

Cursed: Denied Priesthood

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Sandy, Utah

7 January 2018

We are going to divide this into two parts. I am going to give a talk, don't know how long it will be, but following the talk there will be questions and answers. The talk I've already written, and if you're interested in seeing it in writing it will go up on my website tonight. The Q&A will be some time after it gets transcribed but a recording will be put somewhere by Reed.

For Joseph Smith, 1838 was a terrible year. Rumors of immorality, begun that year by Oliver Cowdery, were given credibility because Oliver was the scribe who recorded most of the Book of Mormon, and he was a member of the presidency of the Church. Those rumors are still believed by most Mormon sects, including the LDS church. Cowdery's insinuations resulted in him being brought before a Church court on April 12, 1838 by the Far West High Council. A total of nine charges were brought against Cowdery.

At that time, Cowdery was the Assistant President to the Church and respected as the "second elder." Cowdery had been one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon and was responsible for selecting and ordaining the first Twelve Apostles. Cowdery's Church trial was perhaps the most significant to be held in the history of the Church.

The nine charges against Cowdery included this one: "For seeking to destroy the character of President Joseph Smith Junior by falsely insinuating that he was guilty of adultery etc." After taking evidence, the High Council ultimately ex-communicated Oliver Cowdery and cleared Joseph of the charge. The minutes of the High Council said they dealt with "the girl business," meaning Oliver's allegations against Joseph. Joseph was exonerated. (See Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 162-163.)

The un-substantiated charge that Joseph was an adulterer has remained with Mormonism, moving from rumor, to widespread accusation, and finally into accepted LDS history. Today, essentially every Mormon sect either reluctantly admits, or vigorously advocates that carnal relations with plural wives originated with Joseph Smith, and therefore Oliver Cowdery was justified in accusing Joseph Smith of adultery. The closer the historical record is examined, however, the less evidence there appears to support Joseph as the instigator of sexual relations with multiple women. That same historical record has more evidence to implicate Brigham Young and consider that he changed what Joseph Smith believed. Joseph denounced adultery, and fathered children with Emma Smith alone. Brigham Young vigorously advocated carnal sexuality in the here-and-now with multiple women as a religious sacrament.

Unlike Joseph Smith, Brigham Young not only publicly advocated the practice but also fathered children with many women. Joseph denounced it publicly and excommunicated

those he found engaged in it, and fathered children only with Emma Smith, his lawful wife. Despite this clear difference, the LDS Church claims that Brigham Young only practiced publicly what Joseph Smith did privately.

Even if you believe the LDS account of history (which I do not), the differences between the public statements and open conduct of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young could not be more dissimilar. The way the LDS institution has reconciled the great disparity between them is to assert Joseph was a liar, and Brigham Young was not! They cannot be reconciled, and one of them will be damned, (if you believe D&C 76:103-106).

Oliver Cowdery was not alone in forsaking Mormonism and Joseph Smith in 1838. Many of the most prominent members and leaders of the Church likewise abandoned Joseph that year. David Whitmer, another of the Three Witnesses, resigned his membership in 1838, but he was not formally excommunicated. His brother John Whitmer, the Church historian, was excommunicated and took the history with him, refusing to return it to Joseph. Prominent and respected Mormons, Hiram Page (one of the Eight Witnesses) and W.W. Phelps (a member of the high council), also left the church in 1838. So did three members of the twelve, and other Church leaders and members.

On July 4, 1838 Sidney Rigdon delivered the infamous "Salt Sermon," warning that dissenters were worthy of being "trodden, like salt that lost its savor" under the feet of the saints. Because of the talk, former close friends and Church leaders Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, W.W. Phelps and Lyman E. Johnson were warned to leave Far West or face "a fatal calamity." They became enemies of Joseph. Mormons were in turmoil. In response to the threats against these men, all but Phelps fled Far West.

Rigdon's Salt Sermon did not just threaten disaffected Mormons. He also threatened (and these are his words:) a "war of extermination" against the non-Mormons of Missouri if they did not stop annoying the Mormons. The threats ignited anti-Mormon opposition. Many of the disaffected Mormons changed sides and joined the Missouri mobs attacking Mormon settlements. These former leaders used their credibility as insiders to incite greater anger and hostility toward the Church. The animosities soon turned into armed conflict and arson.

Missourians believed Mormons threatened them. Mormons thought they were acting in defense, and justified their own violence as "defending" themselves. Civil order broke down completely. Historians have named the resulting conflict "The Mormon War." Angry Mormons fought against angry Missourians. Both sides blamed the other for causing the violence.

In October 1838, responding to the outbreak of hostility between Mormons and Missourians, Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs issued an "Exterminating Order" directing that Mormons be slain or driven from the State of Missouri. The Order gave violence against Mormons legitimacy and made Mormon responses an act of war against the state.

Many of these former Mormon leaders signed affidavits accusing Joseph Smith and his Church organization of criminal and moral wrongdoing. Thomas Marsh, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, signed an affidavit on October 24, 1838 condemning and blaming Joseph for causing all of the violence. The Marsh allegations were endorsed by a second affidavit from fellow apostle Orson Hyde. The Marsh affidavit was signed the same day open warfare commenced and stated in part that, "Joseph Smith, the Prophet, had preached [at Far West]...that all the Mormons who refused to take up arms, if necessary, in difficulties with the citizens, should be shot, or otherwise put to death[.]" The affidavits identified Joseph Smith as the one responsible for Mormon violence directed at Missouri citizens. After recounting circumstantial evidence of thefts by Mormons that he claimed were supervised by Joseph, the Marsh affidavit stated:

"They have among them a company consisting of all that are considered true Mormons, called the Danites, who have taken an oath to support the heads of the church in all things that they say or do, whether right or wrong. ... On Saturday last, I am informed by the Mormons, that they had a meeting at Far West at which they appointed a company of twelve, by the name of the destruction company, for the purpose of burning and destroying; ... they passed a decree that no Mormon dissenter should leave Caldwell County alive; & that such as attempted to do it should be shot down & sent to tell their tale in eternity. In a conversation between Doct. Avard & other Mormons, said Avard proposed to start a pestilence among the gentiles, as he called them, by poisoning their corn, fruit &c and saying it was the work of the Lord. And said Avard advocated lying for the support of their religion, and said it was no harm to lie for the Lord.

[Now, I'm interrupting this affidavit for a moment because the concept of "lying for the Lord" got exported into Utah Mormonism as an acknowledged and legitimate part of what was expected of a good Mormon. You lie for the Lord, the originator being Sampson Avard.]

"The plan of said Smith, the Prophet, is to take this State; and he professes to his people to intend taking the United States, and ultimately the whole world. This is the belief of the Church, and my own opinion of the Prophet's plans and intentions. It is my opinion that neither said Joseph Smith, the Prophet, nor any one of the principal men who is firm in the faith could be indicted for any offense in the county of Caldwell. (Caldwell is where the Mormons settled and they ran all of the judicial proceedings there.) The Prophet inculcates the notion, & it is believed by every true Mormon, that Smith's prophecies are superior to the law of the land. I have heard the prophet say that he should yet tread down his enemies & walk over their dead bodies; that if he was not let alone he would be a second Mahamet [Mohammad] to the generations, & that he would make it one gore of blood from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic ocean. That like Mahamet, whose motto in treating for peace was Alcoran [Al Koran] or the sword, so should it be eventually with us - Jo Smith or the sword.

