my **friends**; [**Apostles called in 1832 in the Church of Christ vs apostles called in 1835 in the Church of Latter-day saints. Apostles as we are taught in Section 20.**]

84:64. Therefore, as I said unto mine apostles I say unto you again, **that every soul who believeth on your words, and is baptized by water for the remission of sins, shall receive the Holy Ghost. [These all have authority to give the Gift of the Holy Ghost.]**

1:8. 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**;

1:9. Yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure— **[These are apostles: power to seal, power to give the Gift of the Holy Ghost.]**

We must listen to words of these apostles and prophets or be cut off.

Go to all the world, or send – future mission. What could be more marvelous then for these men to return? Search the commandments. ALL shall be fulfilled. These specific commandments and keys were given to certain, specific servants. They were not given to the general Priesthood holders, at large.

84:117. And verily I say unto you, **the rest of my servants**, go ye forth as your circumstances shall permit, in your several callings, unto the great and notable cities and villages, reproving the world in righteousness of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days.

84:118. For, with you saith the Lord Almighty, **I will rend their kingdoms; I will not only shake the earth, but the starry heavens shall tremble. [Future event.]**

Section 88 was given in December 1832 and January 1833.

88:74. And I give unto you, who are **the first laborers in this last kingdom**, a commandment that you **assemble** yourselves together, and **organize** yourselves, and **prepare** yourselves, and **sanctify** yourselves; yea, **purify** your hearts, and **cleanse** your hands and your feet before me, that I may make you clean;

88:75. That I may testify unto your Father, and your God, and my God, that you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation; that I may fulfil this promise, this great and last promise, which I have made unto you, **when I will**.

88:76. Also, I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth.

88:77. And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

88:78. Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;

88:79. Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms--

88:80. That ye may be prepared in all things **when I shall send you again** to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have **commissioned** you. **[There will be two callings and two commissions. More later.]**

88:81. Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

88:82. Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads.

88:83. He that seeketh me early shall find me, and shall not be forsaken.

88:84. Therefore, tarry ye, and labor diligently, **that you may be perfected in your ministry to go forth among the Gentiles for the last time**, as many as the mouth of the Lord shall name, to **bind** up the law and **seal** up the testimony, and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come;

88:85. That their souls may escape the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination which awaits the wicked, both in this world and in the world to come. Verily, I say unto you, **let those who are not the first elders continue in the vineyard until the mouth of the Lord shall call them, for their time is not yet come; their garments are not clean from the blood of this generation. [These seven do have their garments clean from the blood of this generation.]**

Section 90, given in March 1833 speaks more about these keys. These are given to Joseph Smith **and** his counselors, who share in them equally.

90:2. Therefore, thou art blessed from henceforth that bear the keys of the kingdom given unto you; which kingdom is coming forth for the last time. **[Addressed to those who have these keys. Nobody can actually prove a documented transfer of these keys to Brigham Young.]**

90:3. Verily I say unto you, the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from you, while thou art in the world, neither in the world to come;

90:4. Nevertheless, through you shall the oracles **[revelations]** be given to another, yea, even unto the church.

90:5. 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 are brought under condemnation thereby, and stumble

and fall when the storms descend, and the winds blow, and the rains descend, and beat upon their house. **[This is how the church and individuals come under condemnation.]**

90:6. And again, verily I say unto thy brethren, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams **[future prophecy]**, their sins are forgiven them also, and they are accounted as **equal** with thee in holding the keys of this last kingdom; **[Sidney Rigdon was excommunicated by Brigham Young for saying that he had the keys, which he actually held, according to the Lord. This revelation also applies to Oliver Cowdery, who was later ordained a member of the Presidency of the High Priesthood.]**

90:7. As also through your administration the keys of the school of the prophets, which I have commanded to be organized;

90:8. That thereby they may be perfected in their ministry for the salvation of Zion, and of the nations of Israel, and of the Gentiles, as many as will believe;

90:9. That through your administration they may receive the word, and through their administration **the word may go forth unto the ends of the earth**, unto the Gentiles first, and then, behold, and lo, they shall turn unto the Jews.

90:10. And then cometh the day **when the arm of the Lord shall be revealed in power** in convincing the nations, the heathen nations, the house of Joseph, of the gospel of their salvation.

90:11. For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the **fulness** of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are **ordained unto this power, by the administration of the Comforter [Today's missionaries learn to teach the preparatory gospel in other languages using secular methods in a language school. In the future, the servants of the Lord will teach the fullness of the Everlasting Gospel by the gift of tongues.]**, shed forth upon them for the revelation of Jesus Christ.

90:12. And now, verily I say unto you, I give unto you a commandment that you continue in the ministry and presidency.

The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man.

65:2. **The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth [See above.]**, and from thence **[them]** shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth. **[Summarizing the Lord's previous decrees.]**

D&C 85:7 Mentions the need to set in order the house of God **[refers to the church as a whole, not the temple]. This would not be necessary if the church were already in order.**

This labor is prophesied in the Book of Mormon.

3 Nephi 21:9 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.**

3 Nephi 21:10 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.

3 Nephi 21:11 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.

Joseph Smith actually spoke of two commissions for these servants: the current commission and a future commission. Here is the original statement from the JS Papers and the “doctored version” given in TPJS. Joseph Fielding Smith actually removed the “plain and precious truth” that the second commission was necessary because of the failures of the first commission.

It is not necessary that God should give us all things at first or in his **first commission** to us, but in his **second**. John saw the angel deliver the gospel in the last days, **which would not be necessary if it was already in the world this expression would be inconsistent,** the small lights that God has given, is sufficient to lead us out of babylon, when we get out we shall have the greater light. (Nov. 9, 1835, Journal, 1835–1836," p. 3, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed June 27, 2021, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-1835-1836/4>)

Doctored quote in TPJS:

It is not necessary that God should give us all things in His first commission to us, but in His second. John saw the angel deliver the Gospel in the last days. The small lights that God has given are sufficient to lead us out of Babylon; when we get out, we shall have the greater light. (TPJS Section Two 1834-37, p.104)

D&C 101:43-62, D&C 103:15-22 give the Parable of the redemption of Zion. There are two attempts to recover Zion.

D&C 100:13, D&C 103:1-4, D&C 105:1-17 describe why Zion was not redeemed.

105:2. Behold, I say unto you, were it not for **the transgressions of my people,** speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now.

105:3. But behold, **they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands,** but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them;

105:4. And are **not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom;**

105:5. And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.

105:6. And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer.

105:7. I speak not concerning those who are appointed to lead my people, who are the first elders of my church, for they are not all under this condemnation;

105:8. But I speak concerning my churches abroad--there are many who will say: Where is their God? Behold, he will deliver them in time of trouble, otherwise we will not go up unto Zion, and will keep our moneys. **[First servants are not guilty, but the collective will suffer because Zion is a collective endeavor. But this passage also speaks to the need to prepare spiritually for Zion.]**

105:9. Therefore, in consequence of the transgressions of my people, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion--

105:10. **That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands.**

105:11. And this cannot be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high. **[In the future.]**

Future prophecy of the work of the servants.

Mormon 8:26 And no one need say they shall not come, for they surely shall, for the Lord hath spoken it; for out of the earth shall they come, by the hand of the Lord, and none can stay it; and it shall come in a day when it shall be said that miracles are done away; and it shall come even as if one should speak from the dead.

Zion needs to return to the power which she has lost.

D&C 113:7. Questions by Elias Higbee: What is meant by the command in Isaiah, 52d chapter, 1st verse, which saith: Put on thy strength, O Zion--and what people had Isaiah reference to?

D&C 113:8. He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of **priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel**; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; **also to return to that power which she had lost.**

D&C 113:9. What are we to understand by Zion loosing herself from the bands of her neck; 2d verse?

D&C 113:10. We are to understand that the **scattered remnants** are exhorted to return to the Lord from whence they have fallen; which if they do, **the promise of the Lord is that he will speak to them, or give them revelation.** See the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. The bands of her neck are the curses of God upon her, or **the remnants of Israel in their scattered condition among the Gentiles.**

The Keys to the Mysteries of God

D&C 84:18-26 explains how the priesthood contains the knowledge of the mysteries of God.

18 And the Lord **confirmed** [*purposefully endowed*] a **priesthood** [*an enabling, symbiotic relationship*] also upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations, which priesthood also continueth and abideth forever with **the priesthood which is after the holiest order of God** [*a greater and more intimate relationship with the Lord*]. 19 And this greater priesthood **administereth the gospel** [*reveals the true and pure doctrine of Christ*] and holdeth the **key of the mysteries of the kingdom** [*a broader*

and deeper knowledge and understanding of the mind and will of the Lord as it relates to the Lord's own spiritual kingdom—the kingdom of God], **even the key of the knowledge of God** [personal and firsthand knowledge of the glory of the Lord]. 20 Therefore, in the **ordinances thereof** [the sanctification and justification within the doctrine of Christ], the **power of godliness is manifest** [through various gifts of the spirit—including prophecy, revelation, visions, etc.]. 21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the **authority** [the Lord's permission] of the **priesthood** [symbiotic relationship between the Lord and mankind], the **power of godliness** [the enabling power for a soul to receive more] is not manifest unto men **in the flesh** [in mortality; the telestial world]; 22 For **without this no man can see the face of God** [literally enter the presence of the Lord in the heavenly realms], **even the Father** [the Lord and even the Lord's Father; a mystery], and **live** [without this intimate relationship and having been sanctified and justified by the Lord (Moses 6:60) through this relationship, you cannot enter the presence of the Lord without literally being destroyed by His glory]. 23 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** [Moses literally taught them to believe God had invited them to come into His presence and receive the glory He intended for them to receive. This belief (hope) was supposed to precede personal supplication to the Lord for sanctification through baptism of fire and Holy Ghost.]; 24 **But they hardened their hearts** [were filled with “unbelief”] **and could not endure his presence** [without this necessary hope (belief) they failed to exercise faith unto repentance and allow the Lord to sanctify their individual souls]; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, **swore that they should not enter into his rest** [enter His presence in the heavenly realms] while in the wilderness, **which rest is the fulness of his glory** [yes, literally]. 25 Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, **and the Holy Priesthood** [the intimate relationship in which the Lord could reveal keys and even reveal Himself] also; 26 **And the lesser priesthood continued** [a relationship centered around the Law of Moses; a teaching tool to help them overcome their unbelief and renew an individual and personal relationship with the Lord], **which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel** [this includes learning how to interact with angels of light and darkness instead of the Lord];

From: <https://journeydoctrineofchrist.org/2020/11/27/false-traditions-two-churches-only-part3/>. This is an excellent website that teaches the Doctrine of Christ in a very clear and straightforward manner in the form of lessons for self-study or for family instruction.

The Keys to Ask and Receive

The Lord instructed the saints to construct a temple in Nauvoo so that He could restore the fullness of the Priesthood.

124:33. For verily I say unto you, that after you have had sufficient time to build a house to me, wherein the ordinance of baptizing for the dead belongeth, and for which the same was instituted from before the foundation of the world, your baptisms for your dead cannot be acceptable unto me;

124:34. For therein are the **keys** of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory.

D&C 124:38. For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that **those ordinances might be revealed** which had been hid from before the world was.

D&C 124:39. Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your **anointings**, and your **washings**, and your **baptisms** for the dead, and your **solemn assemblies**, and your **memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi**, and for your **oracles [revelations]** in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your **statutes and judgments**, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipalities, **are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house**, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name.

D&C 124:40. And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, **that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;**

D&C 124:41. **For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.**

With Oliver Cowdery forced out of the church, Joseph required a second witness for when the Lord would restore additional Priesthood to them, as He did with Joseph and Oliver. The Lord appointed Hyrum to fill the office of Patriarch to the Church and begin to prepare to receive the keys of that office – not from Joseph Smith, but directly from the Lord, as Oliver Cowdery had,

124:91. And again, verily I say unto you, let my servant William be appointed, ordained, and anointed, as counselor unto my servant Joseph, in the room of my servant Hyrum, that my servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, which was appointed unto him by his father, by blessing and also by right;

124:92. That from henceforth he shall hold the **keys** of the patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people,

124:93. That **whoever he blesses shall be blessed, and whoever he curses shall be cursed; that whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

124:94. And from this time forth I appoint unto him that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph;

124:95. That he may act in concert also with my servant Joseph; and that he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph, **who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive, and be crowned with the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and gifts of the priesthood, that once were put upon him that was my servant, Oliver Cowdery;**

124:97. Let my servant William Law also receive the **keys by which he may ask and receive blessings;** let him be humble before me, and be without guile, and he shall receive of my Spirit, even the Comforter, **which shall manifest unto him the truth of all things [This is a mystery.],** and shall give him, in the very hour, what he shall say.

Both William Law and Oliver Cowdery were to be shown “the keys by which they might ask and receive”, or in other words, learn how to call upon the Name of the Lord and receive a visitation of the Lord to ordain them and confer additional keys upon them. If it were sufficient for the Lord to name Hyrum and William by revelation, and if it were sufficient for Joseph to simply give keys to Hyrum and William, then why was it necessary for the Lord to instruct Joseph to show both of them these specific keys? If it is

necessary for them to receive their ordinations from the Lord, as Oliver Cowdery charged the Twelve, how can Brigham Young and subsequent presidents of the Church claim that these keys, which they claim to hold, be passed off from man to man? What, exactly was the Lord telling Joseph? What does this mean? Here's a clue.

Bathsheba W. Smith recorded that on one occasion the Prophet said to her, "You do not know how to pray and have your prayers answered." Then she added that when she and her husband received their endowments, they learned how to pray. (*Jl* 27 (June 1, 1892): 345. Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia* 1:700.)

How did Oliver Cowdery receive the keys? By **asking** and **receiving**. When Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer ordained the original Twelve in 1835, Oliver gave them a charge to **go directly to the Lord to be fully ordained and to obtain power in authority to function in their office of special witnesses of the Name of Christ to all the world**. It is necessary to obtain an eyewitness of the Lord in order to teach with power and authority. Here is an excerpt from this charge.

You have been indebted to other men, in the first instance, for evidence; on that you have acted; but **it is necessary that you receive a testimony from heaven for 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 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, [I testify that you will receive God's personal pledge that He will stand by you in your testimony.]** 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? Oliver Cowdery ("Charge to the Apostles," Kirtland, Ohio, February 21, 1835; *LDS History of the Church*, 2:194-198)

These keys could not be passed from one mortal to another. One must receive them directly from the Lord. See also the section explaining why "Keys do not convey authority".

[Keys in the Doctrine & Covenants](#)

Here is where we find most teachings about keys. Both Joseph and Oliver were given the keys to the gift of translation. What does *keys* mean in this case? The knowledge of how to use this gift. See Webster's 1828 Dictionary, Definition # 7: **"That which serves to explain anything difficult to be understood."**

6:25. And, behold, I grant unto you a gift, if you desire of me, to translate, even as my servant Joseph.

6:26. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that there are records which contain much of my gospel, which have been kept back because of the wickedness of the people;

6:27. And now I command you, that if you have good desires--a desire to lay up treasures for yourself in heaven--then shall you assist in bringing to light, with your gift, those parts of my scriptures which have been hidden because of iniquity.

6:28. And now, behold, **I give unto you, and also unto my servant Joseph, the keys of this gift**, which shall bring to light this ministry; and **in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.** [Joseph needed Oliver, and later Hyrum to be a second witness.]

Peter, James, and John were to have the knowledge, power, and understanding to direct the ministry of angels, to minister to those who would be heirs of salvation. The Aaronic Priesthood contains the keys to **receive** the ministry of angels, but Peter, James, and John have the keys to **conduct** this ministry.

7:7. And I will make thee to minister for him and for thy brother James; and unto you three I will give this power and the **keys** of this ministry until I come.

