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## Priesthood

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Lecture 5 Orem, Utah

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

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

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

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

There are two precautions I want to put into this discussion: First, this is an overview and cannot contain all there is to be known about this topic. Second, this is merely a brief review of my own

understanding. You should not assume this represents all I know about this topic. It is merely introductory and an attempt to clarify some of the larger misunderstandings about priesthood. Much more needs ultimately to be understood by anyone who would like to have a complete understanding of priesthood.

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

Ask yourself then if there is a possibility that when Joseph speaks about "different portions or degrees" of priesthood, whether he is talking about something altogether different from the offices we have in the Church of Elder, Priest, Teacher, Deacon, Bishop, Seventy, Apostle, High Priest, Patriarch, Church President, Area Authority Seventy; because even in the understanding of the Church, the way in which we ordain today, and the way that we once ordained suffered from an interruption that lasted over two decades. Today we lay hands upon someone and to confer upon them alternatively, either the Aaronic priesthood or the Melchizedek priesthood, and then to ordain them to an office. The way we phrase it today, is an office within that priesthood. But they confer, on the one hand, Aaronic or on the other hand Melchizedek, priesthood. For over two decades they did not confer priesthood, but only ordained to an office in the church. I would like you to entertain the idea that Elder, Priest, Teacher, Deacon and so on aren't priesthood at all; they are offices in the Church. They occupy the position in the Church of these various church offices, with or without the presence of priesthood.

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

So when Joseph says there are different portions or degrees, that all priesthood is Melchizedek. That all priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are "different portions or degrees" of it, I want to suggest to you that he is not talking about offices in the Church. I want to suggest to you that

instead, what he's talking about is a continuum that I hope by the end of today, we have some greater appreciation or understanding for.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"For he that receiveth my servants receive me." [I suggested in Centerville that the word "servants" in this context meant angels. And "angel," the word is derived from a Greek word that simply means "messenger." The messenger can't be on their own errand. They have to have a message that is being brought from the Lord. Therefore if the message originates with the Lord and the message is delivered by a messenger, it does not matter if the one delivering the message

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

is a mortal. We find in the Book of Mormon where Jacob was told what he was to preach by an angel the night before he taught. (See 2 Ne. 10: 3.) King Benjamin said his sermon was based on what the angel told him to teach, after awakening him at night. (See Mosiah 3: 2-23.) In that context, both Jacob and King Benjamin were angels, or messengers with a message from God.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, as long as they bear a message from the Lord, they fit the definition.]

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

"He that receiveth me receiveth my Father." [In this context, what he's talking about is the same thing that you find in the 14th chapter of the book of John, in which Christ says that He will not leave you comfortless, but He will come to comfort you. And then He and his Father will "make our abode with [you]." (John 14: 23.) This is not an abstraction. The idea that this is something that happens in your heart, you can read in the Doctrine and Covenants, is an old sectarian notion and is false. (D&C 130: 3.) It means a literal appearance of these holy beings to minister, to comfort, and ultimately to take up their abode.]

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

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

"Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, [notice now the reference is in the singular, implying it speaks now about the singular, fullest manifestation which comes from the Father] "receive this oath and covenant of my Father..." [This is not talking about abstractions, quorums, groups, churches and organizations, orders, and choruses among men on this side of the veil. This is talking about a direct covenantal relationship established by the Father with *this*, meaning the fullness obtained directly from the Father, which comprises "this priesthood." This

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

priesthood is the one about which today I would like to speak. This fully endowed priesthood.] "...which he (the Father) cannot break..." [Because if he were to break this once he has made this covenant with someone, he would cease to be God. And he cannot do that. Therefore, *this* covenant cannot be broken by Him.] "...neither can it be moved," That is, once the Father has made that covenant, earth and hell cannot make it otherwise.