"These last statements were made during the last summer. ..."

In calmer days, both Marsh and Hyde would recant their sworn affidavits. But in 1838 their statements were thought to be entirely truthful, and provided justification for the Missouri political leaders, militia and general population to see Joseph Smith and Mormons as a clear and present danger to them and to their property.

The first skirmishes between Mormons and Missourians began in August 1838 at a polling station when Mormons tried to vote. A band of Mormons led by Sampson Avard confronted election judge Adam Black about the failure to protect Mormon voting rights. Joseph Smith was among these Mormons. Judge Black attributed threats of violence to Avard, and said Joseph did not approve and instead possessed no such heart for violence.

In the aftermath of the fight at the polling station, Avard's authority to direct the Mormon militia was removed by Joseph Smith and Avard was reassigned as a surgeon. The re-assignment was because Joseph did not want violence to be used to resolve conflicts and Avard thought otherwise. Avard testified in November [1838], "I once had a command as an officer, but Joseph Smith, jr., removed me from it, and I asked him the reason, and he assigned that he had another office for me. Afterwards Mr. Rigdon told me I was to fill the office of surgeon, to attend to the sick and wounded." (Testimony before Judge Austin A. King, 5th District Court of Missouri, November 12, 1838.)

Avard continued to support violence against perceived enemies, and formed a group that came to be known as the "Danites." Joseph denied that he approved or supported Avard's group or violent actions. Historians have debated the question of Joseph's involvement with the Danite organization and activities. Joseph's denials have been questioned largely because of the testimony against Joseph given by Avard in late 1838 before Judge King.

While Avard was acting in the role of a surgeon, the battle of Crooked River was fought on October 24, 1838. The Extermination Order was issued immediately after, on October 27, 1838. Three days later, October 30, 1838 at Haun's Mill, the Missouri Militia, led by Colonel William Jennings, Sheriff of Livingston County, massacred a group of Mormons, some even after they surrendered. None of the Missouri Militia were killed. The Mormon dead totaled at least 17, including a 78-year-old Revolutionary War veteran, whose body was decapitated.

Joseph Smith was tricked by George Hinkle into surrendering at the city of Far West while it was under siege. He thought he was going to meet with Missouri Militia leaders to negotiate peace. Hinkle lied to Joseph and brought him and other leaders to the militia, to be immediately arrested for treason.

On November 1st Joseph was sentenced to death "at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning in a public square at Far West." Militia leader Doniphan¹ refused to carry out the order, and Joseph's life was spared. In the lead up to his arrest, and then during imprisonment,

¹ Alexander W. Doniphan

disaffected Mormons were far more dangerous and threatening to Joseph than the non-Mormons. It was Mormon lies about him that caused the peril.

Joseph's original arrest at Far West was arranged by an agreement George Hinkle made with the commander of the Missouri Militia. The church leaders were inside Far West, which at the time was fortified and would be difficult for the militia to take without serious loss of life. Hinkle was sent to negotiate with the militia poised outside Far West as the representative for the community.

Hinkle agreed with militia commander Colonel Lucas² to surrender church leaders to the militia, but lied to Joseph and the others. He did not disclose they would be arrested, but led them to believe they were going to meet with Colonel Lucas to negotiate an end to the conflict. Joseph was surprised when Hinkle led him into the camp as a prisoner. George Hinkle was a traitor.

Joseph Smith wrote several documents while imprisoned in Missouri. Specific dissidents are named and their treachery explained in those documents. The individuals and their wrongdoing are set out in what I am about to read:

From jail Joseph Smith petitioned for habeas corpus. In the petition he mentioned George Hinkle. This is an excerpt from that habeas corpus petition:

"Joseph Smith Jr is now unlawfully confined and restrained of his liberty in Liberty jail Clay County (Mo) that he has been restrained of his liberty near five months your petitioners clame that the whole transaction which has been the cause of his confinement was (is) unlawfull from the first to the Last he was taken from his home by a fraude being practised upon him by a man by the name of George M Hinkle..."
(JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 344; as in original.)

Hinkle is mentioned in another letter, along with John Corrill, Reed Peck, David Whitmer and W.W. Phelps. This is Joseph's letter:

"Look at Mr [George M.] Hinkle. A wolf in sheep's clothing. Look at his brother John Corrill Look at the beloved brother Reed Peck who aided him in leading us, as the savior was led, into the camp as a lamb prepared for the slaughter and a sheep dumb before his shearer so we opened not our mouth But these men like Balaam being greedy for a reward sold us into the hands of those who loved them, for the world loves his own. I would remember W[illiam] W. Phelps who comes up before us as one of Job's comforters. God suffered such kind of beings to afflict Job, but it never entered into their hearts that Job would get out of it all. This poor man who professes to be much of a prophet has no other dumb ass to ride but David Whitmer to forbid his madness when he goes up to curse Israel, and this ass not being of the same kind of Balaams therefore the angel notwithstanding appeared unto him yet he could not penetrate his

² Samuel D. Lucas

understanding sufficiently so but what he brays out cursings instead of blessings.” (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 300-301; as in original.) [That is an allusion to an incident in the Old Testament.]

Sampson Avard led the Danites, a secret Mormon, quasi-military organization that terrorized Missourians and exacted a revenge against them. They burned houses and engaged in assaults to retaliate against the local non-Mormons. Avard was responsible for Joseph, Hyrum and others being held on the charge of treason. Without Avard’s testimony it was unlikely for enough evidence to be shown for probable cause to hold them on the charge of treason. Joseph wrote from jail about Avard the following:

“We have learned also since we have been in prison that many false and pernicious things, which were calculated to lead the saints far astray and to do great harm (have been taught by Dr. [Sampson] Avard) as coming from the Presidency and we have reason to fear (that) many (other) designing and corrupt characters like unto himself (have been teaching many things) which the Presidency never knew of being taught in the Church by anybody until after they were made prisoners, which if they had known of, they would have spurned them and their authors from them as they would the gates of hell. Thus we find that there has been frauds and secret abominations and evil works of darkness going on leading the minds of the weak and unwary into confusion and distraction, and palming it all off all the time upon the presidency while mean time the Presidency were ignorant as well as innocent of these things, which were practicing in the Church in their name[.]” (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 306)

Joseph wrote about the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon (David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris) along with William McLellin, John Whitmer, Thomas Marsh and Orson Hyde. All these were identified in the following condemnation written by Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail:

“Such characters as [William E.] McLellin, John Whitmer, O[liver] Cowdery, Martin Harris, who are too mean to mention and we had liked to have forgotten them. [Thomas B.] Marsh & [Orson] Hyde whose hearts are full of corruption, whose cloak of hypocrisy was not sufficient to shield them or to hold them up in the hour of trouble, who after having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of God and become again entangled and overcome the latter end is worse than the first. But it has happened unto them according to the words of the savior, the dog has returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Again if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking (for) of judgement and fiery indignation to come which shall devour these adversaries. For he who despiseth Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses of how much more severe punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath sold his brother and denied the new and everlasting covenant[.]” (JSP Documents Vol. 6, pp. 307-308.)