These are future ministries of angels. There are a couple of misconceptions that Mormons have. Even after the vision of the coming of Elijah in the Kirtland House of the Lord, Joseph still spoke of the future coming of Elijah. A careful reading of the D&C shows that Joseph's mission was only to lay the **foundation** for the restoration, **which was a future event to take place in a future dispensation** – the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, which is a dispensation to take place between now and the Millennial reign of Christ. Many believe that this dispensation is already under way.

27:9. And also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the **keys** of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse;

27:12. And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the **keys** of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them;

27:13. Unto whom I have committed the **keys** of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in the which I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;

The Doctrine & Covenants is a sealed book, and embedded within the revelations are mysteries yet to be revealed. Joseph Smith holds the keys to the unfolding of these mysteries, and the members of the Presidency of the High Priesthood (See Section 81 below.) – namely Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Oliver Cowdery were accounted as being equal to Joseph Smith in holding those keys, as I mentioned earlier.

28:7. For I have given him the **keys** of the mysteries, and the **revelations which are sealed**, until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead.

35:18. And I have given unto him the **keys** of the mystery of those things which have been sealed, even things which were from the foundation of the world, and the things which shall come from this time until the time of my coming, if he abide in me, and if not, another will I plant in his stead.

35:3. Behold, verily, verily, I say unto my servant Sidney, I have looked upon thee and thy works. I have heard thy prayers, and prepared thee for a greater work.

35:4. Thou art blessed, for thou shalt do great things. Behold thou wast sent forth, even as John, to prepare the way before me, and before Elijah which should come, and thou knewest it not.

35:25. And Israel shall be saved in mine own due time; and by the **keys** which I have given shall they be led, and no more be confounded at all.

The keys of the kingdom, or the keys of the church (as the Lord defines “church”) have been committed (entrusted, not given) to man. Note that these keys were already committed by the time these two revelations were given in 1831. The visits of Moses, Elias, and Elijah didn’t occur until 1836.

42:69. Lift up your hearts and rejoice, for unto you the kingdom, or in other words, the **keys** of the church have been given. Even so. Amen.

64:1. Behold, thus saith the Lord your God unto you, O ye elders of my church, hearken ye and hear, and receive my will concerning you.

64:4. I will be merciful unto you, for I have given unto you the kingdom.

64:5. And the **keys** of the mysteries of the kingdom shall not be taken from my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., through the means I have appointed, while he liveth, inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances.

65:2. The **keys** of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth.

97:14. That they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth, the **keys** of which kingdom have been conferred upon you.

This verse which follows is speaking of the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost. Water baptism does not remit sins. The Lord holds the keys to this ordinance, which is administered by someone holding the apostolic authority, who has been ordained and sealed by the Lord. The performance of these ordinances must also be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the Lord, himself.

76:52. That by keeping the commandments they might be **washed [water baptism] and cleansed from all their sins [justification, baptism of fire], and receive the Holy Spirit [sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost]** by the laying on of the hands of him who is **ordained and sealed** unto this power;

I wrote another paper explaining the specific relationship between Adam and the gods. Later in this paper will be a quote from Joseph Smith, who explains what it means for Michael-Adam to hold the “keys of salvation.”

78:16. Who hath appointed Michael [**aka Adam**] your prince, and established his feet, and set him upon high, and given unto him the **keys of salvation** under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is without beginning of days or end of life.

The keys of the kingdom are given to the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

81:1. Verily, verily, I say unto you my servant Frederick G. Williams: Listen to the voice of him who speaketh, to the word of the Lord your God, and hearken to the calling wherewith you are called, even to be a high priest in my church, and a counselor unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.;

81:2. Unto whom I have given the **keys of the kingdom, which belong always unto the Presidency of the High Priesthood:**

Specific keys are held by those who hold the two priesthoods. The power of godliness is manifested in the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost.

84:19. 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.**

84:20. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

84:26. And the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the **key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel;**

107:18. The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the **keys** of all the spiritual blessings of the church **[These blessings are available to all members of the church of Christ, not just the presiding officers.]**

107:20. The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, is to **hold the keys [to be able to receive] of the ministering of angels**, and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the **[preparatory to the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost]** remission of sins, **agreeable to the covenants and commandments [now Section 20].**

The Twelve, whom the Lord never called “apostles”, but were conditionally called to **be** apostles were given certain specific keys limited to open the door to the nations to preach the gospel worldwide, but **not** to preside in the stakes of Zion.

107:35. The Twelve being sent out, holding the **keys, to open the door by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ**, and first unto the Gentiles and then unto the Jews.

112:15. Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph; for verily I say unto you, I am with him, and my hand shall be over him; **and the keys which I have given unto him, and also to youward**, shall not be taken from him till I come.

112:16. Verily I say unto you, my servant Thomas, thou art the man whom I have chosen to hold **the keys of my kingdom, as pertaining to the Twelve**, abroad among all nations--

112:30. For unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders, is the **power** of this priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time, in the which is the dispensation of the fulness of times.

112:31. Which **power** you hold, in connection with all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation;

112:32. For verily I say unto you, the **keys** of the dispensation, which ye have received, have come down from the fathers, and last of all, being sent down from heaven unto you. **[Some keys are not exclusive. They are held jointly by all those who have held the same office at any time. Priesthood is eternal, meaning Priesthood endures throughout time and space. John Taylor taught that no man acts in the Priesthood alone. Jesus taught that He was the vine and we are the branches, and unless we are connected to Christ, the vine, as Christ is connected to the Father, and as all gods are connected to all other gods who came before Him, we are nothing. Prayerfully consider the broader meaning of “inseparably connected” in D&C 93:33.]**

124:127. I give unto you my servant Brigham Young to be a president over the Twelve traveling council;

124:128. Which Twelve hold the **keys to open up the authority of my kingdom upon the four corners of the earth**, and after that to send my word to every creature.

Section 110 was never included in the D&C while Joseph and Oliver were alive. Joseph and Oliver never discussed these visions while they were alive. Section 110 was added in 1876 by Brigham Young, along with 25 other sections, containing revelations and instruction designed to support the false idea that the church possessed the sealing power of Elijah and, therefore, was empowered to perform polygamous marriages that reached into eternity. This account was taken from Joseph Smith’s journal, written in the third person by a secretary, but later edited and redacted to appear as if it were written in Joseph’s own hand.

110:11. After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the **keys of the gathering of Israel** from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.

110:12. After this, Elias appeared, and **committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham**, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed. **[These two verses committed or entrusted the keys of the gathering of Israel and the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham to Joseph and Oliver. The keys were not given to them. The keys were held jointly with all who ever received a dispensation of the Gospel. But these keys are the preparatory Gospel, not the fullness of the Gospel or the everlasting Gospel. Joseph said that the Priesthood of Abraham (not Elijah) was the highest yet experienced in the church. These keys were necessary to commence “the work of the Father” among all nations. It is interesting that the work of the Father and the gospel of Abraham are related. All the Gentiles who are gathered, receive the Gospel, and are baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost, are adopted into Israel and are accounted as children of Abraham.]**

110:13. After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

110:14. Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi-- testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come--

110:15. To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse--

110:16. Therefore, **the keys of this dispensation** are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors. **[Joseph never taught that he received any keys from Elijah. Joseph always spoke of a future coming of Elijah, as we shall later see in this paper. So, what did Elijah do? He came to declare his (Elijah's) keys and to reaffirm that the keys of the dispensation of the Gospel of Abraham were committed to Joseph and Oliver, by way of preparation for greater things to come. Joseph confirmed in Section 128 that numerous angelic messengers came declaring (not committing or giving) keys and foreshadowing future events, including the future "Dispensation of the Fulness of Times".]**

124:28. 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. **[If Elijah restored the fullness of the Priesthood in 1836, why would the Lord say in 1841 that it had been lost or taken away and needed to be restored in a special place?]**

128:20. And again, what do we hear? ... The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, **declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times!**

128:21. And again, ... the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, **all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!**

Here is more confirmation that more keys and more revelation were necessary in a future dispensation in order to establish Zion in the **last days, not the latter days.**

113:5. What is the root of Jesse spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter?

113:6. Behold, thus saith the Lord, it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the **keys** of the kingdom, for an ensign, and **for the gathering of my people in the last days.**

In this revelation, commanding the building of the city of Far West, Missouri, the Lord reaffirms that he has given the keys of this kingdom and ministry.

115:19. For behold, I will be with him, and I will sanctify him before the people; for unto him have I given the **keys of this kingdom and ministry.** Even so. Amen.

Section 124 lists the officers of the church and **associates specific keys with those offices, not the individuals involved.**

124:123. Verily I say unto you, I now give unto you **the officers belonging to my Priesthood, that ye may hold the keys thereof,** even the Priesthood which is after the order of Melchizedek, which is after the order of mine Only Begotten Son.

124:143. **The above offices I have given unto you, and the keys thereof**, for helps and for governments, for the work of the ministry and the perfecting of my saints.

Here are the first references to keys in the New Testament. They weren't just given to Peter. In a later verse the Lord gives them to all his disciples. In D&C Section 112, the Lord says that all the apostles should be equal in all things, which would include holding equally the keys to opening up the nations to the preaching of the Gospel.

128:10. And again, for the precedent, Matthew 16:18, 19: And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I **will give** unto thee the **keys** of the kingdom of heaven [**When did Peter receive these keys? Were these keys exclusive to Peter?**]: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Matt 18:18 [**Speaking to a group of disciples,**] Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

But wait there's more. The "keys of the kingdom of heaven" are given to every person who receives the Second Comforter. These keys consist of the knowledge and ability to return to the heavens at any time and commune with the Lord and with the hosts of heaven, and the church of the Firstborn, at His invitation. This is symbolic and takes many forms. Like all mysteries, they remain mysteries until the Lord reveals them to you, but there are clues scattered about the scriptures in plain sight.

But there is even more. These two above passages are mistranslated, and not even Joseph Smith fixed them in his new translation. The Concordant New Testament is a literal Greek translation that gives us more information. The Amplified New Testament is also a literal translation, but the following is from Matthew, chapters 16 and 18 of the Concordant version.

16 Now answering, Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Now, answering, Jesus said to him, "Happy are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood **does not reveal it to you**, but My Father Who is in the heavens. [**Note the present tense.**]

18 Now I, also, am saying to you that you are Peter, and on this rock will I be building My ecclesia [**"church" in the original sense: gathering of people, not an institution. D&C 10:67.**], and the **gates of the unseen [hell]** shall not be prevailing [**Present progressive – denotes ongoing action.**] against it.

19 I will be giving [**future tense**] you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and **whatsoever you should be binding on the earth shall be those things having been bound in the heavens, and whatsoever you should be loosing on the earth, shall be those having been loosed in the heavens.**"

18 "Verily, I am saying to you, **Whatsoever you should be binding on the earth shall be those things having been bound in the heavens, and whatsoever you should be loosing on the earth shall be those loose in heaven.**

This is huge. If you have the Sealing Power, you don't just use it arbitrarily. You must first discern what has already been decided in the councils of heaven. And if you were a true prophet, God would have revealed this counsel to you (Amos 3:7, Jeremiah chapter 23, as discussed in this paper). There is also a way to influence the decisions of heavenly councils, but that is beyond the scope of this paper. Most of the time, if you have the sealing power, given you of the Lord, once you determine the will of God, you can act in His Name on the earth, and it will be the same as if God, Himself, said it or did it.

The use of "keys" has been distorted by the church to mean "exclusive monopolistic rights". These two verses by Joseph Smith explode this myth by explaining what keys really are: **knowledge. Peter possessed knowledge of who Christ was, and therefore, received the "keys of the kingdom". So did the brother of Jared. Jesus declared that this knowledge came from the Father. Power in the Priesthood consists in obtaining knowledge from the Father. Joseph Smith mentions no exclusivity in obtaining these keys.**

128:11. Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the summum bonum of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the Holy Priesthood. **For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living.**

128:14. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. ... **This, therefore, is the sealing and binding power, and, in one sense of the word, the keys of the kingdom, which consist in the key of knowledge.**

128:18. ... **for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time.** And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. **[The Dispensation of the Fulness of times is not yet here, but is beginning to usher in, and God does not restrict those to whom He will reveal this knowledge.]**

Keys taught by Joseph Smith

Here are quotations from speeches, first from Joseph Smith, then Brigham Young, taken from church history. You will notice the contrast between the two in that Joseph spends his efforts **teaching about keys**, but Brigham reveals nothing new about keys. He only tries to **convince you that he has them**, and nobody else does. Brigham made an effort to look like a prophet, make the claims of a prophet, but he cared little, and apparently the saints didn't either, that he didn't teach like a prophet or display the spiritual gifts of a prophet.

Joseph Smith: Try the Spirits

The Shaker will whirl around on his heel, impelled by a supernatural agency or spirit, and think that he is governed by the Spirit of God; and the Jumper will jump and enter into all kinds of extravagances. A Primitive Methodist will shout under the influence of that spirit, until he will rend the heavens with his cries; while the Quakers (or Friends) moved as they think, by the Spirit of God, will sit still and say

nothing. Is God the author of all this? If not of all of it, which does He recognize? Surely, such a heterogeneous mass of confusion never can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Every one of these professes to be competent to try his neighbor's spirit, but no one can try his own, and what is the reason? **Because they have not a key to unlock, no rule wherewith to measure, and no criterion whereby they can test it. [This is what you can do when you have keys.]**

A man must have the discerning of spirits, as we before stated, to understand these things, and how is he to obtain this gift if there are no gifts of the Spirit? And how can these gifts be obtained without revelation? "Christ ascended into heaven, and gave gifts to men; and He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers. **And how were Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers and Evangelists chosen? By prophecy (revelation) and by laying on of hands: -- by a divine communication, and a divinely appointed ordinance--**through the medium of the Priesthood, organized according to the order of God, by divine appointment. **The Apostles in ancient times held the keys of this Priesthood--**of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and consequently were enabled to unlock and unravel all things pertaining to the government of the Church, the welfare of society, the future destiny of men, and the agency, power and influence of spirits; **for they could control them at pleasure, bid them depart in the name of Jesus, and detect their mischievous and mysterious operations when trying to palm themselves upon the Church in a religious garb, and militate against the interest of the Church and spread of truth. We read that they "cast out devils in the name of Jesus,"** and when a woman possessing the spirit of divination, cried before Paul and Silas, "these are the servants of the Most High God that show unto us the way of salvation," they detected the spirit. And although she spake favorably of them, Paul commanded the spirit to come out of her, and saved themselves from the opprobrium that might have been heaped upon their heads, through an alliance with her, in the development of her wicked principles, which they certainly would have been charged with, if they had not rebuked the evil spirit.

"Try the Spirits"--The Prophet's Editorial in the Times and Seasons. DHC 4:571-581

Delivering the keys of the Priesthood to the Church

He spoke of **delivering the keys of the Priesthood to the Church, and said that the faithful members of the Relief Society should receive them in connection with their husbands,** that the Saints whose integrity has been tried and proved faithful, **might know how to ask the Lord and receive an answer; for according to his prayers, God had appointed him elsewhere. [This is a key. Do the saints have it? Do the saints know it?]**

He exhorted the sisters always to concentrate their faith and prayers for, and place confidence in their husbands, whom God has appointed for them to honor, [This is an important principle that we sustain one another in the exercise of Priesthood by our faith.] and in those faithful men whom God has placed at the head of the Church to lead His people; that we should arm and sustain them with our prayers; **for the keys of the kingdom are about to be given to them,** that they may be able to detect everything false; as well as to all the Elders who shall prove their integrity in due season. Remarks to Relief Society, DHC 4:604-605

What constitutes a prophet?