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

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

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

Then we come in these words which I think are critical to understanding the topic, and we're going to spend a lot of time on today: "which ye have received, which I now confirm upon you

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

who are present this day, by mine own voice out of the heavens; and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you." [Oh my! You see the priesthood is being conferred. And the priesthood is being conferred, not by the laying on of hands, but by the voice of God, given to those who were present on this day.]

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

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

But Melchizedek, that is, Shem grew up to become the one that received that name-title. He "was a man of faith, who wrought righteousness; and when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire." [This is Melchizedek as a child. This is Melchizedek doing something by faith.] "And thus having been approved of God, he was ordained." [That is, ordination occurred *after* faith.]

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

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

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

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

And it was delivered to Melchizedek just as we saw in Doctrine and Covenants section 84: "And it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as believed on his name. For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God." [Now take that impressive list of things, and read it in light of this,] "... to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this *by the will of the Son of God* which was from before the foundation of the world."

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

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

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<sup>4</sup> Moses was commanded to strike a rock with his rod while at Horeb so that water would come from it. Moses did exactly as he was commanded, and the rock brought forth water. (See Exo. 17: 1-7.) Later the Lord commanded Moses at the place called Meribah to speak to the rock and bring forth water. Instead Moses did as before, struck the

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

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

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

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

"And now, Melchizedek was a priest of this order; therefore he obtained peace in Salem, and was called the Prince of peace." [That is also one of the titles given to the Lord, The Prince of Peace.] "And his people wrought righteousness, and obtained heaven, and sought for the city of Enoch which God had before taken, separating it from the earth, having reserved it unto the latter days, or the end of the world. And hath said, and sworn with an oath, that the heavens and the earth should come together..." [See that city of Enoch is reserved unto the latter days until the end, it was separated from the earth, but it's going to come again in the latter days. These are they who are coming to "burn up" all those who are unprepared for their glory.]

And the Lord swore "...with an oath, that the heavens and the earth should come together; and the sons of God should be tried so as by fire." [Meaning that, when they return again, those sons who remain standing are going to have to remain able to endure the fire that is coming. "They

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rock with his rod, as he had previously done, thereby departing from the strict instructions given for a man to be using God's power. (See Num. 20: 7-13.) The Lord expects exactitude from those who come to be His sons and all the more from those whom He permits to command the elements and have them obey. Few are able to govern themselves sufficiently to warrant such trust by God.

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

who come shall burn them up." We talked about that briefly in Boise, and we've been trying to track that down through Idaho Falls, and now we see it again here. Therefore, this priesthood has something to do with all of the talks that I've been giving up until this point, as well as where we go from here in the remaining talks to be given.]

"And this Melchizedek, having thus established righteousness, was called the king of heaven by his people, or, in other words, the King of peace." [Because he brought peace to them.] "And he lifted up his voice, and he blessed Abram, being the high priest, and the keeper of the storehouse of God; Him whom God had appointed to receive tithes for the poor." [And Abraham paid him. In any event, Melchizedek established righteousness, his city was a city of peace.]

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

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

This is Doctrine and Covenants section 121:36. "That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness." I want to suggest to you that the word "powers of heaven" is a proper noun, and not just a phrase encompassing some abstraction. Powers of Heaven: a title, a status and a reference to persons who hold such a title. It is not some mere feeling, abstraction or emotion. That's not it.

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

I want to be clear about this. I am not talking about the kind of hierarchy we see among the gentiles in the gentile Church. We do not see people who love to control and compel others

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

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

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

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

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

"...and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man." [So then, if one has this fellowship that has this authority, or is in fellowship with that group from which such power reckons.]

How is it then that you exercise that authority? Well the answer is also contained in the same revelation. "No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By

kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—" [So if you find someone who is armed with this, what you are going to discover is someone whose tool is persuasion, and who offers knowledge. This will be someone whose knowledge does not reckoned merely from the writings, the theories, the research and the philosophies of men. But it will reckon rather from a higher place. It will always be filled with new truth and therefore new light, because those who hold such authority are themselves in possession of light and truth. Remember the reason the authority is given in the first place is to make men more like God, to lift and to elevate them. Therefore this priesthood will be plain in the language, in the light and in the flood of new truths which emanate from the holder of this authority.]