W.W. Phelps was another Mormon dissenter who was removed from leadership and then excommunicated in June 1838. He was one of the witnesses who testified against Joseph Smith in the Missouri treason hearings and accused him of being responsible for violence and treason. Phelps may have been motivated to testify against Joseph Smith to protect himself from criminal charges. He had been seen by Patrick Lynch, the clerk in Stolling's grocery store, as one of the Mormon mob that robbed the store and then burned it. (JSP Documents Vol. 6, pp. 417-419.)

Joseph was not fooled by these men. He recognized they were traitors and liars. But he revealed to his wife his own spirit of forgiveness about them. Writing from jail to his wife, after 5 months and 5 days of imprisonment, Joseph counseled Emma "neither harbor [sic] a spirit of revenge." (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 405.) Joseph's advice to his wife contrasts sharply with the revealed word from the Lord to Joseph.

Early in 1839, after nearly a half-year of imprisonment, Joseph Smith wrote a letter from Liberty Jail to the saints. The letter included several revelations. One revelation declared these words:

"[C]ursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed saith the Lord and cry they have sin[n]ed when they have not sined before me saith the Lord but have done that which was meat in mine eyes and which I commanded them but those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin and are the children of disobediance themselvs and those who swear false against my servants that they might bring them unto bondage and death. Wo unto them because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house their basket shall not be full their houses and their barnes shall famish and they themselvs shall be dispised by those that flattered them they shall not have right to the priesthood nor their posterity after them from generation to generation it had been better for them that a millstone had been hanged about their necks and they having drownd in the depth of the see..." (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 366; all as in original.)

It was the Lord who said those men who bore false witness against Joseph "shall not have right to the priesthood nor their posterity after them from generation to generation[.]" Even as late as the 1830s it was possible for men to so offend God that He will curse both them and their posterity from any right to the priesthood.

Such a heavy cursing raises two questions: First, upon whom was this curse imposed? Second, what did they do to merit such a heavy burden?

The probable candidates who earned this cursing are those Joseph identified in his letters describing the lies and false testimony against him. They were: George Hinkle, John Corrill, Reed Peck, Sampson Avard, William McLellin, John Whitmer, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Thomas Marsh, Orson Hyde and W. W. Phelps. Each of these men and their wrongdoings are mentioned by Joseph Smith in his correspondence from jail in Missouri.

The three witnesses to the Book of Mormon are in almost every priesthood line of authority throughout Mormonism. Think of the irony of that for a moment. They were cursed and “shall not have right to the priesthood nor their posterity after them from generation to generation” yet Mormons point to them as the source through which the priesthood authority has descended until today.

This loss was because God sent a messenger, Joseph Smith, to say what God gave him to speak as God’s message to that generation. But these men rejected the messenger and fought against him. They accused Joseph of wrongdoing and sin when there was none.

What are the implications today for those historians and institutions who, like Oliver Cowdery, say Joseph Smith was an adulterer and a liar? Are they any different from those who testified against him in 1838 and 1839? It calls to mind another revelation God declared while Joseph remained in Liberty Jail:

Fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee; While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand. And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors. (D&C 122:1-3.)

Are fools who hold Joseph Smith in derision today any less accountable?

I DO NOT believe Joseph Smith was an adulterer. He was not a liar, nor a hypocrite. But almost every Mormon institution, and certainly the largest ones, either proclaim or admit Joseph was all these things. I do not. I think he was pure in heart, noble, and virtuous. Must a person themselves be pure in heart, wise, noble, and virtuous before they qualify to seek worthy counsel, authority and blessings through Joseph Smith’s legacy?

One of the most ghastly legacies still happening as a result of Brigham Young’s openly adulterous version of Mormonism is best understood in a recent article in a December 28th Salt Lake Tribune edition. This is the title of the article: *After polygamist leaders used underage girls for sex, lawsuit says, one teen was forced to be a scribe for the rituals.* The article describes the allegations in a newly filed lawsuit against FLDS leaders. Among other things it relates the following:

“Starting when she was 8 years old, the woman [victim] says, she would be taken from her home, wearing a bag over her head, to an unknown location — typically an FLDS temple in the Colorado City, Ariz., area or other church- or trust-owned properties — where she would be assigned a number for a religious ritual, according to the lawsuit.

There, she was reportedly sexually assaulted by the Jeffses, Nielsen or other church members and leaders. When the men weren’t assaulting her, she says, they watched.”³

³ Harkins, Paighthen. “After polygamist leaders used underage girls for sex, lawsuit says, one teen was forced to be a scribe for the rituals.” *Salt Lake Tribune* 28 Dec. 2017. Web. 13 Jan. 2018.

While these are unproven allegations at present, the lawsuit will be based on these and other horrific allegations. These contemptible deviant sexual practices are an outgrowth of the legacy bequeathed to the LDS by Brigham Young. Carol Lynn Pearson's recent book, *The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy*, recounts how plural wivery continues to invade and haunt the thinking of LDS Mormon women⁴. Though the LDS church finally abandoned the practice in 1904, this cancer originated with it. I do not believe the deviant sexual legacy is Joseph's, who denounced adultery, but is Brigham's, who celebrated sexual access to multiple women as a religious sacrament.

How many descendants of George Hinkle, John Corrill, Reed Peck, Sampson Avard, William McLellin, John Whitmer, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Thomas Marsh, Orson Hyde and W. W. Phelps today think they hold priesthood, when God said they were cursed as part of these men's posterity? It would be interesting to know how many men today are cursed and have forfeited any right to priesthood because they, like those who were responsible for Joseph's imprisonment, foolishly hold Joseph in derision.

As for myself, I believe Joseph when a sermon of his on May 26, 1844 is quoted in DHC 6:411: "What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can find only one." He made this comment in response to the false accusations contained in the Nauvoo Expositor.

I believe Joseph when he, referring to the 1835 D&C Section 101, affirmed it was his belief that: "Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy; we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again." I believe Joseph Smith was truthful when he, as editor of the Times and Seasons, disavowed polygamy and stated the foregoing verse was "the only rule allowed by the church." (Times and Seasons, vol. 3, p. 909 (1842).) He repeated that same position again at Times and Seasons, vol. 3, p. 939 (1842).

In 1844 Joseph and Hyrum Smith announced the excommunication of Hiram Brown for (and this was the charge): "preaching Polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the county of Lapeer, state of Michigan." (Times and Seasons, vol. 5, p. 423 (1844).)

Hyrum Smith, with Joseph's approval, published a statement denying plural wives or polygamy, explaining all such teaching is false doctrine: "... some of your elders say, that a man having a certain priesthood, may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here: I say unto you that that man teaches false doctrine, [for] there is no such doctrine taught here; neither is there any such thing practiced here." (Times and Seasons, vol. 5, p. 474 (That was in March of 1844).)