If any person should ask me if I were a prophet, I should not deny it, as that would give me the lie; for, according to John, **the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; therefore if I profess to be a witness**

or teacher, and have not the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus, I must be a false witness; but if I be a true teacher and witness, I must possess the spirit of prophecy, and that constitutes a prophet; and any man who says he is a teacher or preacher of righteousness, and denies the spirit of prophecy, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; and by this key false teachers and imposters may be detected. DHC 5:215-216

The Key to Understanding Parables

In reference to the prodigal son, I said it was a subject I had never dwelt upon; that it was understood by many to be one of the intricate subjects of the scriptures; and even the Elders of this Church have preached largely upon it, without having any rule of interpretation. What is the rule of interpretation? Just no interpretation at all. Understand it precisely as it reads. I have a **key [A key to obtain knowledge.]** by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, **what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable?** It is not national; it does not refer to Abraham, Israel or the Gentiles, in a national capacity, as some suppose. To ascertain its meaning, we must dig up the root and ascertain what it was that drew the saying out of Jesus. While Jesus was teaching the people, all the publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him; "and the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." **This is the key word which unlocks the parable of the prodigal son.** It was given to answer the murmurings and questions of the Sadducees and Pharisees, who were querying, finding fault, and saying, "How is it that this man as great as He pretends to be, eats with publicans and sinners?" Jesus was not put to it so, but He could have found something to illustrate His subject, if He had designed it for a nation or nations; but He did not. It was for men in an individual capacity; and all straining on this point is a bubble. **"This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."** And he spake this parable unto them--"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons which need no repentance." The hundred sheep represent one hundred Sadducees and Pharisees, as though Jesus had said, **"If you Sadducees and Pharisees are in the sheepfold, I have no mission for you; I am sent to look up sheep that are lost; and when I have found them, I will back them up and make joy in heaven."** This represents hunting after a few individuals, or one poor publican, which the Pharisees and Sadducees despised. DHC 5:261-262

The Key Is Knowledge

Now for the secret and grand key, Though they might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure, that they had part with Christ, and were joint heirs with Him. They then would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. **Then, having this promise sealed unto them, it was an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.** Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation. **Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.**

Compare this principle once with Christendom at the present day, and where are they, with all their boasted religion, piety and sacredness while at the same time they are crying out against prophets,

apostles, angels, revelations, prophesying and visions, &c. Why, they are just ripening for the damnation of hell. They will be damned, **for they reject the most glorious principle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and treat with disdain and trample under foot the key that unlocks the heavens and puts in our possession the glories of the celestial world.** Yes, I say, such will be damned, with all their professed godliness. Then **I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure** for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it, &c. DHC 5:388-389

1st key: Knowledge is the power of salvation.

2nd key: Make your calling and election sure.

3rd key: It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice. &c., &c., and another to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom. DHC 5:403

How many can hold the keys of power on the earth?

Third, John at that time was the only legal administrator holding the keys of power there was on earth. [This presupposes that there could be more than one legal administrator holding the keys of power on the earth.] The keys, the kingdom, the power, the glory had departed from the Jews; and John, the son of Zachariah, by the holy anointing and decree of heaven, held the keys of power at that time.

The Prophet's Address to the Twelve

Here are some excerpts from the prophet's address to the Twelve as pertaining to Priesthood and the Keys thereof.

In the afternoon of Monday, July 2, 1839, the Prophet met with the Apostles and some of the Seventies who were about to depart on their mission to Great Britain in fulfilment of the revelation of the Lord, and instructed them. A synopsis of his remarks he placed in his journal and this is here reproduced in full as they are given in the History of the Church.

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

The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. **The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from heaven, it is by Adam's authority. [Notice that the keys have to be revealed. Keys are knowledge.]**

Daniel in his seventh chapter speaks of the Ancient of days; he means the oldest man, our Father Adam, Michael, he will call his children together and hold a council with them to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man. **He (Adam) is the father of the human family, and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. This may take place before some of us leave this stage of action.** The Son of Man stands before him, and there is given him

glory and dominion. **Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe, but retains his standing as head of the human family.**

The spirit of man is not a created being; it existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity. **Anything created cannot be eternal; and earth, water, etc., had their existence in an elementary state,** from eternity. Our Savior speaks of children and says, Their angels always stand before my Father. The Father called all spirits before Him at the creation of man, and organized them. **He (Adam) is the head, and was told to multiply. The keys were first given to him, and by him to others. He will have to give an account of his stewardship, and they to him.**

The Priesthood is everlasting. The Savior, Moses, and Elias, gave the keys to Peter, James and John, on the mount, when they were transfigured before him. [Did you catch that? Peter, James, and John were transfigured, as was Christ. Otherwise, they could not have ascended to the top of the high mountain and stood in the Presence of God, where they received these keys.] The Priesthood is everlasting--without beginning of days or end of years; without father, mother, etc. If there is no change of ordinances there is no change of Priesthood. Wherever the ordinances of the Gospel are administered, there is the Priesthood. [If God commands you to perform an ordinance or an ordination, implicit with that commandment is the bestowal of keys, power, and authority, necessary to carry out that commandment. He whom the Lord calls, He empowers.]

How have we come at the Priesthood in the last days? It came down, down, in regular succession. Peter, James, and John had it given to them and they gave it to others. Christ is the Great High Priest; Adam next. Paul speaks of the Church coming to an innumerable company of angels--to God the Judge of all the spirits of just men made perfect; to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. (Hebrews 12:22-24.)

I saw Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. He called together his children and blessed them with a patriarchal blessing. The Lord appeared in their midst, and he (Adam) blessed them all, and foretold what should befall them to the latest generation.

This is why Adam blessed his posterity; he wanted to bring them into the presence of God. They looked for a city, etc., "whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11:10.) **Moses sought to bring the children of Israel into the presence of God, through the power of the Priesthood, but he could not.** In the first ages of the world they tried to establish the same thing; and there were **Eliases [Holders of the office of Elias, possessing the gifts and callings appropriate to the office.]** raised up who tried to restore these very glories, **but did not obtain them; but they prophesied of a day when this glory would be revealed.** Paul spoke of the dispensation of the fullness of times, when God would gather together all things in one, etc.; **and those men to whom these keys have been given, will have to be there; [The return of the servants.]** and they without us cannot be made perfect.

These men are in heaven, but their children are on the earth. Their bowels yearn over us. **God sends down men for this reason.** "And the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that give offense and them that do iniquity." (Matthew 13:41.) **All these authoritative characters will come down and join hand in hand in bringing about this work.**

[There is a company of exalted 4th estate people who condescend to return to the earth, age after age, to assist the children of men, and particularly the seed of Israel, to come to Christ.

“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. ...”
Luke 19:12-27

We can also see from this parable that one needs to understand reincarnation for a full understanding [of it], for the servants of the Lord will toil in the world until the Lord comes and the patterns they set with their works will follow them from lifetime to lifetime and eventually from world to world.

From this we can learn that what was said of Joseph Smith, a servant empowered with keys to labor in the Lord's vineyard from one lifetime to the next. The same could be said of other servants as well.]

The Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed. The mustard seed is small, but brings forth a large tree, and the fowls lodge in the branches. The fowls are the angels. **Thus angels come down, combine together to gather their children, and gather them. We cannot be made perfect without them, nor they without us;** when these things are done, the Son of Man will descend, the Ancient of Days sit; we may come to an innumerable company of angels, have communion with and receive instruction from them. Paul told about Moses' proceedings; spoke of the children of Israel being baptized. (1 Cor. 10:1-4.) He knew this, and that all the ordinances and blessings were in the Church. Paul had these things, and we may have the fowls of heaven lodge in the branches, etc.

The "Horn" made war with the Saints and overcame them, until the Ancient of Days came; **judgment was given to the Saints of the Most High from the Ancient of Days;** the time came that the Saints possessed the Kingdom. This not only makes us ministers here, but in eternity.

Not every spirit, or vision, or singing, is of God. The devil is an orator; he is powerful; he took our Savior on to a pinnacle of the Temple, and kept Him in the wilderness for forty days. **The gift of discerning spirits will be given to the Presiding Elder. Pray for him that he may have this gift.** Speak not in the gift of tongues without understanding it, or without interpretation. The devil can speak in tongues; the adversary will come with his work; he can tempt all classes; can speak in English or Dutch. Let no one speak in tongues unless he interpret, except by the consent of the one who is placed to preside; then he may discern or interpret, or another may. **Let us seek for the glory of Abraham, Noah, Adam, the Apostles, who have communion with [knowledge of] these things, and then we shall be among that number when Christ comes.** (July 2, 1839.) TPJS p. 155-162, DHC 3:383-392.

Remarks On Priesthood at the Conference, October, 1840

Commencing with Adam, who was the first man, who is spoken of in Daniel as being the "Ancient of Days," or in other words, the first and oldest of all, the great, grand progenitor of whom it is said in another place he is Michael, **because he was the first and father of all, not only by progeny, but the first to hold the spiritual blessings, to whom was made known the plan of ordinances for the salvation of his posterity unto the end, and to whom Christ was first revealed, and through whom Christ has been revealed from henceforth. Adam holds the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of times; i.e., the dispensation of all the times have been and will be revealed through him from the beginning to Christ, and from Christ to the end of the dispensations that are to be revealed.** "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He that purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." (Ephesians 1:9-10.)

And again, God purposed in Himself that there should not be an eternal fullness until every dispensation should be fulfilled and gathered together in one, and that all things whatsoever, that should be gathered together in one in those dispensations unto the same fullness and eternal glory, should be in Christ Jesus; therefore He set the ordinances to be the same forever and ever, and set Adam to watch over them, to reveal them from heaven to man, or to send angels to reveal them. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14.)

These angels are under the direction of Michael or Adam, who acts under the direction of the Lord.

From the above quotation we learn that Paul perfectly understood the purposes of God in relation to His connection with man, and that glorious and perfect order which He established in Himself, whereby he sent forth power, revelations, and glory.

God will not acknowledge that which He has not called, ordained, and chosen. In the beginning God called Adam by His own voice. "And the Lord called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and hid myself." (See Genesis 3:9-10.) **Adam received commandments and instructions from God: this was the order from the beginning.**

That he received revelations, commandments and ordinances at the beginning is beyond the power of controversy; else how did they begin to offer sacrifices to God in an acceptable manner? **And if they offered sacrifices they must be authorized by ordination.** We read Genesis 4:4, that Abel brought the firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof, and the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering. And, again, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh." (Hebrews 11:4.) How doth he yet speak? Why he magnified the Priesthood which was conferred upon him, and dies a righteous man, and therefore has become an angel of God by receiving his body from the dead, **holding still the keys of his dispensation; and was sent down from heaven unto Paul to minister consoling words, and to commit unto him a knowledge of the mysteries of godliness.**

And if this was not the case, I would ask, how did Paul know so much about Abel, and why should he talk about his speaking after he was dead? Hence, that he spoke after he was dead must be by being sent down out of heaven to administer.

This, then, is the nature of the Priesthood; every man holding the Presidency of his dispensation, and one man holding the Presidency of them all, even Adam; and Adam receiving his Presidency and authority from the Lord, but cannot receive a fullness until Christ shall present the Kingdom to the Father, which shall be at the end of the last dispensation.

The next great, grand Patriarch [after Enoch] who held the keys of the Priesthood was Lamech. "And Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years and begat a son, and he called his name Noah, saying, this same shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands because of the ground which the Lord has cursed." (See Genesis 5:28-29.) The Priesthood continued from Lamech to Noah: "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them and behold I will destroy them with the earth." (Genesis 6:13.)

Thus we behold the keys of this Priesthood consisted in obtaining the voice of Jehovah that He talked with him [Noah] in a familiar and friendly manner, that He continued to him the keys, the covenants, the power and the glory, with which He blessed Adam at the beginning; and the offering of sacrifice, which also shall be continued at the last time; for all the ordinances and duties that ever have been required by the Priesthood, under the directions and commandments of the Almighty in any of the dispensations, shall all be had in the last dispensation, therefore all things had under the authority of the Priesthood at any former period, shall be had again, bringing to pass the restoration spoken of by the mouth of all the Holy Prophets; then shall the sons of Levi offer an acceptable offering to the Lord. "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord." (See Malachi 3:3.) TPJS p. 167-171

Three Orders of Priesthood

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.

The law was given under Aaron for the purpose of pouring out judgments and destructions.

The sectarian world are going to hell by hundreds, by thousands and by millions.

There are three grand orders of priesthood referred to here.

1st. The King of Shiloam. (Salem) had power and authority over that of Abraham, holding the key and the power of endless life. Angels desire to look into it, but they have set up too many stakes [**Set up limits.**]. 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.** The Israelites prayed that God would speak to Moses and not to them; in consequence of which he cursed them with a carnal law.

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 fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings.** 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.

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 fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers. [This is a future event.]

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.

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. **[The temple was never completed, and hence this authority was never revealed.]**

The 3rd is what is called the Levitical Priesthood, consisting of priests to administer in outward ordinance, made without an oath; but the Priesthood of Melchizedek is by an oath and covenant.

The Holy Ghost is God's messenger to administer in all those priesthoods.

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. DHC 5:554-555

Misc. Quotes from Joseph Smith

I then called upon the quorums and congregation of Saints to acknowledge the Twelve Apostles, who were present, as Prophets, Seers, Revelators, and special witnesses to all the nations of the earth, **holding the keys of the kingdom, to unlock it, or cause it to be done, among them, and uphold them by their prayers**" (TPJS 109) (DHC 2:417 Dedication of the Kirtland Temple)

[These keys are very specific and limited.]

Salvation is for a man to be saved from all his enemies; for until a man can triumph over death, he is not saved. A knowledge of the priesthood alone will do this. DHC 5:403

Knowledge is the power of salvation

Contend earnestly for the like precious faith with the Apostle Peter, "and add to your faith virtue," knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, 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." Another point, after having all these qualifications, he lays this injunction upon the people "to make your calling and election sure." He is emphatic upon this subject-- after adding all this virtue knowledge, &c., "Make your calling and election sure." What is the secret--the starting point? "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." **How did he obtain all things? Through the knowledge of Him who hath called him. There could not anything be given, pertaining to life and godliness, without knowledge.** Woe! woe! woe to Christendom!--especially the divines and priests if this be true. DHC 5:402-403

To become a joint heir of the heirship of the Son, one must put away all his false traditions. DHC 5:554

Keys Claimed by Brigham Young

President Brigham Young said; ---- `I do not care who leads the church, even though it were Ann Lee; but one thing I must know, and that is what God says about it. **I have the keys and the means of obtaining**

the mind of God on the subject. [How could he? He never saw God. He never followed the charge given by Oliver Cowdery.]

I know there are those in our midst who will seek the lives of the Twelve as they did the lives of Joseph and Hyrum. We shall ordain others and give the fullness of the priesthood, **so that if we are killed the fullness of the priesthood may remain. [You receive the fullness from Christ, not from another man.]**

Joseph conferred upon our heads all the keys and powers belonging to the Apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away [a lie], and no man or set of men can get between Joseph and the Twelve in this world or in the world to come.