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

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

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

Rather like what Nephi did with Isaiah, if I can lay this at the feet of someone else, then I can say that I didn't break any confidences. In any event, the ranking goes: angels, and then archangels, and then principalities, then powers, then dominions, then thrones, then Cherubim, and then Seraphim. Seraphim being those who dwell in everlasting burnings, the glorious ones, the ones who dwell in flames of glory. For a description of them, we've already looked at that in Doctrine and Covenants section 109:79. I'm not going to go there. These conditions are developed by degrees. They are not achieved in a single step. But when they are achieved, they are done by obedience to the laws upon which such blessings are predicated. If you want to see what a Being acts like who has risen to the point they are moving onto the Throne of the Father, then you have Jesus Christ as your model. He is, according to the *Lectures on Faith*, the "prototype of the saved man." And, as I explained in an earlier talk, He represents what you must be like in order to be saved. You must be "precisely" as He is, and nothing different. Therefore when you consider these developmental stages through which all must pass, you should not look at this as a model for an afterlife church akin to what we suffer under here in mortality. There will be no proud

gentiles there bossing one another around. Rather it will be knowledge which will exalt you there. It will be light and truth, or in other words the glory of God which will exalt you. Therefore you progress always, eternally, according to the grace within you.

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

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

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

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

Now go back to Moses chapter 8 and in verse 19 it says: "And the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his Gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch." Or in other words, in the case of Noah, the fellowship that originated as a relationship between him and his older brethren, here, but was extended by

God ordaining him also to a fellowship on the other side. Therefore he belonged not merely to the priesthood held by men, but that the priesthood held by the immortals.

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

Jethro the father-in-law, ordained Moses to a brotherhood here. D&C 84:6. "And the sons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he (that is Moses) received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro." Then go over to verses beginning at 21: "And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also." This is referring to the other, higher brotherhood involving those "Powers" beyond the veil.

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

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

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

Well, you can find it throughout if you look for it. These few illustrate the concept enough to point it out today. The fact is that there are two levels, the more important one of which requires a connection beyond the veil, and a less important one of which is between mortals. It is not

enough, and you ought never to be content to simply have the association that exists here. You should always seek to know and associate with “the Powers of Heaven.”

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

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

The question was asked to Joseph Smith: "Was the priesthood taken away when Moses died?" Joseph said, and it was in this context, that we began earlier, that all priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it. I'm hoping now when you read there are "different portions of degrees of it," you will realize this has reference to these different fellowships, these different associations that one can have with those "Powers of Heaven" which exist on the other side. Because there is a level of growth, a level of development, and an entrusting of the authority and the power of godliness, that continues on into the eternities, until at last you arrive at the final point, which Joseph calls: "attaining to the resurrection of the dead."<sup>6</sup> He knew what he was talking about. Many of us do not. Attaining to the resurrection in that context, means to inherit everlasting burnings. Or, in other words, to be able to dwell in a position of glory, from priesthood that reckons from mortal descent through mothers and fathers is well-nigh impossible.

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

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

Next you must realize that all priesthood is perishable. We saw that in Doctrine and Covenants section 121 verse 37. "That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness..." [This limitation on such priesthood should be coupled with an understanding of the only possible tool to be used when you possess such priesthood. Ask yourself: If I ever were to obtain it, how do I get to use the priesthood? How is it that I do get to exercise some influence? And the answer is:] "No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Continuing: "What was the power of Melchizedek? 'Twas not the Priesthood of Aaron which administers in outward ordinances, and the offering of sacrifices. Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings." [This is because the Aaronic portion only holds limited authority and is given for judgments and destruction. The Melchizedek is given instead for blessing and giving life. When someone claims to hold Melchizedek priesthood but they use it in order to offer up judgment, and condemnation, control, compulsion, and authority over the souls of men, you can mark it as a sign that they hold no such authority. If they refuse to constrain themselves, to use persuasion only, and gentleness and meekness then you know by that sign alone that you are listening to an Aaronic and not a Melchizedek authority (if they have authority at all). Because the office and the authority and the keys of the Melchizedek is given by God to a man to bless, to enlighten, to raise you up<sup>8</sup> by bringing to you light and truth, which is the glory of God, or intelligence. (See D&C 93: 36.)