⁴ Pearson, Carol Lynn. *The Ghost of Eternal Polygamy: Haunting the Hearts and Heaven of Mormon Women and Men*. Pivot Point Books, 12 Jul. 2016.

God identified those who deride Joseph and Hyrum Smith as “fools.” Writing histories and teaching as doctrine that Joseph and Hyrum were liars is, to any reasonable mind, “derision” of them. Like those condemned in 1839, should all who deride Joseph as a liar today question their claim to hold priesthood authority? Has God continued to curse both them and their posterity from any right to the priesthood?

As explained in the talk on Priesthood given in Orem, Utah on November 2, 2013, priesthood is a fellowship. Joseph Smith was clearly in fellowship with God and angels, and therefore one whose priesthood included the ministering of angels, the Son of God, and God the Father. He held the priesthood. Why would anyone want to have fellowship with someone they regard as a liar, and an adulterer, and a hypocrite? Why would they want that fellowship?

Cursed: Denied Priesthood Q&A

Sandy, Utah
Denver Snuffer
7 January 2018

That is the prepared comments. I did a quick check and none of those guys are in my line of authority and none of them are in my genealogy. Now you are all going to go check to see if you're descended from any of the names. Does anyone have any questions?

Question #1: On that line, whether you're a direct descendant or trace your line of authority, you mentioned in Talk 10 at least, maybe other talks or places, that we ought to keep track of our line of authority from the LDS Church. When you couple that with Heber J. Grant's double decade of not conferring priesthood, why is it important for us to continue to trace it there when we seem to have had, in my belief, a renewal of that authority and sort of a restart. In other words, has the line of authority begun again anew today in our day, and why do we have to keep tracing it, if so?

Denver: There are actually two reasons for accomplishing it in that fashion. It's probable that because he put down, he suppressed the righteous priests who were older, more experienced people in his kingdom when wicked King Noah reconstituted the priesthood and called younger, more ambitious people that were more amenable to the corrupt ambitions of King Noah, that Alma's participation in the court of King Noah was reckoned from an ordination that came from the wicked King. When Alma heard the message of Abinidi he went out and he sought to repent. Then, when he performed the first baptism of Helam, before doing so, he did what you did before blessing the sacrament, and that was to ask God for authority to proceed, and then he proceeded to baptize both Helam and himself and started it anew. The Book of Mormon mentions that people ordain according to the gifts and power that is in them, given by God.

In order for us to accomplish what presently needs to be done we need to have the ability to spontaneously move this work forward globally. A young man who is a returned LDS missionary who had been ordained an Elder in the LDS Church became disaffected, kept his testimony of Joseph, the Book of Mormon, the Restoration, but what he saw in the Church convinced him that the Church itself had little if anything to offer him any longer. As a result of his prayerful searching and studying he became convinced that there was something afoot that God was doing right now among us. He contacted people through Request Baptism and the fellowship locator and began a series of correspondence. Because of a whole lot of complications no one was able to go to Africa where this fellow is located in order to minister there. But he had a line of authority from the Church, and so he was walked through the process of going to God and praying that God ratify what he'd been given so that he could perform baptisms. On December 29th, I don't know how many days ago that was, a week or so ago, 22 people were baptized in Uganda using authority from heaven; that once God said to him, "You may proceed," is exactly the same as Alma being told to go forward with Helam and thereafter with others. We do not need to send people

all over the world. We have the ability, because of what has been put in place, to spontaneously have this arise globally and we just had an example of that occurring.

I've mentioned this before. Largely the purpose of Aaronic priesthood is to curse people, and the purpose of the Melchizedek priesthood is to bless people. Aaronic priesthood is a fairly durable kind of priesthood. It was what was involved in all kinds of rites and performances under the Law of Moses which were pretty easy to run afoul of and wind up in a state of uncleanness or ceremonial condemnation, and you had to renew – heavens, the High Priest had to renew. He was the top of the pyramid. You had to go through the Day of Atonement ceremonies, you had to purge from top to bottom, and then everyone was expected to purge with some regularity. Even a woman's regular monthly cycle resulted in ceremonial uncleanness requiring renewal. Childbirth was considered something that required a sacrifice and a ceremonial cleansing. Every time you turned around under the Law of Moses you became unclean, and every time you turned around under the Law of Moses you had to fetch another animal, run up to the temple, offer sacrifice, and undo the ceremonial uncleanness. The purpose of the Aaronic priesthood ministry was to bring you under condemnation regularly. Well, it's pretty durable precisely because of its functionality.

When the Aaronic priesthood was restored a promise was given or a timeframe for its persistence was described, depending on whether you listen to the Oliver Cowdery account or the Joseph Smith account. It's supposed to endure that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering in righteousness unto the Lord, or until the sons of Levi do offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. Well, that event has not occurred. It's persistent.

Joseph Smith said all priesthood is Melchizedek but there are different portions or degrees of it. When you carve it all the way down to the least of these, the Aaronic priesthood, it holds the keys of the ministering of angels. Angels were the source from which priesthood was restored. Angels in turn can lead people to the Son of God. The Son of God can take a person to the throne of the Father. Every bit of what is to be accomplished through priesthood is possible to achieve so long as you get Aaronic priesthood into the hands of someone. Looking at the lay of the land today there are not many who can say that they have been in fellowship with angels or realized the blessings of Aaronic priesthood. There are fewer still who can say that they have been in fellowship with Christ, and there are only a small handful who have been in fellowship with the Father. That doesn't matter because everything that is necessary in order to start down the pathway comes as a consequence of receiving some portion of priesthood.

In my own case I reckon four lines of priesthood. I reckon one from Aaronic ordination. I reckon another from Melchizedek and ordination as an Elder, and I reckon another, as happenstance with habit, priesthood was conferred again when I became a high priest, and then the fourth is something that involved God himself. But I don't think I would have gotten the fourth without accepting all of the work that had been left behind by the prophet Joseph Smith and respecting the patterns that had been put here. True enough, they've been corrupted. True enough, they've been compromised, but God's plan for His children is

capable of being accomplished and the work that God begins is resilient enough to overcome a lot of failure.

You look at Caiaphas prophesying that it is better that one man should perish than that the people should be destroyed, which he spoke not of himself but because the Spirit moved upon him to speak those words. That's confirmed in the gospels in Acts. That's confirmed. What that is saying, is that God is capable of using the guy who in his corruption intended to say, we have to kill Jesus because he's going to disrupt our culture, when others hearing that statement said, of course, Christ is going to die to redeem his people from their sins because he is the offering that all of those rites under the Law of Moses pointed forward to, and so he will be the offering of sin, so that the people are not lost. It doesn't have anything to do with preserving the Jewish hierarchy, the Sanhedrin, and the high priest in Jerusalem, it had to do with redeeming mankind.

Question #2: I have a question to add to that. I've been excommunicated. Twelve years from now I'll have a boy, a son, I don't know if age matters. How would that child get priesthood? Would it go through my line of authority? Would it be exactly the same?