How often has Joseph said to the Twelve, 'I have laid the foundation and you must build thereon, for upon your shoulders the kingdom rests.' **[This is a false statement. I will present proof that this was false.]**

The Twelve, as a quorum, will not be permitted to tarry here long; they will go abroad and bear off the kingdom to the nations of the earth, and baptize the people faster than mobs can kill them off. would like, were it my privilege, to take my valise and travel and preach till we had a people gathered who would be true. DHC 7:230 **[These are legitimate keys which the Twelve possessed, by revelation and by ordination. They should be out in the mission field, not presiding in the stakes.]**

For the first time in my life, for the first time in your lives, for the first time in the kingdom of God in the 19th century, without a Prophet at our head, do I step forth to act in my calling in connection with the Quorum of the Twelve, as Apostles of Jesus Christ unto this generation---**Apostles whom God has called by revelation through the Prophet Joseph, who are ordained and anointed to bear off the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world.** DHC 7:231 **[Again, Oliver Cowdery, whom the Lord actually called as an Apostle said that their ordination was not complete until Jesus Christ, Himself, laid hands on their heads. This never happened, so their ordination was not complete, and they were complete impostors.]**

There has been much said about President Rigdon being President of the Church, and leading the people, being the head, etc. Brother Rigdon has come 1,600 miles to tell you what he wants to do for you. If the people want President Rigdon to lead them they may have him; but I say unto you that the Quorum of the Twelve have the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world. DHC 7:233 **[Sidney Rigdon actually held the keys. See Section 90.]**

Elders Orson Hyde and Parley P. Pratt bore testimony that Joseph the Prophet had ordained, anointed and appointed the Twelve to lead the church and had given them the keys of the kingdom for that purpose. DHC 7:264 **[They had every reason to bear false witness for their own benefit.]**

The Apostleship

The ordination to the Apostleship does not make a man one whit better than he was before. Nor does being an Apostle make that man unerring, flawless, or without sin. The Apostleship is the authority and ordination in the Priesthood, but faithfulness to that calling depends on him. From an excellent treatise entitled "A Real Representative" comes the following:

One thing is certain--**Divine Authority alone is not sufficient to make us representatives of God. Some men possess that, but nothing else. There is scarcely an attribute of Almighty God**

about them. They walk in the authority of their appointment, but not in the virtue, the grace, or the righteousness of it. Strip such men of their authority, and there is nothing of God left to be counted. They may be successful managers, wise economists, and excellent teachers of the things of God, because the faith of their associates and the Saints draws the Spirit down upon them; and yet, otherwise, they have scarcely an enduring quality of righteousness in their possession. (Mill. Star 20:641; 1858)

We cannot think that our ordinations or appointments have necessarily advanced us one particle towards celestial life, only so far as we have made them do it, by taking advantage of the rich opportunities and get an insight into the real sources of celestial life. Ordinations do not celestialize; appointments do not elevate; they only authorize us to be channels of light to others and to ourselves, if we will. **Our present standing in the Priesthood, therefore, does not necessarily represent our progress in salvation, although there will come a day when it will; for eternal authority will, finally, only be vested where the eternal attributes of God exist. But under the present state of things, if the whole world were ordained Apostles, that in itself would not make it a whit more heavenly; that alone would not bring it forward towards celestial life; it would only put the means within its reach.** (Mill. Star 29:643)

[More about Keys from Modern Authors](#)

The following quotations about keys come from Robert Smith, “Anonymous”, and Denver Snuffer. These are all men who have stood in the Presence of the Lord and have searched their scriptures. I consider their statements to be authoritative. They all support the idea that keys are obtained directly from the Lord, indicative of the level of relationship between the individual and the Lord. Keys do not add stature to the individual, but instead, enable Him to more effectively serve God.

Keys do not convey authority

The claim is that the apostles received all of Joseph’s keys in the last charge meeting. **The keys to the sealing power are never passed from a man to a man in scripture.** As an illustration of the process, consider Elisha’s request for Elijah to give him all of his keys. Elijah states that it is a hard thing, and describes a sign that would come if it was God’s will. After Elijah dies, Elisha sees the sign, indicating it was God’s will. Even Elijah, among the mightiest in the priesthood, could not pass the sealing power to Elisha. God had to do it.

Scriptural comparisons contradict Pharisaical authority claims. Pharisees are renown for quoting scripture out of historical or textual context (otherwise known as proof-texting). However, because their appeals to scripture do not hold up to scrutiny, their principle claim to authority is that of continuous succession. **Though early Pharisees no doubt recognized the difference in power and authority between Moses and the elders of Israel that succeeded him, later Pharisees considered themselves equal with Moses,** able to not only interpret the revelations received by Moses, but also to give additional council and even commandments that contradicted those given by Moses. **In modern Mormonism, this passable authority that makes successors equal to the predecessors is known as “keys.”**

Keys do not prevent leaders from leading a church into apostasy. The Pharisees at the time of Jesus had a valid chain of authorized appointments to church office from their founder Moses. Yet, they were woefully apostate. Jesus’ interactions with the Pharisees provide sufficient

evidence that keys are insufficient to imply God's authority. Jesus did not recognize the continuous appointment of leaders in the church as authoritative. Speaking of the Pharisees he said, **"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."** (Matthew 15:13.) He did not recognize the Sanhedrin as planted by Heavenly Father despite their legal appointment. He openly rejected their pronouncements and pointed out their deviations from Moses' revelations. Jesus showed that the traditions or commandments created by key holders are not the same as God's commandments.

If keys were sufficient, why would heaven be shut to the rightful key holders? Why would the key holders' teachings prevent their followers from entering into the kingdom of heaven? **Can someone who is barred from heaven lead you to heaven?** Can one who is not sealed up to eternal life seal you up to eternal life? The leaders of such religions truly are the blind leading the blind:

Not even one true messenger in the scriptures ever claimed keys as a source of their authority.

In modern Mormonism, keys are incorrectly taught as the catalyst of the great apostasy. Yet, less than 100 years ago, apostle James E. Talmage and others instead claimed that the great apostasy came not from the loss of ephemeral "keys," but because the ancient church supplanted scripture with council decisions and other worldly wisdom. The great apostasy was not the result of a loss of authority, but a loss of power. Ordinations still occurred. Offices continued. Vacancies were filled. However, even before the death of the apostles, the doctrine had become corrupted through the false teachings of leaders (see "The Great Apostasy" by James Talmage), despite their possession of "keys." (Quotations from Robert Smith *Teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of Men*)

Keys are Obtained Directly from the Lord

O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and **he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate;** for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name. (2 Nephi 9:41)

This is an important scripture. Anyone who claims to hold the keys that make the case that only they can grant you access to God is not truthful, ". . . he employeth no servant there." **There is no single individual that stands between us and the Lord. There are messengers and servants that can assist us through ordinances, but it is not the Lord's way to deny access to Him according to any rules of men to determine your worthiness.** If you were alone on a deserted island and had nothing but the Book of Mormon to help you, it would be all you need to find the Lord. If you understood the Gospel, you would need nothing more than faith in Christ to lead you to Him. Pray for a personal understanding of what this means. I am not condemning the value of church and those who speak to us by the power of revelation. We just need to be vigilant not to make any person an idol in our heart.

Many claim authority and power of God yet lack the permission and relationship with Christ. I think it was Joseph that said the keys of the priesthood is knowledge. I'm surprised at how many people deny the true power of God these days. The prophecies of Nephi and Mormon are being fulfilled. To have "knowledge" is to know the Lord intimately, then comes the bestowal of authority to do His work. The more you know, the more you are capable of serving. ("Pure Revelations")

What are Keys? How are they Given?

The following quotations are excerpted from a talk given by Denver Snuffer called "The Holy Order".

I was asked to discuss the topic of "priesthood." The biggest challenge in discussing the topic is that those most interested already have a context in their mind and so whatever is said about priesthood is distorted by their misunderstandings. It becomes almost impossible to make any meaningful forward movement in understanding a much bigger picture. **To make progress, this discussion should be looked at as introducing something very different from how you now understand priesthood. Consider new ideas that may change the picture altogether.** I will be using quotes from Joseph Smith that frequently use the word "keys." That word is horribly misunderstood. I have made it a practice to not use the word because of all the foolish and vain ideas that have accumulated around it. Joseph used the term in a variety of ways. For example, to mean "authority," or **opportunity**, and in others it refers to a **correct idea**. The term in the context of priesthood is **completely absent from the Book of Mormon**; and that book is the keystone of our religion, containing the fullness of the gospel. The only time the word "keys" is referenced in the Book of Mormon, it refers to a physical set of keys to unlock a door to the treasury controlled by Laban.

The LDS Handbook of Instructions states the following, "Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood leaders to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on earth." This definition is the opposite of the way scripture directs priesthood be used: (D&C 121:39-42.) The LDS Handbook approach turns this scripture upside down and backwards: by virtue of priesthood keys they have the right to direct, control and exercise influence over others. **Mormon institutions in general all use their preferred meaning of the term "keys" to denounce anything or anyone they view as a rival. That is nonsense, and I avoid using the term because of widespread abusive practice.**

When God gives a man a dispensation from heaven, there is a labor to be done in His vineyard. The authority to complete the labor is implicit with the assignment given by God. When someone receives a dispensation and discharges the assignment with honor, he holds the keys, owns the rights, enjoys the honors, and possesses the dispensation of that assignment to all eternity. A new dispensation is founded on knowledge from those who went before who "all [declare] their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little" to the new dispensation.

An unchanging God bestows an unchanging gospel. Therefore, there is continuity and understanding shared along the path. These servants obtained rights and honors and are expected to come to the great future meeting when Adam-ondi-Ahman occurs in the last days. At that meeting an accounting will be given in the presence of Christ to Father Adam,

preliminary to Christ's return as the One whose right it is to preside over all things. **If a dispensation was given and the recipient failed to complete the work God assigned, then he acquires no key, no honor, no right, no authority from the Lord and therefore has nothing to account for to Adam.**

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

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

It was "the **voice** of Peter, James, and John" that spoke to Joseph. **When they spoke they declar[ed] themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom of the dispensation of the fullness of times.**" Does saying "I have the keys to my Dodge truck" give you the keys to my Dodge truck? (<http://denversnuffer.net/resources/The-Holy-Order.pdf>) (This is but a very brief extract from a much lengthier sermon, which is packed with information about Priesthood and the Restoration.)

The Difference Between a True Servant and a False Servant

Read what the Lord has to say about unrighteous prophets, false pastors, and usurpers in Jeremiah 23, NASB.

1 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!" declares the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds," declares the LORD. 3 "Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply. 4 "I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD.

5 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD,
"When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;
And He will reign as king and act wisely
And do justice and righteousness in the land.

6 "In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell securely;
And this is His name by which He will be called,
'The LORD our righteousness.'

7 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when they will no longer say,
'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 8 but, 'As the
LORD lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the
north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.' Then they will live on their own
soil."

False Prophets Denounced

9 As for the prophets:
My heart is broken within me,
All my bones tremble;
I have become like a drunken man,
Even like a man overcome with wine,
Because of the LORD
And because of His holy words.

10 For the land is full of adulterers;
For the land mourns because of the curse.
The pastures of the wilderness have dried up.
Their course also is evil
And their might is not right.

11 "For both prophet and priest are polluted;
Even in My house I have found their wickedness," declares the LORD.

12 "Therefore their way will be like slippery paths to them,
They will be driven away into the gloom and fall down in it;
For I will bring calamity upon them,
The year of their punishment," declares the LORD.

13 "Moreover, among the prophets of Samaria [Ephraim] I saw an offensive thing:
They prophesied by Baal and led My people Israel astray.

14 "Also among the prophets of Jerusalem [Judah] I have seen a horrible thing:
The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood;
And they strengthen the hands of evildoers,
So that no one has turned back from his wickedness.
All of them have become to Me like Sodom,
And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

15 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets,
'Behold, I am going to feed them wormwood
And make them drink poisonous water,

For from the prophets of Jerusalem
Pollution has gone forth into all the land.”

16 Thus says the LORD of hosts,
“Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you.
They are leading you into futility;
They speak a vision of their own imagination,
Not from the mouth of the LORD.

17 “They keep saying to those who despise Me,
‘The LORD has said, “You will have peace”’;
And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart,
They say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you.’

18 “But who has stood in the council of the LORD,
That he should see and hear His word?
Who has given heed to His word and listened?

19 “Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath,
Even a whirling tempest;
It will swirl down on the head of the wicked.

20 “The anger of the LORD will not turn back
Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart;
In the last days you will clearly understand it.

21 “I did not send these prophets,
But they ran.
I did not speak to them,
But they prophesied.

22 “But if they had stood in My council,
Then they would have announced My words to My people,
And would have turned them back from their evil way
And from the evil of their deeds.

23 “Am I a God who is near,” declares the LORD,
“And not a God far off?

24 “Can a man hide himself in hiding places
So I do not see him?” declares the LORD.
“Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD.

25 “I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, ‘I had a dream, I had a dream!’ 26 “How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, 27 who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal? 28 “The prophet who has a dream may relate his

dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?" declares the LORD. 29 "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock? 30 "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," declares the LORD, "who steal My words from each other. 31 "Behold, I am against the prophets," declares the LORD, "who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares.' 32 "Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams," declares the LORD, "and related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit," declares the LORD.

33 "Now when this people or the prophet or a priest asks you saying, 'What is the oracle of the LORD?' then you shall say to them, 'What oracle?' The LORD declares, 'I will abandon you.' 34 "Then as for the prophet or the priest or the people who say, 'The oracle of the LORD,' I will bring punishment upon that man and his household. 35 "Thus will each of you say to his neighbor and to his brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' or, 'What has the LORD spoken?' 36 "For you will no longer remember the oracle of the LORD, because every man's own word will become the oracle, and you have perverted the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. 37 "Thus you will say to that prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?' 38 "For if you say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' surely thus says the LORD, 'Because you said this word, "The oracle of the LORD!" I have also sent to you, saying, "You shall not say, 'The oracle of the LORD!'"' 39 "Therefore behold, I will surely forget you and cast you away from My presence, along with the city which I gave you and your fathers. 40 "I will put an everlasting reproach on you and an everlasting humiliation which will not be forgotten."
(Jeremiah 23, NASB)

On a Personal Level: What's it Like to be a Servant of the Lord

What do these experiences teach us about receiving and exercising keys?

I am going to describe three experiences that I had. These happened in 2019, but yesterday, in 2022, it was given to me to ponder over these three experiences and consider them as one. Sometimes, when I ask the Lord a question, instead of just explaining the answer, He puts me in a situation where I experience something first hand, then He asks me: "What have you learned?" But this case is a little different: He asked me to consider three separate experiences and apply them to lessons learned in the Garden of Eden.

This first experience happened in late 2019. I was saying my prayers before I went to sleep. I was really feeling the Spirit. The Lord came to me and invited me to leave my body and come with Him. We flew all over the universe doing all kinds of things, doing all kinds of acts of service. I don't remember any specific details, and if I did, I probably wouldn't be able to talk about them. A lot of the details were hidden even from me. But there was one lesson, I was supposed to take away from the experience, and I will never forget His parting words to me: **"See what we can accomplish together, when you put your faith in me."**

Later in 2019, came the second related experience. I went to bed, praying for the Second Comforter. The Lord said He wanted to give it to me, but not at this moment. (Guess it's the timing.) But, He could show me a taste of what it will be like. He showed me a garden-like setting. To some people this place might not seem beautiful, but to me, it was like somebody reached down into my mind and brought out things that were beautiful and lovely to me that I never knew before. The setting was a beautiful sunny day in a

coastal forest in Oregon. There were cedar trees and Douglas firs along a running stream. Beside the stream was a paved patio with a pergola overhead, laden with plants. Under the pergola was a table and two chairs. One for the Lord and one for me. He was sitting in one of the chairs in the corner, facing me, with His back to the stream. I couldn't make him out too well, though I was looking around trying to take in as much detail as I could. I was looking around and found a large tree which was the tree of knowledge. A tall evergreen. Then, I looked for the tree of life. I believe it was a smaller deciduous tree, just off the patio behind the Lord.

There was a meal, all laid out on the table we were sitting around. He was laying back relaxing and was perfectly willing for me to just look around and take it all in. I think He offered me a beer, which surprised me. I turned Him down, but in retrospect, I think I should have accepted it. I asked Him a couple of questions, but didn't remember the answers because I immediately fell asleep.

I woke up at 3:30 AM the next morning and had the final related experience. Wondering how to spend my devotional time, I remembered the scene the previous night and quickly visualized it in my mind. It was so perfectly suited to me, it made me cry. I was also thinking this was a great platform for further visualization. So, I started in where I left off, thinking maybe I should have taken the Lord up on that beer. Again, there was a meal spread out before us, and the person across the table invited me to "sup" with him. He started talking about a bunch of stuff, when suddenly he said: **"I can make you great."** I heard that, and all my defenses kicked in. I yelled: **"I don't want to be great!"** This didn't sound like the Lord, so I immediately stood up and broke everything off. That pretty much killed the entire moment for the morning.