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

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

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

That is not to say, that because one receives that priesthood they cannot fall. Because while you are in this world, as Paul put it, you stand in jeopardy every hour. (1 Cor. 15: 30.) Here is the place in which the trial, the test, the temptation, the burden of mortality exists. It exists for so

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

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

long as you have the flesh. Even if you come to possess the authority you will not have that abide with you continually on into eternity until you have finished the course. Not until you have resisted the temptation, until you have completed the race and finished the work. (2 Tim. 4: 7-8.) Only when you successfully lay down the burden here and have completed this test, are you permitted them to take it up there, as a matter of right. But here although the priesthood is endless, although the covenant of God is eternal, a man may fall from it, and therefore you proceed, recognizing you do so at your eternal peril.

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

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

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

The other reason why I think patriarchal ought to be viewed as the highest form, is because the priesthood which began with Adam was a single form of priesthood which was a Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. That priesthood after the Order of the Son of God descended from Adam down to the time of Enoch, and then it got renamed the priesthood after the order of Enoch. These are the "Patriarchs" and therefore their priesthood, in the original form of the Holy Order, can be rightly named "Patriarchal priesthood" because it was the priesthood of the original Patriarchs of mankind.

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

the Order of the Son of God. Therefore, if you are going to say patriarchal priesthood as a scholar, and parsed the words differently, you need to understand that I'm using them in this way.

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

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

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

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

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

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

possessing the covenant itself. Therefore, if you're going to receive the covenant which cannot be broken, it is obtained by, and from, the Father.]

Continuing, "The Holy Ghost is God's messenger to administer in all those priesthoods." [You see, it was by faith and the power of the Holy Ghost, that Melchizedek did what he did. And if someone gets possession of any or all of these priesthoods, administering in them must be through the power of the Holy Ghost. I just read you what Joseph said: "It is by the power of the Holy Ghost." So let me ask you the question, and you answer it yourself: Let us assume the case that a woman is filled with the Holy Ghost. Rather like Anna in the temple when Christ was brought forth, and Anna, by the power of the Holy Ghost prophesies concerning the young babe, who had been brought to the temple. Given the fact that the authority by which priesthood is to become operative, as Joseph just explained, is the Holy Ghost, what possible difference does it make, if the prophetess Anna, standing in the temple, prophesying concerning the child who is brought in (see Luke 2: 36-38), cannot grab a knife and go over to the place where they tied the animals, and cut the throat of the sheep? Of what significance is it if she could not divide up and carry part of the carcass to the iron grate at the top of the ramp upon the altar where they burned it? And of what significance is it if she could not take the bowl and hyssop and walk around and splatter the four corners of the altar, at the bloodline of the altar? Why would it be more significant that Anna was deprived of the outward ordinance performance, then that she, as a prophetess, filled with the Holy Ghost, spake and prophesied concerning the Son of God on the day that He was brought to the temple, for the offering of the cleansing of Mary, having completed her day? Only a fool would prize the outward performance above the power of the Holy Ghost animating Anna on that day. Those priests performing their functions were unaware of the babe's significance. Unless, of course, they gave heed to the testimony of the prophetess.