Denver: It's your obligation and your right as a father to ordain him. I would give to him every line of authority that had been handed to you, and it doesn't matter. Hand it to him. Say, these are the lines of authority through which priesthood comes down to you. I find it really ironic that the three witnesses are included in the bunch of folks that this disbarring from priesthood includes because they're almost universally in everyone's line of authority. Which means that you can be in the role and then you can get kicked out of the role, but while you're in the role and you set something in motion, people that receive what was set in motion go on and you do not. You lose out. Your right got removed from you.

Question #3: We're removing Section 20. What is the role of offices? Is there even a role?

Denver: Orson Hyde got excluded. If you read the writings of Joseph Smith from Liberty Jail and the revelation, the affidavit that he signed seconding the Marsh affidavit condemning Joseph and making him responsible, which at that moment was designed to get Joseph killed, it was designed to have him executed by the State of Missouri. If he's included in the group, his position in the Quorum of the Twelve was suspended and then he came back after it was safe and they were relocated in Commerce, later Nauvoo, Illinois, defended his position and made some apologies, and he was reinstated into the Quorum of the Twelve, and he continued to function as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve from then until his death. He held the office of apostle, likely with no priesthood authority, but held the office.

If you want to create offices people can create offices. Offices in the Church are a matter of vote by the members putting them into a position. Technically, every time we have a conference someone ought to be a recorder for the conference. Someone ought to be chairman for the conference. We don't do that because all of these things get organized informally and the people who are working on them sort that out among themselves spontaneously, voluntarily, and cooperatively. And then it's over with. But you could if you

wanted to, for every conference elect a chairman for the conference and elect a recorder. Because it is simply an office there is no reason why you couldn't elect a woman to be the chairman of a general conference or a regional conference. There is no reason why you couldn't elect a woman to be a recorder. We have associated in the LDS tradition in contrast to the Community of Christ tradition. In the LDS tradition we have associated some of the offices in the Church with men to the point that it is exclusively the right of a man to hold that office and some with women, in which it's not exclusive but it is often the case. For example, a Relief Society president could be a man, if he were elected to the office. The LDS Church has a practice of not doing that. A Primary president could be a man or a woman. A Sunday School president could be a man or a woman, but as soon as you get over into a deacon's quorum then they say no, hands off on women.

Making offices of the Church coincident with priesthood authority... Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, for example, were elected to be the first elders of the Church in 1830. The Melchizedek priesthood would not be restored until 1831 but they held the office of elder by the people accepting them by their vote from 1830 – they could have elected them to be high priests. They could have elected them to be the presiding moose. They could elect them to be the grand – whatever! Choose a title, have everyone vote, hey, you hold the office. That's what Brigham Young said qualified him to be the Church President. He held an election and he won the election. Admittedly it was at Winter Quarters and it didn't involve anything more than a conference that got gathered at that point to sustain him, but when he got back to the Salt Lake Valley and said, I now hold the office of Church President because I got elected at a General Conference, the only choice was to blow the Church apart into conflict or accept the claim.

Offices and positions in an organization are not necessarily proof of possession of priestly authority. Someone raised the problem of Heber J. Grant's practice of ordaining people to an office but not conferring upon them priesthood, a practice that persisted for about 20 years. John Taylor predicted that there would come a time when members put people in the Church claiming to hold priestly authority would not know whether or not they actually did. I guess the proof is in the pudding in whether or not angels minister and other things happen, which if they do is probably pretty good evidence, and if it doesn't it maybe raises a question about, well maybe I ought to be re-ordained. I would use and rely on the LDS lines of authority until they get displaced at some point in the future. But right now for this incipient work we really need as broad a base from which to begin to change the direction of the decay and renew the direction in the hopes of restoration so that we get far enough along that God approves of some of the things that we're doing and gets behind it. I think the last conference up in Boise is evidence that God's somewhat approving, even if He is somewhat scolding, yeah, I get it.

Question #4: So you said it is not necessarily evidence of priestly authority. Is there ever a case where it actually supplies priestly authority?

Denver: The focus of attention on priesthood really skews what may be most important. It really does distort the whole picture. All of the miraculous things that Melchizedek

accomplished – quenching the violence of fire, closing the mouths of lions, causing rivers to run out of their course – all of those things were accomplished by Melchizedek *without* the priesthood. When Paul goes through the list of things that got accomplished by faith he’s talking about the power of faith; he’s not talking about priesthood, or ordination, or office, or authority. The fact is that most of what we think belongs to the franchise called “priesthood” really should be viewed as the evidence or the absence of faith. Priesthood has a really limited bundle of rights and responsibilities that, at its most basic level, involves baptism and blessing the sacrament. At its most basic level.

Question #5: Would it be fair to say then that the overemphasis on priesthood may be something that has caused us to have an overabundance of damning traditions?

Denver: Yes, because what people regard the priesthood as, is as a right of government and as a right of control. No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood. Well, I’m your president, therefore I’m in control here, and my presidency reckons from priesthood, which is only men can hold it. Therefore I have the right to control not only you but your wife too, because she’s subordinate to you, so you’re subordinate to me too, both of you. Now I’m in charge. Here’s what we’re gonna do. It’s ridiculous!

Comment: I have a comment.

Denver: No, I didn’t allow you because I’m in control. [Audience laughter.]

Comment: Good luck with that.

Question #6A: This will change the topic a little bit. As a warning in a way – I don’t know if it’s because my head is in the end of Alma and the beginning of Helaman and I’m seeing Gadianton robbers starting to come in, and all the lying, and the scandals that go on that leads to murder, and this is exactly what I’m seeing. I see this as a warning to us as a people. At the end you said the fellowship is communing with the Father and Christ, and there be no lying or contention between that person and the Father, and if us as a group want to have that communion as a Zion with the Father there can’t be any lying or mistrust or scandal among us.

Comment: Lying for power.

Question #6B: That is what I’m seeing. Maybe my brain is too focused on the Book of Mormon.

Denver: Priesthood, ambition, and pride, they almost inevitably go together. There are many called but few are chosen, and the fact of being chosen is impaired or altogether prevented because hearts are too much set on the things of this world. We really misplace the focus. What matters most, the weightier matters, mercy, justice, love, the things that Christ called attention to, the weightier matters are what matter far more than whether or not someone is a mission president, or a stake president, or a deacon’s quorum president,

or a relief society president, or asked to talk in KSL TV's live broadcast of a General Conference. None of that matters. What matters is whether or not you take Christ at His word and then you try to do what He tells us to do in the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is a blueprint for Zion, it's not a blueprint for just having a low crime society with people in vastly different economic strata, in which some are given extraordinary advantages because of their education and the wealth of their family and some are deprived.

There's a short story by Mark Twain I like a lot. It's called *Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven*. This is an American humorist's telling about the afterlife that is largely based doctrinally on D&C Section 76, covers the same sort of differentiated afterlife, but there people are recognized and respected for who they really are, not necessarily for what they achieved in this life.