After receiving the impression to ponder these three experiences as a whole, I was given questions to ponder throughout the day. This was my stream of consciousness as I pondered and asked and received.

- Was that the Lord in the first two instances, and Satan in the last?
- Why is the Lord always so relaxed?
- The phrase: "See what we can accomplish together, when you put your faith in me." Seems to have a very profound meaning, more than just a meaning for that moment. I think I need to spend the day pondering over it.
- Contrast that phrase with "I can make you great." These correspond to the two temptations/invitations that Adam and Eve received in the garden. How they responded to them had an effect on what happened next. They were leaving that garden, but under what conditions?
- What does all of this mean for me now?
- I think it is a reminder and a call to repentance.
- I don't like to spell things out in a lot of detail. I prefer that people draw their own conclusions, but I think I need to explain a few things.
- These experiences were preparation for receiving the second comforter, which I had not received when I had the experiences.
- I have been recently asking the Lord for more, and to be able to enter into a new phase of my relationship with Him in the future.
- There are levels as we enter deeper and deeper into fellowship with Him. You see these hinted at in the Lord's conversation with His Apostles after the Last Supper. They are found in the Gospel of John: Covenant with me that you may become my servants. Fellowship with me that you may become my friends. Draw near unto me that you may become my beloved.

- You are working with God and doing the works of the gods. And, when you do this, you need to operate by their rules. You don't work alone. You don't glory in yourself. "Let no man glory in man, but let man glory in God." The more you find out who and what God is, the more meaning this phrase takes on for you.
- I anticipate pondering over this all day, but if the Lord is true to form, He will reveal all that He wants us to know about this in an instant, then it's on to the next thing.
- I do know that I have asked for what's next. I have said I am ready for what's next.
- No glory. No demonstration of power.
- There is a lesson in here about keys.
- While on my walk, the Lord told me certain things
 - Add this document to the keys document.
 - The Lord was very specific that I get those two invitations worded exactly right.
 - If the Lord says you have keys, then you have keys.
 - If the keys are inherent in the Priesthood which you receive, or if the Lord commands you to ordain somebody to a specific office in a Priesthood, or perform a work which a certain Priesthood requires (such as laying on of hands), then He has given you that Priesthood. Or, in other words, you have entered into that level of relationship.
 - Melchizedek Priesthood is received directly from the voice of the Lord, speaking from the heavens.
 - Aaronic Priesthood can be conferred by an angel, as in the case of Joseph and Oliver, or conferred by another man, a holder of that Priesthood. Implicit in that ordination is the invitation to seek the Lord to obtain the Holy Spirit of promise which seals the ordination and confers the keys to the ministering of angels. The ordination by man is but an invitation to receive such.
 - When commanded by the Lord, as was Joseph in Section 124, we may be commanded to "show [another person] the keys by which he may ask and receive". This, of course, implies that you know these keys, yourself, having received them from the Lord, or from another person, so commanded.
 - All other keys are inherent in the Priesthood which you receive, or if the Lord specifically gives them to you.
 - The sealing power contains many keys. The key to the sealing power, meaning the knowledge and ability to give or revoke the sealing power lies solely with the Lord. Contrary to Section 132, no man on earth possesses the keys to the sealing power.
 - The Lord must give you the sealing power. A classic example is Moses.
 - When the Lord gives you the sealing power, He introduces you to all his works (his creations) and the angels, and He introduces them to you, and commands them to obey you as if you were God.
 - With the sealing power, you are authorized to do the works of God and speak the words of God. In Hebrew, his *davarim*. This word, used in the Old Testament, describes the works and words of God, of which God told Moses "There is no end to my works or to my words." His words are eternal, and all shall be fulfilled, whether by his mouth or by the mouth of his servants, the true prophets, who have stood in His counsel (Presence), it is the same. His words are spirit and his words are truth. Nobody else has the right to do this without being guilty of taking the Lord's name in vain. Others are free to quote

the words of the Lord from scripture, and to receive the words of God from the Holy Ghost, and quote them, but they cannot speak the words of God directly out of their own mouth. [See Nephi for examples of the *davarim* (words and works) of God.]

- But, remember this always. While you speak the word of God and demonstrate the word of God, only Christ, himself, is the living embodiment of the word of God, in the fullest meaning of that word.
- I am not speculating. I am speaking the words of the Lord as revealed to me. I have received the sealing power.
- Why did I receive this, and why am I sharing this? The Lord is awakening the servants He has called, and who have covenanted to serve him. This is to teach you what to expect and what to prepare for. When you are the servants of the Lord, you are on His errand, and you do things His way. “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” If we are ever to bring heaven to earth, this is the way it must be. Also, when you seek the will of the Lord in all things, and act only in His Name (you must learn what this means), you attract additional light and truth unto yourself. As you add glory to God, God will add glory to you. This is an eternal principle and an everlasting law of heaven.

Continuing with the stream of consciousness, in reviewing this, I was concerned about accurately teaching what the Lord would have me share. It was also time for my daily workout, where sometimes I have conversations with the Lord. (I like telling these running narratives, and some people tell me it helps them to see somebody else’s struggles and triumphs and know that they are not alone.)

Tonight, was one of those nights. I knew that He wanted to say something to me. It began with a question and a concern from me. Lord, is what I wrote what you would have me say? I can explain things, but how do I get people to sincerely desire to come to the Lord, to want to serve Him, and receive the attendant blessings?

The Lord explained to me that we, His servants, and this includes anybody who reads this, are powerless to “make” anybody have a desire, which they don’t have. But the solution is to have the desire for Christ, ourselves, and to reflect that desire in our thoughts, words, love, and intentions. Christ is the attractive one: He draws all men unto Himself. When a person truly sees the Christ in His servants, even if it’s only a faint reflection, it still exercises a drawing power, which kindles a desire in the honest of heart.

The Lord then reminded me of a bunch of scriptures that taught this principle, of times when I exercised this image or light of Christ, and especially times when I was attracted by the light of Christ present with servants who taught me. I wanted what they had. I wanted to hear more. I wanted to be more like them. Then, I saw how they were like Christ, and this created the **desire** in me to be more like Christ.

When we finally stand before Christ, whether in this life, or the next, or on judgment day, we will desire him and we will either be just like Him, or we will want to flee from His Presence and have the gnawing conflict within us that we both want to be with Him, and at the same time can’t stand to be with Him.

The above is an example of how you can bring a question to the Lord, who will answer you with clarity and bring visions to your mind, to further support and illustrate His words. I didn’t have to guess what He said. It was crystal clear in my mind. After this experience, I feel called to repent, because I haven’t always been the best reflection of the Lord that I know how to be. After the workout, I hurried back to

this document to record His words, and my impressions, and my intent to do better. Starting tomorrow, I am going to put this into practice by reviewing this document again, and making sure it reflects the desires and intentions of the Lord, to the best of my ability.

Appendix

“God has given His power to man” as They Suppose

I mentioned earlier that a great way to learn about keys is to study a crisis: when the system breaks down -- when men claim to have received keys from other men, not God. Having pointed out that vital keys such as the apostleship and the sealing power are given only by the Lord, and that possession of keys is no safeguard against apostasy, Brigham Young, his successors, and contemporary church leaders, in defiance of scriptural and historical precedence, and apostolic instruction from those actually holding keys, insist that the keys have been conveyed to them by men, while insisting that there is not only no apostasy, but no chance of apostasy.

Val Brinkerhoff has written extensively about Church history, polygamy, and the succession crisis, along with various other topics. You can find his writings at <http://www.7witnesses.com/resources.html>.

I will be citing quotes from the following documents, written by Brinkerhoff, available at this website. They contain historical references to show that the church did not obtain from the Lord the keys which it claims to hold and has, in fact, gone into apostasy:

- joseph’s_last_charge_at_nauvoo.pdf
- historical_truth.pdf
- succession_crisis.pdf

But we have to remember that the church fell under condemnation in 1832 and the Lord removed His Name from the church in 1824.

D&C 63:11. Yea, signs come by faith, unto mighty works, for without faith no man pleaseth God; and with whom God is angry he is not well pleased; wherefore, unto such he showeth no signs, only in wrath unto their condemnation.

D&C 84:54. And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because **you have treated lightly the things you have received--**

D&C 84:55. **Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.**

D&C 84:56. **And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.**

D&C 84:57. And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the **new covenant**, even **[IN. The Book of Mormon is not the new covenant. The Book of Mormon contains and explains the new covenant.]** the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written—

The whole purpose of the Restoration was to correct the errors of the past: those who had “strayed from the ordinances and broken the everlasting covenant” (D&C 1:15) The church fell from being a Terrestrial church, named the “Church of Christ”, to a Telestial church, named the “Church of the Latter-day Saints”. One result of having done this was when a crisis hit the church by the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum, there were no new leaders prepared and empowered to succeed them, so instead of an orderly

succession, there was chaos and confusion. But this was simply no different from the way the rest of the world operates. You see it in every other nation, church, and secular organization today: telestial men, taking over a telestial organization in a telestial way. There was nothing divine about it, and to twist history in order to make it divine is to perpetuate a lie.

Apostles held no keys over the organized stakes of Zion

Brigham Young claimed the right to lead the church, as President of the Quorum of the Twelve. This claim did not rest on his calling as an “apostle” for they were to be “traveling missionaries” away from the Stakes of Zion - preaching the gospel of Christ. They were not to be administrators over the whole church (see D&C 107). Today the church claims that before he died, Joseph Smith commissioned the Twelve to govern and preserve not only the church, but also the secret rites of the temple, the theocratic Council of Fifty, various priesthood keys, and unique teachings that he supposedly introduced at Nauvoo about God, mankind, and especially polygamy, as part of Brigham Young’s modified endowment. In reality, “the last charge” at the private meeting of the Council of Fifty in the spring of 1844 (perhaps March 23, after the anointing and blessing of Joseph Smith III) was to the Council of Fifty, that they were to lead out in cleansing the church, not the Twelve, as a growing portion of the Twelve, and their involvement in spiritual wifery was the problem (see p. 113, endnote 16 & Assumption #7, chap. 6) Succession_Crisis.pdf

False claims about the Sealing Power and the Keys Thereof

The Doctrine and Covenants gives contradictory guidance about who possesses the Sealing Power and the Holy Spirit of Promise. The contradictions are removed when we exclude Section 132 from consideration, as it is rife with many contradictions.

Section 88 says the Holy Spirit of Promise comes only from the Lord and is the promise of eternal life. It is also Christ’s sealing or ratification of any ordination or ordinance.

But Section 132 says that only Joseph, or the president of the church has the key to the sealing power – only one man on earth at a time. However, as pointed out, other revelations declare the entire First Presidency, including Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Oliver Cowdery as being equal with Joseph in holding the keys of the kingdom, which belong to the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

Section 132 claims that these keys are never conferred upon more than one person at a time while living on the earth, but in the past, each man who received a dispensation of the Gospel held these keys, and each must return to the earth, still possessing these keys, to assist in the final dispensation.

While it has been stated in revelations to Joseph Smith (though we have no second witness to this fact) that the keys will never be taken from him, the same could well be said of Adam, Peter, James, and John, and others to whom these keys were given.

But Section 124 declared that Hyrum is supposed to possess these keys, in addition to Joseph, thus contradicting Section 132. Eventually, the office of Patriarch to the Church was eliminated, without any empowering revelation to do so.

The Keys Joseph Smith held are held **jointly** with his counselors in the Presidency of the High Priesthood, and with all those who have received a dispensation of the Gospel in ages past. The twelve were also

charged to obtain other specific keys, which, had they obtained them from the Lord, they would also hold jointly with those who have received a dispensation of the Gospel in ages past. However, the keys held by the Twelve and the keys held by the Presidency of the High Priesthood are different keys. Joseph was commanded **by revelation [not seniority]** to fill vacancies in the Presidency. None of these vacancies were filled by members of the Twelve.

The keys enumerated above are very limited and specific. They consist of nothing more or less than the authority to direct the use of the Sacred Sealing Power within the church. Within that framework, no man can exercise that power nor confer it upon another without the knowledge and consent of he who holds those specific and limited keys. Outside the church, and within the Kingdom of God, one may obtain the keys of the Priesthood by obtaining the Voice of Jehovah, declaring to a person that he has a portion of inheritance within the Kingdom, or in other words that his calling and election is made sure

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12-13

Then, a man so ordained by the voice of God speaking out of the heavens is empowered to exercise these keys within the Kingdom of God, when directed by revelation to do so.

Beware of any man claiming exclusive right for himself, or of a group of followers clamoring to ascribe these exclusive rights to their beloved leader, for these gifts of God are available to all who seek for and obtain them in the proper manner, according to the principles upon which they are given.

To paraphrase Joseph Smith, if any man claims these keys exclusively for himself while all others are out of the way, know this that that man is on the high road to apostasy, and will fear, and deny the Spirit which giveth utterance, and he will lose his gift, and become as any other man.

This priesthood refers specifically to this ordinance.

We have the words exclusively from Joseph Smith, with no second witness stating that he possesses all these keys forever and that they will never be taken from him. These words are quoted only in a context which seems to imply that he possessed these keys exclusively. But if we take his words in their full context, we see that others also possess these keys. If we are going to accept the word of Joseph Smith solely, then we must accept ALL of his words, not just those which support our particular point of view.

Brigham Young falsely conflates the rights and powers of the Apostleship as possessing all the keys which operate in the church and falsely claims that these keys can be passed from one man to another:

Joseph was ordained an Apostle--that you can read and understand. After he was ordained to this office, then he had the right to organize and build up the kingdom of God, for he had committed unto him the keys of the Priesthood, which is after the order of Melchizedek--the High Priesthood, which is after the order of the Son of God. And this, remember, by being ordained an Apostle. (Contributor 10:361)

Could he <Joseph Smith> have built up the Kingdom of God without first being an Apostle? No, he never could. The keys of the eternal Priesthood, which is after the order of the Son of God, are comprehended by being an Apostle. All the Priesthood, ALL THE KEYS, all the gifts, all the endowments, and everything preparatory to entering into the presence of the Father and of the

Son, are in, composed of, circumscribed by, or I might say incorporated within the circumference of, the Apostleship. (JD 1:135) **[Joseph Smith possessed these keys, but not by virtue of being an apostle, and he did not, because he could not, pass them along to others.]**

Others, such as Orson Pratt, took a similar stand:

In those days, some persons, ignorant of the authority of an Apostle, questioned the right of the Twelve to preside, **[and rightly so]** but I would ask, what authority ever existed in the Church that the Twelve do not hold? I would further inquire, had the First Presidency any office that the Twelve had not? If they have, where did they get it? **[The answer is clear. Read the Doctrine & Covenants]** (JD 19:114)

Fabrications about Polygamy and Keys to the Sealing Power

The following illustrates not only the doctoring of Joseph Smith's journal, but the possible fabrication of the statement in Section 132, claiming exclusivity of certain keys.

One of the most important journal entries by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in connection with polygamy, is his October 5, 1843 entry, recorded by William Clayton. It has been modified to promote polygamy. He and Joseph were walking the public streets of Nauvoo together on this date. Clayton recorded an anti-polygamy statement by Joseph. Ten years later it was changed by historians under Brigham Young's direction to reflect a pro-polygamy stance, then put in the official History of the church. Both versions are presented hereafter.