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

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

Well, I believe that the purpose of the heavenly association is to accomplish two things: One, is to have valid ordinances. And the second, is to obtain answers or direction. I want to read from *The Teachings the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 272: "Where did the kingdom of God begin? Where there is no kingdom of God there is no salvation. What constitutes the kingdom of God? Where there is a prophet, a priest, or a righteous man unto whom God gives His oracles; there is the kingdom of God and where the oracles are not, there the kingdom of God is not. In these remarks, I have no allusion to the kingdoms of the earth. We will keep the laws of the land; we

do not speak against them; we never have, and we can hardly make mention of the state of Missouri, of our persecutions there, but what the cry goes forth that we are guilty of larceny, burglary, arson, treason, murder, &c., &c., which is false. We speak of the kingdom of God on the earth, not the kingdoms of men." [If you read the paper I wrote, *Brigham Young's Telestial Kingdom*, you'll recognize in that paper that Brigham Young thought the kingdom was to be an earthly institution. Joseph denounced that. He denounced a lot of things we have subsequently taken up. We have gone far astray from what Joseph began.]

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

Continuing, "As touching the Gospel and baptism that John preached, I would say that John came preaching the Gospel for the remission of sins; he had his authority from God, and the oracles of God were with him, and the kingdom of God for a season seemed to rest with John alone. The Lord promised Zacharias that he should have a son who was a descendant of Aaron, the Lord having promised that the priesthood should continue with Aaron and his seed throughout their generations. Let no man take this honor upon himself, except he be called of God, as was Aaron; and Aaron received his call by revelations. An angel of God also appeared unto Zacharias while in the Temple, and told him that he should have a son, whose name should be John, and he should be filled with the Holy Ghost. Zacharias was a priest of God, and officiating in the Temple, and John was a priest after his father, and held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, and was called of God to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God. The Jews, as a nation, having departed from the law of God and the Gospel of the Lord, prepared the way for transferring it to the Gentiles. But, says one, the kingdom of God could not be set up in the days of John, for John said the kingdom was at hand. But I would ask if it could be any nearer to them than to be in the hands of John. The people need not wait for the days of Pentecost to find the kingdom of God, for John had it with him, and he came forth from the wilderness crying out, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand,' as much as to say, 'Out here I have got the kingdom of God, and you can get it, and I am coming after you; and if you don't receive it, you will be damned;' and the scriptures represent that all Jerusalem went out into John's baptism. There was a legal administrator, and those that were baptized were subjects for a king; and also the laws and oracles of God were there; therefore the kingdom of God was there; for no man could have better authority to administer than John; and our Savior submitted to that authority Himself, by being baptized by John; therefore the kingdom of God was set up on the earth, even in the days of John."

John was a legal administrator. Christ recognized him even though there was an existing priestly authority which He also respected, who were in control of the temple at Jerusalem. But the

presence of one set of recognized authorities did not prevent Christ from respecting another, unrecognized priestly authority. You see John was unrecognized by the earthly fellowship or priesthood, but was recognized by the heavenly fellowship or priesthood. Christ gave polite deference to the earthly, but submitted to the heavenly. As it turned out, Christ's submission to the heavenly authority was necessary for His own salvation. (See 2 Ne. 31: 5-12.)

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

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

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

In another talk Joseph Smith also said, "John wrested the keys, the kingdom, the power and the glory from the Jews by the holy anointing and decree of heaven." That's from *The Teachings the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 276. Further Doctrine and Covenants 84:28 points out that John "was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord, in whose hand is given all power." John was sent forth, in part, to be rejected by the Jews so that he could wrest "the keys, the kingdom, and the power and the glory from the Jews, and this by the holy anointing and decree of heaven." Because an angel had established it, and because the Powers of Heaven were behind it, the rejection of John was a necessary step to permit one dispensation to close and another to begin. God follows patterns in every age.

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

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

Patriarchal priesthood is not obtained by going and being sealed in the temple. It is one that one obtains by going and meeting with God in *His* temple. That greatest priesthood before the days of Melchizedek "was called *the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God.*" My view is

we've had enough name changes. When this highest order of priesthood returns again in the last days, it will no longer be called after a man, or men, or those who have held it in the past. But it will be called once again The Holy Order after the Son of God. The authority to be given by heaven to man on earth at the end of the world, will be in a mirror image of that which was in the beginning.