Captain Stormfield wants to go meet the greatest general that ever lived, and of course, since he's in heaven, your wishes are all granted, so they're taking Captain Stormfield to go see the greatest general that ever lived. On his way he's wondering and guessing. He's guessing about Alexander the Great, he's guessing about Napoleon, he's throwing out some of these names. I forget which one, it may have been Napoleon. He said, "Oh yeah, Napoleon is with him, he polishes his boots, he helps take care of his stuff." Then he wants to know, "Well who is it then, who is the greatest general that ever lived?" and he's given a name. I don't remember the name, it was Fred something, just some name that means nothing to any of us, and Captain Stormfield says, "I've never heard of him. What battles did he win?" And the answer is, "Oh, he was never in a battle, he was a shoe cobbler in New England. But if he'd ever commanded he would have been the greatest general that ever lived, and here we recognize people for what they really are, not for what they accomplished there." What was in his heart was the greatest general that ever lived. That's who you want to be, the greatest Christian that ever lived.

Question #7A: You had that list of people who, their priesthood was terminated and would not persist from generation to generation, there's no limit to the number of generations that was given but let's just assume for a minute to the third and fourth generation, because that seems to be a common...

Denver: That seems to be a common sort of thing.

Question #7B: What about those people? What about people who are direct or other descendents of them who are alive now or who were alive, who might be in priesthood line and have transmitted.... I'm going to go back and look through my lines as well and just see where we are, but what if...

Denver: I was really hoping to find at least one in one of the lines but I couldn't find any of them in mine.

Question #7C: What about their descendants? Are they eligible now? Should we be careful about to whom we ordain priesthood?

Denver: I would say that whoever thinks that they fall within the category probably ought to make it a matter of not just personal prayer but some sincere.... What provoked the curse was derision, rejection, and conspiracy of Joseph Smith. Almost every problem that we encounter in this life requires repentance in order to fix the problem that we've uncovered in this life. How do you fix the problem in which rejection, derision, conspiracy to destroy Joseph provoked God's ire? One of the ways to do that would be to say, let me see what I can do to combat the lies, the derision, the misrepresentations, and the rejection of someone God sent to try and save a fallen world.

If anything, Joseph Smith understated the significance of him, his role, and what God was trying to accomplish through him. Some of the statements that get construed as evidence that Joseph had delusions of grandeur, if you try to understand what the man was saying, instead tell you a whole lot that's extraordinarily positive about the man. For example, he said, "I have more to boast of than any man. I have more to boast of than Peter, and the apostles and even Jesus couldn't keep the church together, but I've managed to keep the church together." If you're acquainted with Christian history, Joseph is absolutely right. The organization of the New Testament church in Christ's day did not survive the lives of those apostles. In fact, by the time they were dead you had Pauline Christianity, and -you had Petrine Christianity, you had Mathayan Christianity. You had different brands of Christianity and they were dissimilar enough that some of them looked at others of them and said, we don't have much in common because it was never integrated into a whole. Paul writes about "how I went up to Jerusalem and withstood Peter to his face."⁵ Why is that? Because Paul considered himself possessor of his own dispensation and therefore not accountable to Peter or any of the others at Jerusalem.

The New Testament church didn't survive the New Testament in a unified whole. Joseph did, in fact, manage to accomplish that. He had an integrated whole, and under his benign leadership he regarded the First Presidency, the Twelve, the high councils of the Church, the Seventy, all as coequal, which given the ambitions of men means that it was doomed but he kept it together. It was doomed either to result in an impasse. For example, Thomas Monson died a couple of days ago. Under the organizational pattern that Joseph set up, the death of Thomas Monson should result in a long period of time in which there are different people contending and there are conflicts and uncertainties in which the Quorum of the Twelve continues to function, the Seventy continue to function, the stakes continue to function, and there is no First Presidency president. And at some point, based upon the virtue of the individual and based upon the consensus of the people, and it might take 20 years, someone gets acknowledged by people as being sufficiently trustworthy and evidencing the kinds of gifts that would justify it, and we get a replacement president, and then he gets to choose his counselors. Joseph Smith never took a single apostle and put them in the First

⁵ See Galations 2:11

Presidency. Those were two different quorums and they didn't overlap. The mechanism that has been chosen is not necessarily anything like what was established by Joseph.

Question #7D: So the descendents of those people then, through repentance, can re-qualify, or can qualify..

Denver: I would say that the sentence of those people need to repent of their father's sins. Almost every one that I know who's a Mormon thinks Joseph Smith was a liar and an adulterer, a dishonest man. I don't. I think Joseph Smith sealed women to him, and that was one of the qualifications I put into the words that I used: "carnal sexual relations." I think that from the time that the first realization of what sealing power could be used for rolled out until the earliest reference I can find it, is in October 1843, which was eight months before his death, there appears to have been one and only one ordinance associated with sealing, and that one and only one ordinance was the marriage covenant. Using that one and only ordinance, marriage, didn't mean that what you were trying to achieve was sexual access to other women, it meant you were trying to bring....

One of the things that I liked about Bushman's book, with all the flaws that it has, *Rough Stone Rolling*, was his acknowledgement that Joseph Smith seemed to be very sexually modest and very respectful of women, and anything but a "lethario", and he uses that word, anything but a lustful man. And that what Joseph Smith seemed to want, according to Bushman, and I agree with him on this, was plentitude of family, meaning he wanted to bring everyone into a family together. And so the sealing mechanism was the means by which you bring family together, not to commit adultery but to bind people together through an ordinance that was authoritative, that allowed them to pass out of this life into the next life as part and member of a family of God.

Question #8: Is that to covenant and be committed to one another?

Comment: Well, he said, "I will carry you on my back."

Denver: Yes. And then you have all of those statements about how Joseph would manipulate people, promising them and their family salvation in the afterlife if this marriage covenant were entered into. Sounds a whole lot like what you are trying to achieve is sealing people together into a family that will endure into eternity so that they can lay claim on one another.

Question #9: Didn't those later come to be known as adoption?

Denver: No, that's what he set up until eight months before his death. Beginning in October of 1843 there's a mention made of a new ordinance that never gets mentioned by Joseph until then. Beginning in October, he, for the first time, mentions a different ordinance that might be used. That different ordinance is adoption.

Question #10: Different than sealing, you are saying?

Denver: He's saying that adoption would accomplish the same thing. This is a passing mention. If you're picking up on the fact that Joseph Smith was trying to put together the family of God, and you saw that chart that comes out in, was it the Millennial Star, where you have God, and then you have the Tree of the Family...

[Inaudible comment]

Denver: Yes, Orson Hyde prepared it but he did it based upon something that Joseph had been teaching. This is 1839, mind you. There's still only one ordinance associated with sealing at this point. It's going to be four more years before the word "adoption" ever appears in anything that Joseph writes. Listen to this. Thinking in terms of the role Joseph Smith may have occupied, although it was not generally understood at that time, and of what was happening with adoption later on, think about this in terms of covenantal relationships and of what is being assembled as a family of God in order to endure into eternity:

Time and experience, however, is the only safe remedy against such evils. (Let me back up.) It opens such a dreadful field for the avaricious and indolent and corrupt-hearted to pray upon the innocent and virtuous and honest. We have reason to believe that many things were introduced among the saints before God had signified the times, and notwithstanding the principles and plans may have been good; yet aspiring men, in other words, men who had not the substance of godliness about them, perhaps undertook to handle edged tools. Children, you know, are fond of tools while they are not yet able to use them. Time and experience, however, is the only safe remedy against such evils. *There are many teachers but perhaps not many fathers.* There are times coming when God will signify many things which are expedient for the wellbeing of the saints, but the times have not yet come but will come as fast as there can be found place and receptions for them.