In their effort to falsely prove that Joseph was a polygamist, church historians deleted ten key words from Joseph Smith's original statement (below), then added forty-nine other words. Based on the Joseph Smith's Papers timeline for this compilation, the illustrated example (see below) would have probably been edited sometime between 1853-1855, after George A. Smith took over duties for the deceased Willard Richards. Both Willard Richards and George A. Smith were Freemasons, Apostles, and members of the secret chamber at Nauvoo. Both men became counselors in the First Presidency to Brigham Young. The entry does not describe a public moment, but instead Joseph's private journal entry, made by his personal scribe William Clayton, after the two walked the public streets of Nauvoo. It occurred three months after July 12, 1843, the supposed date that Brigham Young said Joseph had the pro-polygamy revelation, now known as D&C 132. Modern LDS scholars with access to church archives found both statements. Joseph's original, undoctored quotation is in "an untitled journal of 278 manuscript pages," as identified in the handwriting of Willard Richards (secret chamber member), another scribe of Joseph. Richards recorded:

"Walked up and down St[reet] with Scribe and gave instructions to **try those who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives on this Law. Joseph forbids it and the practice thereof. No man shall have but one wife**" [rest of page blank, page 116], Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, 417). See also, Van Wagoner, Sidney Rigdon, 292.

Faulring (trained in history at BYU and elsewhere) pointed out that the rest of the page was blank, allowing for future "doctoring." The edited version below (supporting polygamy) is the

one that ended up in the official History of the Church, volume 3, p. 46 (changes made 1853-55). It states:

“Gave instructions to try those persons **who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives; for, according to the law, I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom the power and its keys are conferred; and I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise”** (History of the Church 6:46).

The changed historical document (among many) illustrated here was discovered in the Joseph Smith Papers project, though difficult to now find there. A transcription of the relevant, changed text appears in it. Note the “to be revised” statement near the arrow at the illustration’s lower left. They appear in a different scribe’s handwriting, which appears to match that of the revisions made. The revisions change the whole meaning of Joseph’s words. The definitive words “Joseph forbids it” and “the practice thereof” are crossed out and replaced with verbiage similar to what is found in D&C 132. The edited version was changed to say what is found in the outline area of the illustration on the next page. The 1850’s editor left extra space around the part where Joseph unequivocally forbids the practice of plural marriage. This was a favorite tactic of Freemasonry devotee Heber C. Kimball. He [Kimball] and Young had editors like William Clayton carried out this form of editing repeatedly. It is a pattern found in many “official” historical documents from the Nauvoo era. Clayton modified a number of entries in the Masonic Lodge book #2 as well. Some of these modifications include post-dating and ante-dating entries, as well as omitting other entries. One of these modified entries involved ten names, two of them being Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. They were men not admitted to the Freemasonry Lodge at the time. Kimball and Young were both members of “the craft” before joining Mormonism. The Lord uses the word “craft” in mostly negative ways in scripture (Psalm 83:1-4; Dan. 8:25; Mark 14:1; Alma 35:3; Hel. 2:4; D&C 76:75, 106:6, 123;12; JSH 1:75). It comes from the Hebrew “Aram,” meaning “serpent, subtle, crafty,” or “shrewd.” Satan inspires “secret” or “hidden” things (from the Hebrew “sod”), like his blood-oaths with Cain. For more on the Oct. 5, 1843 journal entry, and this particular edit, see:

1. <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1842-june-1844-book-3-15-july-1843-29-february-1844/123> Joseph Smith’s anti-polygamy personal journal statement, entered July 15, 1843.
2. <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-draft-1-march-31-december-1843/143> An editor’s plans for modifying this journal entry to make it pro-polygamy.
3. <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-e-1-1-july-1843-30-april-1844/118> The final modified journal entry establishing a pro-polygamy stance in LDS church history.

The above taken from Val Brinkerhoff, *Historical Truth*.

Enter At the Gate

In 1829, after sincere repentance, turning fully to Christ, [Joseph Smith] and Oliver Cowdery received the lesser priesthood, and then baptized each other. Immediately thereafter, they

experienced what Alma received in the Book of Mormon – “the mighty change of heart” in the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost.

The “born again” status of Joseph and Oliver was before there was an official church organization (1830), one done according to the laws of men in New York State (JS History 1:72-74). The LORD’s church, as described by Him in D&C 10:67 was present and working effectively in 1828 and 1829. The gifts and fruits of the Spirit were clearly evident. This is because both Joseph and Oliver came in “at the gate” the LORD required, not some other way, like the robber and thief (John 10:1; 1 Ne. 31 & 32; D&C 22:2, 43:7). It is the same gate all of us must come through. It is “the way of salvation of our God” (chap. 7). It is the way the LORD requires, via a broken, repentant heart and a contrite, humble spirit. Because of humility and heartfelt repentance, Joseph received the necessary gifts of the Spirit to lead the Restoration movement - to bring again the LORD’s way of doing things.

No leader since Joseph can rival his contributions. His most important attribute was love. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit. God empowered Joseph Smith to help bring forth the fullness of the gospel of Christ in the latter-days for the salvation of many. What “the fullness” is and how it was lost is addressed in succeeding chapters. We will see that as soon as God dispensed greater light to the Saints in the early 1830’s, Satan then came to take it away (D&C 93:39). Wicked men helped the evil one do it. Especially useful, as a corrupting influence, was spiritual wifery. Sexual sin is a great weakness for many men. Satan used it to cut many of the Saints off from God early on.

Contrast this with official LDS church websites and publications, and information presented at the three church universities named after Brigham Young. There, official descriptions of Joseph Smith state that he was a polygamist and a polyandrist. They suggest that he secretly practiced what the Book of Mormon calls a whoredom and an iniquity, while publicly preaching against it. Justifying it with changed doctrine is a great abomination. The gifts and fruits of the Spirit were clearly present in Joseph’s life. He was not a liar, a cheat, or a fraud. (Val Brinkerhoff, *Historical Truth*)

Special order of Priesthood, Allowing for Polygamy

Now, we are getting into areas where Brigham Young and his Quorum of the Twelve lead the church into apostasy.

How could Young and others in the Twelve in England go against the clear teaching of Joseph Smith and Jacob 2 in the Book of Mormon and other scripture? The answer may involve two things; (1) Brigham Young taught that the apostles had a special priesthood, that of the Patriarchal Order of the ancient Patriarchs in the Old Testament, allowing them to have as many wives and concubines as they wanted. This priesthood involved a special sealing doctrine provided by Elijah (this false doctrine was borrowed from the book *The Peacemaker* printed at Nauvoo). This new doctrine became part of the modified temple endowment Young put in place to promote polygamy after Joseph’s murder. Young used this special priesthood as justification for polygamy later in 1852 when he wrote verse 1 of Section 132. The very first verse of this Section uses the word “justified” in connection with Joseph’s supposed inquiry to the LORD

about doing the works of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon, an inquiry, “touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines” (D&C 132:1).

Latter-day Saint Samuel Downes apparently showed the pro-polygamy book, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Sons of Jacob*, to a number of church leaders in England. It presented Jacob's plural marriage and concubines as godly, stressing the unique patriarchal priesthood of the ancient Patriarchs of the Old Testament. Some 100 copies of it were sold in the church's Millennial Star office in Liverpool England. A short review of it was published in *The Millennial Star* 4 (October 1843, 96). Reprinted by Downes (an “elder” in a local LDS Ward), the book was dedicated to a Patriarch in Manchester. Downes stated, “Having shewn it to many of my brethren, and it having met with their approbation, they are wishful to possess themselves of it also. I now at their solicitation for the church, and for mankind in general, send it forth unto the world” (his new “Preface” to *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*).

In a meeting later in Utah where Brigham first introduced new Section 132 to the Saints in 1852 (and where Joseph's name was falsely attached to it), Apostle Orson Pratt gave a stirring sermon citing the ancient practices of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament as a primary reason for reinstating the same practice in modern times among the Saints (Orson Pratt JD 1 [1854]: 53–66). Pratt would eventually take ten wives. Four of them were from the British Isles (Utah Genealogical Magazine 27 [1936]: 113–114). Pratt authored *The Seer* (by request of Brigham Young), believing that polygamy was the most efficient way for the Lord to raise up a righteous and numerous people (see Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt*, p. 175). Later in Utah, another influential book on polygamy would be promoted among the brethren of the Twelve. This one was printed on the Times and Seasons press.

You can download a copy of “The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs” at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/patriarchs-charles.html> and read it for yourself. I have downloaded a copy and read it. It's about 30 pages long, and contains the supposed last blessings of each of the 12 sons of Jacob. The most interesting one is the testament of Levi, to whom was given the priesthood, but I read nothing concerning justifying having many wives. There is, however, a paragraph in the testimony of Levi condemning his descendants for polluting the Priesthood by marrying the Gentiles.

Moving Forward with Decisions on Your Own

You don't operate as a servant of the Lord by going off on your own, and assuming you are correct because the Lord hasn't intervened and stopped you. If this were true, the Lord would have intervened in the apostasy of the world that Abraham was born into, the apostasy among the Jews at the time of Jesus, or the apostasy of the Catholic Church. No, this doesn't happen. When you stray too far, you have put yourself beyond the influence of the Holy Ghost, and the Lord cannot correct you.

In the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, we read one modern report about the mission of the Twelve in England. It stated that being separated from Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the Twelve had to make decisions on their own. One of them was making Willard Richards an apostle, a relatively new English convert. Another was beginning the practice of spiritual wifery, there. Willard was a cousin of Brigham Young. He, Brigham, and Heber were all related by blood or marriage. They would later become the First Presidency in Utah. The Encyclopedia of Mormonism states: “On April 14, 1840, in Preston, they ordained Willard Richards an apostle and sustained Brigham

Young as “standing president” of their quorum.” Joseph & Hyrum Smith weren’t consulted for this ordination. In the June 1987 issue of the Ensign magazine, we read of a letter (most likely manufactured years later) said to be written by Brigham Young to Willard Richards (also in England at the time) in September of 1840. According to Ronald K. Esplin, “Although he [Brigham] had several times written [to Joseph Smith in the States] for direction, by early September [1840], some five months into his mission, President Young still had no answers. With a detailed report to the First Presidency in September, he [Brigham] asked again for counsel on a series of pressing questions. He also knew that he could not await a reply.” There is no record of attempted contact with Joseph. Brigham said:

“Our motto is go ahead. Go ahead - & ahead we are determined to go – till we have conquered every foe. So come life or come death we’ll go ahead, but tell us if we are going wrong & we will right it” (The Historian’s Corner: The Willard Richards and Brigham Young 5 September 1840 Letter from England to Nauvoo,” BYU Studies, Spring 1978, p. 475).

Brigham later claimed that another pressing concern while in England was moving forward with spiritual wifery, and acting on the revelation he had been given. He may have viewed his special priesthood as an apostle as supportive of this move, as he held the “priesthood of the ancient patriarchs of the Old Testament”. Young stated that because he had received no word from Joseph, he moved forward, believing Joseph and God were bound to sustain him.

“If I do not know the will of my Father, and what He requires of me in a certain transaction, if I ask Him to give me wisdom concerning any requirement in life, or in regard to my own course, or that of my friends, my family, my children, or those that I preside over, and get no answer from Him and then do the very best that my judgment will teach me, He is bound to own and honor that transaction, and He will do so to all intents and purposes” (JD 3:205, this reasoning is similar to that used with the “revelation” on blacks in the church receiving the priesthood in 1978).

God is not bound by the weak understanding and corrupt will of men. We are bound by His decrees. Young’s claim of a “revelation” was used to deceive many into following him into the same practice. “Covered heads” (2 Ne. 27:5; Isa. 29:10) has prevailed since then. The humble and repentant who look to God in all things, can receive God’s guidance – according to His will, but the LORD is never bound by our limited understanding, or our will. Our decisions too often manifest “the idols in our heart.” Jeremiah’s lament in chapter 23 applies to this “awful situation.”

Many of Val Brinkerhoff’s essays contain references to a larger book that he wrote called *The Secret Chamber*. It is a history of polygamy in Nauvoo, and is available at Amazon.

A Supposed Temporary Takeover

Some say that to avoid division, Brigham and the Twelve took charge *temporarily*. Taking power is like raising taxes, they never go back down. I believe it was the plan of the secret chamber members all along to get the power and keep it, for the purpose of making polygamy an institutional practice. Quinn makes it all out to be very innocent, stating, “The Latter-day Saints voted on 8 August 1844 to preserve the LDS Church from fragmentation by **sidestepping** the succession question: there were too many seemingly unresolvable succession claims for various

men to be the sole successor to Joseph Smith, and the church membership simply voted to **defer** that question by turning to the Quorum of Twelve to '**act in its place**' as the priesthood quorum that had the full powers and authority of Joseph Smith. In an epistle of 15 August 1844, the Quorum of Twelve also indicated to the members that the question of appointing a successor to Joseph could be **deferred indefinitely**, rather than risk disrupting the church by trying to choose among various succession contenders: 'Let no man presume for a moment that his [Joseph Smith's] place will be filled by another; for, *remember he stands in his own place, and always will*' (*Times and Seasons*, 15 Aug. 1844, p. 618)" (D. Michael Quinn, *Joseph Smith III's 1844 Blessing and the Mormons of Utah*, p. 79).

It is clear in the events addressed hereafter that President Young of the Quorum of the Twelve pushed all competition aside, taking power in "**crafty**" ways to support and maintain polygamy (he was secretly practicing it at the time with others in the secret chamber). The LORD uses the word "craft" or "craftiness" in scripture in association with **secrecy, intrigue, and deception**, and typically in connection with **secret blood-oaths**, like those used by Freemasons, the Danites, and those in Cochranite spiritual wifery (see D&C 76:75, 106:6, and 123:12). Young succeeded in downplaying the strengths of the other candidates and attacking them, especially Sidney Rigdon. Later the distance between Rigdon, Young and the Twelve increased, primarily because of the **iniquities** Rigdon addressed among church leaders. William Clayton recorded Rigdon's comments, stating:

"Last evening the Twelve and some others met together with Elder Rigdon to investigate his course. He came out full against the Twelve and said he would **not** be controlled by them. They asked him for his license, and he said he would give that if he must **expose all the works of the secret chambers** and all the **iniquities** of the church" (Clayton Journal, Wed., 4 Sept. 1844).

The False Claim that Joseph's "**Last Charge**" was a Transfer of Power to the Twelve Young also utilized the later lie (via modified historical documents) that the Prophet Joseph's "**last charge**" to leaders was a transfer of all keys of priesthood power to the Twelve, done in a *private* meeting with them prior to Joseph's murder. In reality it was a **secret** meeting with **the Council of Fifty**, where the Prophet Joseph removed all *responsibility* of their sins from him, by placing the *responsivity* for them squarely on the shoulders of those present who were guilty, those part of *spiritual wifery* at Nauvoo, including some in the Twelve. Joseph removed these sins in an ancient symbolic rite involving the "shaking" of his garments - free from the blood and sins of his generation. It is similar to the "shaking off of dust" from one's feet against some as part of an official "*cursing*." These two acts throughout scripture absolves the one doing it (under God's inspiration) from the responsibility of the sins of those who have been taught correct doctrine (like the law of monogamy, D&C 42:22-23). They alone are now responsible for them! Jacob in the Book of Mormon did the same thing with his people when they began embracing polygamy too (see 2 Ne. 9:44-45; Jacob 1:19, 2:2). The truest account of what happened during Joseph's "**last charge**" is apparent in an *unmodified* letter from polygamist Benjamin F. Johnson to George Gibbs (Johnson was a close friend *present* at the meeting). In the nondoctored version of this account, Johnson supplies two important details *edited out* of the "official" church history account. The first (1) is that this was a private meeting of *the Council of Fifty, not the Twelve alone, and that many of the Twelve were present (including some in the secret*

chamber); And (2) that Joseph performed a dramatic sign, symbolizing the removal of guilt from him for the sins of many at Nauvoo - those practicing *spiritual wifery*. He did so by vigorously shaking his clothing, while stating, “**I now shake my garments clear and free from the blood of this generation and of all men**” (see endnote 16). Like Paul the Apostle in the New Testament (Acts 18:6), and Jacob, King Benjamin, Alma, and Moroni in the Book of Mormon, Joseph taught the Saints correct doctrine about marriage and other things and was removing the stain of *polygamy* – and other sins among the Nauvoo Saints - from him, and transferring them to those who were guilty at this meeting (Spring 1844).