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

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

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

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

This is a complete aside, but I really like the work that Bart Erhman has done. He's tried to reconstruct the Christological debates of the second and third century, in which they rewrote the New Testament in order to conform with their false Christological ideas and arguments. See, when Christ was baptized, the statement that was made to Christ, Bart Erhman has shown, is the statement that you find in Psalms chapter 2: 7, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." Which was changed during these debates to read instead: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This change was in order to solve a debate going on in the second century over the idea of adoptionism. This was the argument among some of the clerics that Christ was merely mortal, and He was adopted by God through that statement. And so that statement which appears in Psalms 2 :7 was really what was one time in Matthew. But these earlier words got changed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not only were Christ and Moses called to be God's sons while they were mortal, but Abraham was likewise called God's son. In Abraham 3:12, we encounter God saying, "And he said unto me: My son, my son (and his hand was stretched out), behold I will show you all these. And he put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many; and they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof." Once again, you have at the same instance, that he is being acknowledged as a son, the outpouring of the intelligence of God, the glory of God. Light and truth knowledge of things as they are and as they were as they are to come were given to each of these because they were sons of God. That is part of the calling.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, Melchizedek was a man of righteousness. "and when a child he feared God" [not man,] "and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, having been approved of God" [and not man. In fact to be approved of God, in many cases, conforming to His will make you offensive to man. But the opinions, vagaries, and the fashions of men, the opinion polling and the drifts of what is and what is not popular at one point or another, are damnable. They ought not even be considered. Righteousness does not give any regard to such things. And yet it may be virtuous to do so. It may be virtuous to be a limp wristed, weepy, happy-go-lucky, "have a nice day" kind of effeminate chap. But righteousness will kick his ass everyday.]

Continuing, "Having been approved of God." [It is God, and God's approval alone that matters. It is what God regards of you. It is what is in your heart, because God can detect what is in your heart. God knows why you do what you do. God knows why you say what you say. God knows

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now I want to focus on the topic of “keys.” This is a continuing theme of meetings, conferences and articles put out by the church. Like the Catholic Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints focuses attention continuously upon the claim to possess “keys.” The Catholics claim they have perpetuated them from Peter to the present. The Latter-day Saints claim to have been given them more recently. But both of these churches base their legitimacy on the claim to have something they denominate “keys” and therefore they can offer salvation to their respective memberships.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dispensation heads are given the power, the sealing power, the authority, the ability to use the power to seal up by embodying the covenant that is given to them by God, by establishing an ordinance to perpetuate the covenant. That ordinance remains in effect after the death of Moses, after the death of Lehi, after the death of Joseph Smith, so long as it remains embodied within the ordinance. This kind of ordinance or this kind of sealing authority, then requires and gives rise to, the second kind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you turn to Doctrine and Covenants section 68 verses three and four. "And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation." Now go over to verse 12. "And of as many as the Father shall bear record, to you shall be given power to seal them up unto eternal life. Amen." So this is talking in the context of someone having authority to seal as a result of them being moved upon by the Holy Ghost. That is authority which anyone of you, and the prophetess Anna in the temple at Jerusalem when Christ came into the temple, can have through the power of the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Spirit of Promise which makes the declaration. The one moved is simply declaring by the voice of prophecy what God has done. This power even women can use when they are moved upon by the power of the Holy Ghost to make the declaration. It is the word of God, and in a real sense it is obtained by an ordination. Rather it is the power of prophecy. The prophetic

word contains the power to seal if it originates from God. It doesn't mean it's the same thing as a dispensation head. It doesn't mean that the same thing as an ordinance. And it doesn't mean it's the same thing as the control of the elements given in those rare cases. But what it does mean is that the word of God will always be respected both in time and eternity, provided it is in fact given by God. Conditioned upon it being through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