I hesitated on "receptions" because it's spelled R-E-S-E-P-T-I-O-N-S. Mark Twain said he didn't have any respect for a man that could only spell a word one way.

Question #11: Can you tell us where you are reading from?

Denver: Page 396 and 397 of the Documents Volume Six of the Joseph Smith Papers. So there are many teachers but there aren't many fathers. The challenge is to put people into position in which you have this family of God reconstituted on earth. Joseph was aimed in that direction, and it was 1839. But you have one tool, and only one tool.

Comment: Teachers have no skin in the game. If you teach your child poorly it's going to come back and bite you, but if you have some student that you decide that you're just going to write them off, in a few years you won't even remember their name or face, maybe sooner than that. I think there are plenty of people who are out there who are willing to just divulge.

Question #12A: There's acres of land on the Mount of Olives over in Israel that Orson Hyde has been over there to dedicate.

Denver: It got rededicated.

Question #12B: It got rededicated. Want to expound on that or talk about it?

Denver: Some doubts were raised about whether Orson accomplished it or whether he came back and told a great story about accomplishing it, and another group went over later and redid the work. But we are loathe to admit some of the... warts and wrinkles in the history of the Church and so not much attention is paid to the rededication.

Question #12C: Dedicated for the return of Israel?

Denver: Yes.

Comment: It's a beautiful park. [cross talk]

Denver: The Church has does great things. Anything money can buy. [cross talk]

Comment: It's right by the Garden of Gethsemane. [cross talk]

Question: That's has nothing to do because he was cursed or anything like that so the rededication was not necessary because he's on this list.

Denver: He is, but the rededication didn't have to do with that. People do not take seriously the revelations and voice of God through Joseph. If they did a whole lot of what you see going on would not even be considered as something appropriate to have go on. I may be pointing this out but no one takes it seriously. To Mormons it's just another "Oh, yeah sure... right..."

Question #13: What volume of the Ensign is that in?

Denver: What, the rededication? [cross talk] Don't expect it.

Question #14: There's two parts to this question. First, what's the role of the other ordinances and sacraments like child's blessing, marriage, and sealings, now that many of us are not in any church? How does that work? We are so used to a level of priesthood that accomplishes those things.

Denver: Fathers' blessings scripturally had legitimacy because they were spoken through the gift of the Holy Ghost. Three years previous to the death of Adam he called together his posterity in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman and there he bestowed his final blessing on them. And notwithstanding he was bowed down with great age. He rose up and he prophesied what should befall his descendents to the end of time. That was the first

patriarchal blessing. It was given by the power of the Spirit and it was prophecy. It would be appropriate to read out of that event “priesthood” and to read into that event “Holy Ghost, power of the Spirit, word of prophecy”. Because a patriarchal blessing delivered with no benefit of the Spirit is just more ink on paper, but a blessing delivered by the power of the Spirit as a prophecy is the word of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation which cannot be broken.

When Jacob called his kids before him to bestow his final blessing, when father Lehi called his kids before him to bestow his final blessing, it was a reenactment of the event that the first father, Adam, had enacted in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman in which someone – bowed down with great age, knowing that they are going to soon depart this world, having no personal investment in the outcome, intending only to say what is for the blessing and benefit through the Spirit of what will befall their children after them, things that they will not be around to witness – confirm by the spoken voice what it is that God has put into their hearts. It’s given generally by someone like Lehi, like Jacob in Genesis chapters 49 and 50 in the KJV. (If I had the new set of scriptures I’d tell you where it is in Genesis the new volume but I don’t have one yet.) They are calling upon all of the experience that they’ve had with the kids throughout their lifetime and then they are projecting forward by the power of the Spirit.

Some of what, in giving blessings by the power of the Spirit, is prophesied to befall a child may be surprising to the one filled with the Spirit but generally that lifetime of experience with the child helps prepare the mind, the heart, and the connection of the father to heaven in order to speak by the power of the Spirit concerning the child and what will befall the child. All of which, every bit of that, can occur with or without priesthood, every bit of that, which is another reason why we tend to associate and therefore to limit the power of the Spirit to influence any person without regard to rank, position, or office.

[inaudible audience comment]

Denver: Deborah was a prophetess.

[inaudible audience comment]

Denver: If she was filled with the Spirit and she uttered a prophecy then that was God speaking through her. That doesn’t mean that she now gets to preside in the High Priests group. If she’s smart she’ll stay the hell away from the High Priests group.

Question #15A: With the fathers, like Abraham and Isaac for example; Isaac was the father of many nations also. When we have sealings to the fathers, are these sealings that are done to the individual fathers? Or is there going to be a major time where there’s going to be sealings to all of the fathers or is there going to be, and has there been, sealings already done to fathers in their time? Or am I mixing this up.

Denver: No, there were sealings to fathers...

Question #15B: So those who were sealed to Isaac – Isaac is the father, so maybe they are under his wing, and then maybe, Abraham is like “grandpa feeling” or are they all just fathers to their....

Denver: Yes. Yes. The government of God is the family. The government of God is not stakes and wards and districts and missions and areas and all that. It's family; the government of God is family. Therefore the sealing is to put together a family.

One of the requests that the mother of John and his brother came and made of Christ was that when Christ got into his kingdom, the mother was asking if her boys could sit on his left and on his right. Christ said that “when I get my kingdom they can be there with me but I don't have the right to assign who's going to sit on my right and who's going to sit on my left. That's left up to the Father.” The purpose of organizing the family on earth through the sealing process is to make sure that you get into the kingdom, but it's kind of foolish to say I have ambition to be way up high in the organization of the family of God, because Christ told parables about people that are capable of ruling over a city will be put in that position. People that aren't – his parable of the talents, his parable of the laborer in the vineyard – but what you really want is to get into the kingdom. Once you get into the kingdom then how the kingdom gets organized is going to be entirely up to the Father. How that will unfold will be the permanent resolution of all issues involving salvation pertaining to this planet at the very end, and all those who have lived or come through here. And that organization at the end is more relevant for what will come thereafter.

Comment: So it's permanent for [inaudible].

Denver: It's permanent until there is some further development that requires people to go out and develop.

Question #16: The goal isn't to assign yourself a position, but just hopefully get into the kingdom because the Father knows your capabilities.

Denver: Right. Get into the kingdom. Because, like the talk down in Ephraim, the prototype of the saved man is Jesus Christ. If any man will be saved he must be precisely what Christ is and nothing else, because Christ attained to the resurrection. We're going to be resurrected. Christ attained to the resurrection. On the other side of that you won't hold the keys of death and hell, He will. He'll use them for your benefit but ultimately you're going to have to hold the keys of death and hell if you're going to be precisely what the prototype of the saved man is, or else not be saved.

Question #17A: Does this kingdom have a [inaudible].

Denver: This kingdom?

Question #17B: The kingdom you're talking about.

Denver: When it is established in its – I hate the word fullness but I can't think of another word. When it is completely organized according to God's will, that will be necessary but I don't anticipate that happening separate from the command to build a temple, and then God filling that temple with what is necessary in order for it to come to pass.