Moroni did the same thing at the end of the Book of Mormon, placing all responsibility for correct doctrine on **our** shoulders today, saying he would meet us - free of our sins - at the judgment seat of Christ (see Ether 12:37-40; Morm. 9:35). These insightful scriptures are excellent examples of this important rite, revealing what really happened at Nauvoo in Joseph’s “last charge” to leaders there. It was **not** a transfer of *all power* to the Twelve (originally done in Nauvoo to seal multiple wives to one man) as we are told today. Instead, it was a transfer of **responsibility** for sin!

In Paul’s day, the Jews were threatening to kill Paul for preaching Christ to them, whereas Jacob was fully aware of “the abominable thoughts” and hard hearts of his people. He knew of their pride and their desire to *justify* or *excuse* their sins via the examples of David and Solomon of old. These same sins were rising up among Jacob’s people too.

Like these other prophets in scripture, Joseph was **shaking off** their sins and iniquities from him.

Later doctored accounts of Joseph’s **last charge** are used today to claim that all keys of power held by Joseph Smith (including the sealing power for sealing *multiple wives to one man* – at this point in time) were transferred from Joseph to Brigham and the Twelve at this meeting. In endnote 16, I provide four accounts of what happened. Only one has truth in it. Young claimed to have sole charge of “**the sealing power**” because of this *supposed* transfer of power. Joseph knew God’s revelation in D&C 107 and its focus upon equal powers among four priesthood quorums. God stipulated there that there was to be *a unanimous vote* on such matters by each of the *four equal priesthood quorums*, **and** by the *general church membership* too, approving such a transfer of power. **No** such **vote** ever occurred (see D&C 26:2; Mosiah 29:26; Alma 29:4; 1 Sam. 8:7). And it was **a private** meeting!

History shows that besides transferring responsibility for sin of polygamy, Joseph was going to expose the guilty parties publicly. Because of these things, Brigham Young tried to excommunicate Stake President William Marks, knowing that Joseph had come to him in the last few weeks of his life with a plan to bring Brigham and other guilty members of the Twelve up before **the Council of Fifty** and the Nauvoo High Council on charges of practicing *spiritual wifery secretly*. Others were aware of this, including Sidney Rigdon. Joseph had given the Council of Fifty responsibility to watch over the church and clean things up, not the Twelve, as the guilty were among them.

“It is a fact, so well known, that **the Twelve** and their adherents have endeavored to carry on this **spiritual wife business in secret**... and have gone to the most shameful and desperate lengths, to keep it from the public...How often have these men and their accomplices stood up

before the congregation, and called God and all the holy Angels to witness, that there was no such doctrine taught in the church; and it has **now** come to light, by testimony which cannot be again said, that at the time they thus dared heaven and insulted the world, they were living in the practice of these enormities; and there were multitudes of their followers in the congregation at the time who knew it” (Sidney Rigdon, *Messenger and Advocate*, 1 October 15, 1844).

D&C 43:2-7 “ye have received a commandment for a **law** unto **my church**, through him **whom I have appointed** unto you to receive commandments and revelations **from my hand** – that **there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me . . . none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him**; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power **except to appoint another in his stead**. And this shall be a **law** unto you, that ye **receive not the teachings of any** that shall come before you as revelations or commandments; And this I give unto you that you may **not be deceived**, that you may know **they are not of me**. For verily I say unto you, that **he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate** and be ordained as I have told you before, **to teach those revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.**”

The Legal, Legitimate Heir - versus the Usurper

The tradition employed in the LDS church today, to replace a church president who has died, utilizes **seniority**. The next president is the one with the longest tenure among the Twelve. God’s word in D&C 43:3 addresses His way. It features three qualifications God put in place for one with **legitimate right** to lead. Young did not meet **any** of them. First, (1) no man could be “appointed” (chosen) to this calling, except it was through Joseph Smith, **God’s mouthpiece**. Second, (2) not meeting this requirement would reveal *deception or false teaching* among the people. And third, (3) God said that His chosen leader must “*come in at the gate,*” or be ordained to this calling by one with authority to do so. This is **God’s law of succession** in leadership, as revealed in the eight modern scriptures listed on pages 116-17 (and those of the Bible there). They are clearly tied to blood lineage (father to son). On four different occasions the Prophet Joseph designated his son Joseph Smith III (his firstborn son) as his successor. They include:

1. Joseph’s 1838 Liberty Jail statement about Joseph III, as recorded by Lyman Wight
2. Joseph’s 1844 blessing upon young Joseph III on the 2nd floor of the Red Brick Store in Nauvoo
3. Joseph’s 1844 statement made just east of Temple Grove in Nauvoo, where in an assembly of some 3,000 **Saints**, the Prophet Joseph was asked who his successor would be. Turning around, he pointed to his firstborn son Joseph III seated behind him
4. And Joseph’s statement the week of his murder, where before leaving home, Joseph again repeated that his son Joseph III would be his successor

Twelve Individuals Back up Joseph’s Statement Twelve individuals claimed they had firsthand knowledge that Joseph Smith made this statement. They include Joseph Thorn, David Dickson, James Whitehead, Catherine Huntington, Hannah Lytle, John and Priscilla Conyers, Mary Ralph, S.L. Crain, E. H. Morse and W. W. Smith.

See <https://restorationbookstore.org/articles/nopolygamy/jsfp-vol2/2chp14.htm>

More on Succession of Power

Stake President William Marks had no interest in becoming Church President, as the church was falling apart after Joseph's murder. One half of the Nauvoo Saints saw what Pres. Marks saw. They recognized Young's blind ambition to grab all power and wouldn't follow him west. One was former senior Seventy President, Hazen Aldrich. He said, "You will see by the Book of Covenants that the 12 are a traveling high council and are entirely out of their place in attempting to assume the First Presidency & dictate the affairs of the whole church," (Quinn, *Origins of Power*, p. 388).

There was no revelation making Young or any church president after Joseph the leader of the church. This false tradition originated with Young. God chooses His servants, whereas usurpers choose themselves and other men. The LORD said, "The president of the church, who is also the president of the council, **is appointed by revelation**" (D&C 102:9). Joseph was God's chosen servant. Pres. Joseph Fielding Smith said, "The senior apostle **automatically** becomes the presiding officer of the church, and he is so sustained by the Council of the Twelve which becomes the presiding body of the Church when there is no First Presidency" (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:156). BYU professor Casey Griffiths clarifies this tradition, stating, "**This is simply a historical precedent first set by President Brigham Young**, and despite there being nothing in the Doctrine and Covenants about prophetic succession, this pattern [**tradition**] of sustaining the most senior apostle as church president has been followed so consistently that **it might as well be doctrine.**"

The Prophet Joseph knew that the Twelve were not to lead. He stated, "The Twelve shall have **no right** to go into Zion or any of its stakes and there undertake to **regulate the affairs** thereof **where there is a standing high council**. But it is their duty to *go abroad* and regulate all matters relative to the different branches of the church." Conversely, the prophet cautioned the high council that they were to stay off the apostles' turf, "No standing high council has authority to go into the *churches abroad* and *regulate the matters thereof*, for this belongs to the Twelve" (Joseph Smith, Kirtland Council Minute Book, p. 112).

It was Christ as head of His Church who gave Joseph the authority to appoint anyone he wanted to succeed him as President. Joseph chose Hyrum from **the Stake High Council**, not one of the Twelve, stating, "If I should now be taken away, I had accomplished the great work the Lord had laid before me, and that which I had desired of the Lord; and that I had done my duty in organizing the High Council, through which council the will of the Lord might be known on all important occasions, in the building up of Zion, and establishing truth in the earth" (HC 2:124). Joseph reorganized the First Presidency **several times** but never **once** did he call one from among the Twelve.

Like her husband, Emma Smith knew God's word and will regarding succession. Her son Joseph Smith III was too young to lead at that time, so she looked to Pres. Marks to lead, "Whereas it is the business of the First Presidency, more particularly to govern the church at Zion, and the members abroad have a right to that quorum from the decisions of the Twelve. Now as the **Twelve have no power** with regard to the government of the Church in the Stakes of Zion, but **the High Council have all the power**, so it follows that on removal of the first President, the office would devolve upon the President of the High Council in Zion [William Marks at the time], as the first President always resides there, and that is the proper place for the quorum of which

he is head; thus there would be no schism or jarring. But the Twelve would attend to their duties *in the world* and not meddle with the government of the church *at home*, and the High Council in Zion and the First Presidency would attend to their business *in the same place*...Mr. Rigdon is not the proper successor of President Smith, being only his counselor, but Elder Marks should be the individual as he was not only his councilor at the time of his death, but also President of the High Council" (Emma Smith to James M. Monroe, quoted in Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, pps. 206-207). Emma's knowledge of God's word and will was a threat to Brigham's power grab, a primary reason why he opposed her so strongly.

Today, volume two of the Encyclopedia of Mormonism (by authors Lynn England and Keith Warner) modifies God's word in D&C 107:22 to support the Twelve in their usurpation of power, deliberately deceiving readers. According to Brewster, "There have always been false prophets and self-proclaimed would-be leaders who have sought to establish their own claim to presiding authority...One's eternal salvation depends upon the ability to recognize and know the true servants of God - those who are authorized to preach His gospel and administer the sacred and saving ordinances thereof" (Hoyt W. Brewster, *Prophets, Priesthood Keys, & Succession*, Deseret Book, 1991, p. 38, see also D&C 124:45-46). Joseph Smith said, "The moment we revolt at anything that comes from God, the devil takes power" (TPJS p. 181, see also D&C 93:39).

Joseph's "Last Charge" at Nauvoo

Like Abinadi, Joseph Smith preached repentance and faith in Christ the LORD, and gave his life for it. Just prior to his murder, Joseph gave the "last charge" to leaders at Nauvoo. It was a transfer of responsibility for sin marked by Joseph shaking his garments free of the blood of sins of those he taught correct doctrine to, just as Jacob did in the Book of Mormon in connection with the rise of polygamy among his people (2 Ne. 9:44-45; Jacob 1:19, 2:2). Records of this event have been edited today to convey the lie that Joseph was transferring all keys of priesthood power to the Twelve. The fact that it was a private meeting of the Council of Fifty (with attendance by some of the Twelve, including the guilty parties), and that Joseph shook his garments free of blood and sins of his people, have been edited out of the current narrative. Our idolatry today, in lifting up the arm of flesh over God's word (in scripture and pure revelation), causes many to rely upon one viewpoint with regard to church history; the history given us by Brigham Young and others under his control, and now today's leaders. Most have not searched out God's words, or the Smith family. The truth is to be had among them. (Val Brinkerhoff)

Brinkerhoff goes on in detail about Joseph's "last charge" in another 13-page essay called [joseph's_last_charge_at_nauvoo.pdf](#). Here are quoted portions of it.

In the full document, Brinkerhoff proves by showing original and doctored letters from Samuel F. Johnson that Joseph's final charge was given to the Council of 50, not the Council of 12, and that he was shaking his garments, not to convey keys and authority, but to rid himself of their sins. In addition, Brinkerhoff explains the Biblical practice of rending your garments, shaking your garments, and dusting off your feet.

Today, the Latter-day Saints are taught that Joseph's "**last charge**" to leaders in the spring of 1844 was a **transfer of all keys of priesthood power to the Twelve**, done in a meeting with *them* prior to Joseph's departure from this world. Official historical accounts today, including *modified* versions of Johnson's

letter to Gibbs, do not address **Joseph's shaking of his garments**, *nor* that the meeting was for **the Council of Fifty**, in which **some of the Twelve** were present, men like Brigham Young. The changed narrative is useful in *hiding original connections to polygamy and justification* for **how the Twelve obtained all power**. Both can be traced to Young.

Ancient Rite of Shaking Garments – A Transfer of Responsibility See the author's paper, Joseph Smith's Last Charge at Nauvoo for all scriptures tied to shaking one's garment before others, that the blood and sins of those taught might be removed from a servant's shoulders and transferred to those taught truth. Like Paul the Apostle, Joseph Smith did this ordinance before leadership in Nauvoo just before he was murdered. The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon made a similar statement at the beginning of the book, whereas Moroni did the same at the book's end. Jacob, King Benjamin and Alma did so in the middle of the book. It is an important ordinance clearing God's servants of the blood and sins of those taught truth.

Patterns in scripture, along with some portions of Benjamin F. Johnson's *unedited* letter point us to the truth. They collectively reveal that the Prophet Joseph was **removing himself of all responsibility** tied to what, I believe, was the secret practice of *spiritual wifery* among select church leaders at Nauvoo. He was placing **all responsivity for this abomination** squarely on the shoulders of those present who were **guilty** of this abomination, including Brigham Young, President of the Twelve, and other members of "*the secret chamber*" who were at the Nauvoo meeting. Some in this "*secret combination*" called it "*the secret chamber*", including William Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph who was in it for a time (the only Smith known to have more than one wife). William eventually turned on Brigham Young and others in this secret organization *after* his three brothers were murdered. Leaders of the *secret chamber* instituted *spiritual wifery* secretly among the people at this time in Nauvoo, **justifying** it via new doctrine, including modified versions of "*the sealing power*" and "*the patriarchal priesthood of the ancient patriarchs*". The Nicolaitans of the New Testament mixed sexual sin with new religious teachings and thus corrupted early Christianity in similar ways (see Rev. 2:6, 14-15 & D&C 117:11). They had lost their "first love" - Jesus Christ (Rev. 2:4).

Like Paul, Jacob, and others, I believe Joseph Smith was removing their sins from him using this same ancient rite, which involved the **shaking of his outer clothing**. Under inspiration from God Joseph was presenting himself as clean before the guilty parties. It was a *warning sign* to them. He had **freed himself of the blood and sins of his generation**. His act was tied to God's **judgment** – with time for *repentance*. It was **not** a transfer of **power** upon the ungodly among him, some of whom would be responsible for taking His life a short time later. Many in the Council of Fifty were not even members of the Church at Nauvoo.

Unedited history reveals that Joseph was threatening to expose the guilty of this abomination at Nauvoo during the last weeks of his life. They would not allow this to occur. Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel were murdered within one month of one another in June to July of 1844 to hide it all. The Book of Mormon has some 80-plus references to *secret combinations*, those rising up again in our day with great strength. They surround us in governments, media, corporations, schools, and churches. One of their primary tools is to hide their designs to "**get gain**" (**power**, sex, money, the honors of men, etc.). These designs are maintained by *secrecy*, **lies** and **deception**, and murder (see Moses 5). God has sprinkled warning messages throughout scripture to help wake us up to these many **lies**, leading to **deception** and ignorance, that the sheep might be fleeced.¹ I have placed these and other scriptures in endnote 1. They

include Matt. 24:4; Moses 4:4 (JST Gen. 3:4-5); 3 Ne. 16:10; 3 Ne. 21:18-20; 3 Ne. 20:1-2; 1833 Book of Commandments, 4:5-6 (*removed and replaced* with D&C 5:19); D&C 123:7-17; Eph. 4:10-14; D&C 45:57.