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

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

Parse that in your own mind, and then take a look at what the Lord says in Abraham chapter 3 about the "souls" in the preexistence who were good. (See Abr. 3: 23.) You should recognize that the definition of the soul given in the Doctrine and Covenants is *both* the spirit in the body. (D&C 88: 15.) Joseph Smith knew this definition which had been given by revelation in 1832, but when he translated the Book of Abraham he described that among the pre-earth gathering in the council there were "souls" who were good. These good "souls" having both a spirit and a body, were chosen before they were born to come and minister here. They were called "noble and great" before coming to earth. As I explain in my paper on the First Three Words, they do not come here to be "proven" but instead come to "prove" others. I will not repeat that here. However I will merely state that when it comes to the topic of priesthood, there is more going on

than you realize from a cursory reading of scriptures. There is more to know than you will ever learn from the Church's wholly inadequate curriculum.

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

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

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

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

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

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

But instead of these words Christ commanded to be used, in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we say "having been *commissioned* of Jesus Christ I baptize you in the name

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

Also when John the Baptist came to Joseph and Oliver, and it doesn't matter if you read the account by Joseph in the Joseph Smith History, or you get it in the footnote in the Joseph Smith History, written by Oliver Cowdery, the words are similar in effect. Both state the Aaronic priesthood will remain.<sup>14</sup> But that authority of the Aaronic order to baptize, that's going to linger. That is a far more persistent form of priestly authority and it's going to remain.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to shed their sins. These converts emerged from the waters of baptism having been cleansed of their sins by the power of the Holy Ghost.

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

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

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

Now keeping in mind everything I've said, now we are really going to parse the scriptures in a way that may not yet have occurred to you. But I find perfectly delightful. Doctrine and Covenants section 132. I want to begin at verse eight. I want you to remember what I've said the house of God is. "Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name? Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed? And will I appoint unto you, saith the

Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was? I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord. And everything that is in the world, whether it be *ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be*, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God. For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed." (Emphasis added.) None of the Powers of Heaven<sup>16</sup> can act independent of God's will.

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

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

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

We take a lot of comfort and spent a lot of money buying all of the stuff around Springhill Missouri, valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman because that was a place where Adam was. (D&C 116: 1.) It is the place where God will come to once again. I want to suggest that, the wicked, knavish, proud, boastful, those fare sumptuously and who seek the honors of men, will never have possession of, and be able to control or prevent the unfolding of God's work. The words Adam-ondi-Ahman mean "Adam in the presence of the Father." Therefore, any place that the Ancient of Days comes to, while Christ is there also, is by definition Adam-ondi-Ahman. It can occur anywhere. When it does, that will be Adam-ondi-Ahman. Therefore, it doesn't matter if a fallen

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<sup>16</sup> Lucifer pretends to be an angel of light because he was once one of the Powers of Heaven. He was "an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled." (D&C 76: 25.) He still feigns to that authority. And fools are still misled into covenanting with him. But these are vain things, and are not established by God's word, therefore they cannot endure into eternity. They will all end.

and corrupt society owns a piece of real estate. God is not bound by the stratagems of men. Nor are His purposes controlled by the vanities of men.

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

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

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

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

There are a couple things that are little different. I really have to go out of my way to make some people feel comfortable inside of my own ward, because they just don't know how to behave. It's "the damndest apostate" they've ever run into, because he still has a testimony and attends his meetings and all the rest of that. I feel worse for other people, and their awkwardness. It's a challenge for them to imagine what to talk about now. Because we used to talk about doctrine and stuff and now they cannot be so sure that maybe my positions on doctrine might be like toxic waste. So if I say something about doctrine I might poison the listener. And so we have conversations like: "How about them Sox?" [laughter] Well how about them Sox? I mean really! They were supposed to be last place, and they won it all.

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

There is one recent event involving our ward's chili cook off. For the last year I was going to make my habanero chili, and I was going to win the hottest chili award. My wife, wise counselor

that she is, suggested that after excommunication that might be viewed by some as retaliation. And so that's a difference. I toned the chili way down, and we still had people dancing around saying...Oooo, ahhhh, oooo, ahhhh. Like the background of some of those dowap songs.

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

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

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