Modified accounts of Joseph's "**last charge**" are used to support the false claim that **all keys of power**, including the *sealing power*, were transferred from Joseph to Brigham Young and the Twelve at this special Spring, 1844 meeting. Young later claimed to have sole charge of the *sealing power* as President of the Twelve as a result of this supposed transfer. Today this supposed transfer of **all power** is used to *justify* the **power** the Twelve wield today over the Saints. They sit in the chief seats like king Noah and his priests, administrating over the church, rather than doing difficult missionary work throughout the world like Paul the Apostle. The primary focus of Young's early *sealing power* at Nauvoo was his supposed authority to *seal* multiple wives to one man, allowing select leaders to secretly practice *spiritual wifery*. Today, with polygamy outlawed by our government, this claim of **power** is now used to join family members together through eternity. These are mixed with another false claim also originating with the *secret chamber*, that the dead prophet *Joseph taught the doctrine of multiple wives* to early church leaders, and lived the principle secretly *with them*. Joseph cannot defend himself today.

The "**shaking of garments**" rite is an important **repeating pattern** presented to us in the words of many good teachers, like Paul the Apostle in the New Testament *and* of Prophets like Jacob, King Benjamin, Alma, and Moroni in the Book of Mormon. Benjamin Johnson's **unedited historical account** of Joseph's "*last charge*" at Nauvoo gives us an additional witness of this truth. Johnson was at the meeting and recorded it. Rare copies of his **unedited** letter are hard to find now, as many have been edited, along with the rest of the Brighamite version of church history. Johnson's unedited letter provides a clearer, more accurate historical portrayal of what Joseph did at the "**last charge**". As addressed earlier, the first truth removed from it (1) is that this meeting was a *private* meeting of **the Council of Fifty**, *not* one for the Twelve alone. The second truth removed is that (2) Joseph performed **a dramatic sign**, symbolizing **a transfer of responsibility for sin, not** a transfer of all **power** in the priesthood. He did so by removing his outer cloak and vigorously **shaking** it free of **blood and sins** of those present. Joseph did this, stating:

"I now shake my garments clear and free from the blood of this generation and of all men."

The meaning and purpose behind Joseph's act, Johnson's **unedited** account of it, and similar acts by other teachers in scripture is obvious when we read scripture. All examples reveal that *the stains of sin of the people they had taught were being absolved from* them. This fulfills the responsibility to trumpet truth by God's "watchmen" (see the Watchman's Parable in Ezek. 33:2-9). Two examples are especially relevant, that of Joseph Smith and Jacob of the Book of Mormon. Both Prophets were laying the **responsibility** for the *abomination* of sexual sin among the people they were responsible to teach. Both had groups among them who were justifying sexual sin via new doctrine created to support it. This is what the Nicolaitans did in the New Testament (see Revelation 2:6, 14-15) and what the Saints were starting to do in Joseph's day (see D&C 117:11). It was a *great abomination* because it featured **justification** for *serious sexual sin* by way of *new religious doctrine*, taught by men who were to feed the sheep, not fleece them. Satan has used sexual sin, secrecy, and blood-oaths to corrupt the things of God from the very beginning (see Moses 5). If he can get the leaders to succumb to his wiles, then the people follow easily thereafter.

The false doctrine that **power** was being transferred to the Twelve in this **private** meeting in the spring of 1844 goes against the scripture patterns, and against God's will and direction in D&C 107, which is

focused upon church government and protection against **abuse of priesthood power** among four equal quorums. Joseph Smith was fully aware of the content of D&C 107. He and other leaders knew that any changes made in church doctrine, priesthood, etc., especially like the supposed transfer of **all power** in “the last charge” to the Twelve by Joseph – would have to have been **unanimously approved** by each of the **four priesthood quorums, with each of them voting separately** (the four quorums include – 1. the 1st Pres., 2. the High Councils of Zion, 3. the Twelve, and 4. the Seventy). These four unanimous votes had to be followed up with a 5th vote - from **the whole church** (regular members). See D&C 26:2; Mosiah 29:26; Alma 29:4; 1 Sam. 8:7. History reveals that none of this voting occurred with reference to the Joseph transferring all keys of **power** to just one quorum – the Twelve! The Twelve were and are to be **traveling missionaries**, preaching the pure gospel of Christ, like Paul the Apostle.

In addition to D&C 107, scripture reveals that **God alone provides real power** in the priesthood to men, and that it is only given in His time and His way (see JST Gen. 14). This is especially true of *the sealing power* (see Mosiah 26:14-29). God gives it to whom He wills, those whom He trusts, those who have come to know Him (see Helaman 10). Joseph did not, could not, and would not have **secretly** given all power to the Twelve, **power** that God alone gives to proven servants that are humble, righteous, those who have come to know Him.

Like many other historical documents featuring Joseph Smith’s words, the “**last charge**” was modified to fit Brigham Young’s narrative (and those following him in leadership), implying that both Brigham and the Twelve were given **all keys of power** in the priesthood by Joseph at this meeting, including the power to *seal many women to one man* – the earliest focus of the sealing power at Nauvoo for those in *the secret chamber*.

Some versions of Benjamin F. Johnson’s letter to George Gibbs have been modified too. The unmodified version I originally found is now difficult to find (see endnote 2). The changes made to it represent lies put in place to protect early polygamy and the **power** the Twelve had taken, that they might sit in the chief seats as administrators over the Saints, living a life of luxury, much like King Noah and his priests in the Book of Mormon. Again, God’s word tells that the Twelve are to be *traveling missionaries*, like Paul the Apostle, preaching Christ, and doing so humbly, with much sacrifice of earthly things, “freely giving” to the people. The Book of Mormon makes it clear that leaders (priests, kings, and missionaries like the Twelve) were not to be supported on the backs of the people. The Twelve were to preach Christ, and like Him - cast out devils, heal the sick, and raise the dead (see Matt. 10:8). They were not to be administrators living off the people, as they do today, a legacy that began with Brigham. The **power** he sought and obtained for himself and the Twelve - has become the focus of the current false narrative today, a replacement focus for Christ’s mission. It was centered upon **repentance** and **faith on the LORD Jesus Christ**, and **redemption** at His hands alone! **Power** and other forms of “**gain**” are the focus of fallen men (see 1 Ne. 22:23).

Modified accounts of “**the last charge**” today include those of Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, and Benjamin F. Johnson (all polygamists). They are found in endnote 2, along with a mostly *unedited* portion of the letter from Johnson to Gibbs about the meeting. Today the LDS church claims that (A) the Twelve were given **all power** by Joseph at the meeting. Some of the earliest accounts also claim that (B) Brigham Young, as President of the Twelve was given sole management of “**the sealing power**” over the whole earth – and that it was primarily used at this time (early Nauvoo, following Joseph’s murder) to seal multiple wives to one man. This is not addressed in today’s accounts. These and other clear

connections to early polygamy are no longer apparent in the modern, edited accounts, and thus most don't match the reality of what really happened in this **private** meeting with the *Council of Fifty*. All four accounts of "the last charge" in endnote 2 are a little different, but similar in the false claim of all **power** being given to the Twelve. Benjamin F. Johnson's letter to Gibbs reveals some of the truth (Joseph's shaking of garments and that it was a meeting of the Council of Fifty), but he too was a polygamist later in Utah. He is not the key authority. Instead, it is **God's word** given us throughout scripture! Nephi's statement in 2 Nephi 4:34 – that we are **cursed when we trust in the arm of flesh**, rather than **trusting in God** alone - is clearly evident in the deception presented us today in governments, media, schools, and churches. Who each of us believes determines what we believe. Blessings result in believing and trusting God! This is the message of David in Psalm 118:8, Jeremiah in Jeremiah 17:5, and Nephi in 2 Ne. 4:34 and 28:31.

Note that the **rent** garment no longer serves as a protective covering (as in Christ's blood or His protective wings as a mother hen). The heart is exposed. Israel's kings often rent their clothes. It typically symbolized that the kingdom of a particular wicked king would be **rent** from them. Such was the case with King Saul (2 Sam. 3:31) and King Solomon's posterity (1 Kings 11:11-13, 29:31; 2 Chron. 34:27; see also D&C 84:118, 133:40; Gen. 37:29-30; Eccl. 3:7; Ezra 9:3-5; Joel 2:12-13; Amos 9:11; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Peter 1:3). King Hezekiah, however, was a righteous king. Isaiah promised that he and his people would be protected from the Assyrian army. Note the summary below.

1. **Rending** (tearing) garments = *Great mourning, concern, and despair shown*
Job 1; Num. 14:6; 1 Kings 11; Esther 4; 2 Kings 19; 1 Sam. 4; John 19:23-24; Matt. 27:5-54; D&C 45:54 (many more)
2. **Shaking** garments free of blood & sins = *Transfer of responsibility, warning with time to repent*
Acts 18:6; 2 Ne. 9:44-45; Jacob 1:18-19, 2:2; Mosiah 2:27-28; Alma 5:21; Mormon 9:34-35; Ether 12:37-38
3. **Dusting** of one's feet = *Judgment with cursing*
Mat. 10:14; Luke 9:5; Acts 13:51; D&C 24:15, 60:15, 75:19-22, 84:88-93, 99:2-4

Both the Prophet Jacob of the Book of Mormon, and Joseph Smith **were placing the burden of the sin of polygamy upon the shoulders of the guilty**. At Nauvoo, they became **the leaders of the people** following the murder of the Smith brothers. Such were turning their backs on the LORD and His teachings. The current church narrative about this meeting is **false**. It goes against (1) how God alone provides Priesthood Power, including the sealing power to His most trusted servants (see Helaman 10); And (2) the supposed **power** that was transferred there privately goes against how the church was to be governed - by four equal priesthood quorums out in the open, each with their checks and balances (see D&C 107), so that power wouldn't be abused by one quorum or one man. The four required unanimous **votes** of these priesthood quorums, and that of the whole church, never happened. Power was taken when the Smiths were gone.

It is a difficult truth to embrace (Matt. 24:4; Moses 4:4 [JST Gen. 3:4-5]; 3 Ne. 16:10; 3 Ne. 21:18-20; 3 Ne. 20:1-2; 1833 Book of Commandments, 4:5-6 [*removed and replaced with D&C 5:19*]; D&C 123:7-17; Eph. 4:10-14; D&C 45:57).

"And thus, if the people of *this generation* harden **not** their hearts, I will work a *reformation* among *them*, and I will put down all **lyings**, and **deceivings**, and *priestcrafts*, and *envyings*, and *strifes*, and *idolatrics*, and *sorceries*, and all manner of *iniquities*, and I will establish **my church**, like unto the church

which was taught by **my disciples** in the days of old. And now if this generation *do* harden their hearts against **my word**, behold I will deliver them up unto Satan, for he reigneth and hath power at this time, for he hath got great hold upon the hearts of the people of *this generation*: and **not far from the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrah**, do they come at this time: and behold the sword of justice hangeth over **their** heads, and if **they** persist in the hardness of their hearts, the time cometh that it must fall upon **them**" (1833 Book of Commandments, 4:5-6, *removed and replaced* with D&C 5:19).

Benjamin F. Johnson's Account of Joseph's Last Charge Benjamin F. Johnson sent a letter to George F. Gibbs containing, what I believe to be, the most accurate account of Joseph's "last charge" at Nauvoo in the spring of 1844.

See

https://archive.org/stream/BenjaminFJohnsonLetterToGeorgeFGibbs/Benjamin%20F%20Johnson%20Letter%20to%20George%20F%20Gibbs_djvu.txt

Three other "official" versions of the "last charge" are provided below. Although Johnson's full letter is not included here (clearly revealing it was a *Council of Fifty* meeting), he does address Joseph's **shaking of his garments free of sin** (some versions have neither fact). Johnson lived during Brigham Young's leadership. He too became a polygamist. His account merges *more* truth about Joseph's actions during "the last charge" but also merges somewhat with the official church narrative of his day, allowing him to remain safely in the fold in Utah in his day. The pattern in God's word in scripture is where truth fully emerges. *Account #1* Johnson wrote, "And now returning to the council [of Fifty] and the 'Last Charge.' Let us remember that by revelation he [Joseph] had reorganized the Holy Priesthood, and by command of the Lord (D&C 124 and D&C 123) had *taken* from the First Presidency his brother Hyrum to hold as Patriarch, *the sealing power*, the first and highest honor due to priesthood; that he had turned the keys of endowments, to the last anointing, and sealing together with keys of Salvation for the dead, with the eternity of the marriage covenant and the power of endless lives. All keys he held, and under these then existing conditions he stood before that association of his select friends, *including* all the Twelve, and with *great feeling and animation* he graphically reviewed his life of persecution, labor and sacrifice for the church and kingdom of God, both of which he declared were now organized upon the earth. The *burden* of which had become too great for him longer to carry, that he was weary and tired with the weight he so long had borne, and he then *said, with great vehemence*: 'And in the name of the Lord, I now **shake** from my shoulders the responsibilities of **bearing off the Kingdom of God** to all the world, and here and now I place **that responsibility**, with *all the keys, powers and privileges* pertaining thereto, upon the shoulders of you the Twelve Apostles, in connection with this **council**; and if you will accept this, to do it, God shall bless you mightily and shall open your way; and if you do it **I now shake my garments clear and free from the blood of this generation and of all men**'; and **shaking** his skirt with great vehemence he raised himself from the floor, while the spirit that accompanied his words thrilled every heart as with a feeling that boded *bereavement and sorrow*."

Note that *this* version of Johnson's letter addresses the solemn "**responsibility**" of "**bearing off the Kingdom of God**" in missionary labors - the primary responsibility of the Twelve witnesses **for Christ** in His day. Christ and His saving mission was to be their focus as "**traveling missionaries**" to the world, like Paul the Apostle. He and they went out to preach the gospel without purse or script, to cast out devils, heal the sick, and raise the dead. *Modern versions* of Johnson's letter no longer feature (1) **the shaking of Joseph's garments free of blood and sin** of the guilty; And (2) they don't address the fact that this was a **Council of Fifty** meeting, where many of the Twelve were present. Why would Joseph transfer all

power at a private or secret meeting, one in which non-church members were present (some of the Council of Fifty were not members of the church)? Only God provides the sealing power to those He chooses (Helaman 10). The clearest thing showing editing, in these modified accounts – is the focus **on power transfer**, *not* a focus on **Christ the LORD** and Joseph’s transfer of **responsibility** for the sin on polygamy on the guilty – Brigham and other leaders among the Twelve!

Account #2: Parley P. Pratt stated, “He [Joseph] proceeded to confer **on Elder Young**, the President of the Twelve, **the keys of the sealing power**, as conferred in the last days by the spirit and power of Elijah, in order **to seal the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers**, lest the whole earth should be smitten with a curse” (see the full account in the *Millennial Star*, 5:151, March 1845). Young *justified* his many wives (55-56) citing his *sealing power* and the special *Patriarchal priesthood authority* he had, like that of David and Solomon of old. Jacob warned his people about *justifying* their similar *sins* in this manner, a mix of sexual sin and abuse of women, *justified* via *false religion* and *new doctrine*. This is why God and Jacob called such a mix an “abomination”, a “whoredom”, an “iniquity”, and a “grosser crime”. Ancient Baal worship in the Old Testament and the teachings of the Nicolaitans in the New Testament (Rev. 2:6, 14-15: D&C 117:11) had a similar *justifying* mix. According to Joseph Smith History 1:39, Moroni quoted Malachi 3 and 4 differently, stating that in the last days, “the hearts of the children were to **turn** (*remember* or be *sealed*) **to the promises** [God] **made to fathers.**” This has to do with understanding the covenant promises God made to ancient patriarchal fathers like Abraham, Noah, Jacob, and Joseph of Egypt, promises we too can *remember* and *inherit* by living the gospel of Christ and keeping His commandments. Moroni’s quoting of Malachi to Joseph was about “turning” or “remembering” God’s covenant promises to men who had parted the veil to God. These same promises may be “sealed” upon us too as we live God’s ways. It was **not** about sealing family members together in a temple – today’s modified focus, one replacing Young’s original focus on *sealing* multiple wives to one man (he had 56 wives). The new doctrine came about to originally support sexual sin among early leaders who used the “sealing” doctrine to justify multiple wives. These men were also Freemasons who used the fear and control of the blood-oaths of Masonry to keep their secret lifestyle going.