Question #18: In D&C 124 it talks about an even higher priesthood, and in that priesthood it communicates, like you talked about, genealogical curses, it communicates genealogical blessings, one being which Joseph Smith has received. Like Lehi received covenants for his seed and Abraham received covenants for his seed, does [D&C] 124 communicate covenants to Joseph's seed, and is it the same conditional as it will come to pass for the remnant of Lehi's seed?

Denver: Joseph would certainly have the right to lay claim upon not just himself and his wife, but certainly his children. It begins to become a little less certain and a little more tenuous when you get to his grandchildren, and even more so when you get to his great-grandchildren because it's one thing... The reason why father Abraham had to go to Melchizedek in order to then rejoice and say, "I have gotten me a priesthood," was because although the line may have had fatherly connections from father Shem down to Abraham, the immediate ancestors of father Abraham were idolaters. True enough, his father repented for a short period of time but he didn't persist in that. Therefore, despite the fact that Melchizedek certainly held authority, there were members of the posterity of Melchizedek between him and father Abraham who were lost and then Abraham was required to come and reconnect because of the apostasy.

When you're talking about the greatest blessings that God offers for the salvation of his children, when you're talking about the family of God, if it could simply be put in one time forever then putting it into father Adam would have solved the problem all the way down to us today. It can and it has been broken. It can and it has been restored. It can and it has been reconnected after a period of apostasy. In fact, once you reconnect Abraham with Melchizedek, you actually have then a family of God beginning with Adam that runs in one continuous line right down to Ephraim. Then you have Joseph's comment about the prophets of the Old Testament. I'm not sure that he means all of them but he certainly means a number that are identifiable. All prophets held Melchizedek priesthood and were ordained by God himself, Joseph said that. I don't think what Joseph is talking about is, "I confer upon you something." I think he's talking about this very connection where you have an isolated faithful individual who honors the fathers and is doing everything that he can in his day but for whom there is no existing possibility for having it occur. God fixes that problem for that individual, not in order to establish a new dispensation in which salvation precedes with the gathering of a people, and a making of a people. But it's a dispensation to that individual for purposes of trying to call others to repentance, and if others were to repent then God could do something with that.

The reason He lead away Lehi and the family of Lehi was to try and establish a righteous branch and a vineyard unto the Lord, and the only way to do that was to get them away

from the people who were corrupt in Jerusalem, and maybe give them the potential for holding onto and becoming a people of promise. They were on again, off again, and faithful. A number of troubling moments in their history, but in general, they were sufficiently intact by the time that the Lord came, that He visited with them and He renewed that with them, and that connection was certainly fulsome at that point.

The only purpose behind the last days work, both what was happening at the time of Joseph and what the Lord is offering to us today, is to accomplish that fulsome restoration of the family of God. Joseph talked about temples and they were built incrementally, and they never reached the finish line even on the second one before he was killed, but he laid a fabulous foundation and pointed in a direction that the restoration necessarily must go to and complete. If we don't have the tabernacle of God where he comes to dwell with his people, which he does when he has a family on earth, then the prophecies are not going to be fulfilled. Then the promises that were made to Enoch will not be realized. Then the statements of what will happen in the last days through Moses will not be vindicated. Then Adam's prophecy concerning his descendants to the end of time will not be realized. All of these things point, so we know it is going to happen. The question is not, is it going to happen, the question is, will we rise up or will we not. Because what he's offering is, in fact, a legitimate opportunity for that to indeed happen.

We seem to get so easily distracted that we have a hard time staying on task. It's one of the gentile afflictions. We're very ambitious people and we're very ego-centric. A lot of what is going to be required will require sacrifice and selflessness.

Question #19: On that track, what it is we're supposed to be doing. In Boise you mentioned a vision where some few followers went into the cavity of the rock. Margaret Barker seems to hint that the cavity is feminine, similar to the virgin, the womb, a hidden cave or place, the Holy of Holies, if you will. For us, what it is? What's the cavity of the rock, and is it accessible? Can we get to it? Is this what Alma 5:62 is referring to when Alma commands the members and invites the members to get baptized, sort of in a cavity, so that they can reach up and partake of the Tree of Life? Could you explain that a little and help us out with what we may be doing better?

Denver: I could explain a great deal about that but I'm going to be talking specifically about things bearing on that topic in March. It probably would be best if I get... It's going to take a little bit of work to lay the whole thing out, but that's a topic that is fraught with the potential for... making a lot of mistakes. Hopefully some balance will be achieved in the talk. There is a lot to that topic. That would take longer than the time we've spent already.

Comment: You make it sound like that's a bad thing. [audience laughter and crosstalk]

Question #20: With the patriarchal priesthood and it falling on the descendants of one another with the earlier fathers, is biological lineage important? Do you think someone could arise to that position who is outside of that lineage or do you think that there will be someone who will?

Denver: We don't have time for that, and I don't mean at this moment, this discussion. I'm talking about this point in history. If you cannot reconstruct the family through an adoption ordinance process the work cannot be accomplished. There just isn't time. We're in the process of walking back to how it was in the beginning. A lot of people think that by getting a New Testament church put on the ground that Joseph Smith accomplished the fulsome restoration. It was never intended to stop there, it's supposed to go all the way back to the beginning. It's a giant chiasm and it's a giant mirror, and today we do not live 900 years. The way in which it will be rebuilt at the end is going to be by ordinance in the house of the Lord and a place that He has accepted. The only kinds of places that are legitimately the house of God are houses that God has come to, to dwell in, in order for those who seek His face to find Him. That happened at Kirtland. It never happened at Nauvoo or Salt Lake.

I know that... well... the fact is that a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of smoke by day is an allusion, an attempt to refer to things we are familiar with to describe things that we are not familiar with. A conduit that reaches up into heaven as the temporary appearance of the Lord to Joseph in the First Vision is intended to be a permanent connection at some place. It will be one of the reasons why people say, let's not go up against the people of Zion because Zion is too terrible. The presence of God is dreadful to the wicked, it's frightening to them. They get near it and it convicts them of their unworthiness. They dare not go up. But the pure and the humble and the noble are drawn to it. They will want to be there. And so that conduit, that fiery pillar, that stairway to heaven, Jacob's ladder, the chariot of fire, all of those things are an attempt to describe that heavenly connection, that heavenly presence. To the unworthy and the ungodly looking at it, they may or may not be able to see anything about it but they will sense extraordinary dread. It will frighten them. To the worthy there will be something enlightened about the very presence of the place. It will not seem to them to just be another place. It will seem as though the God of heaven has some base established there. That's when you know that an ensign has been established in the tops of the mountains to which nations will flow saying, come, let us go up and learn from the god of Jacob, because that ensign is actually something godly, holy, edifying, instructive, revelatory, filled with light, and redemptive, and the god who dwells there is going to be the Lord. So we don't have time... If you think about it, Enoch taught for 365 years before his people were prepared enough to go up, and we have to be prepared enough for them to come down and not destroy us by the brightness of their presence.

Comment: Is anyone else feeling screwed right now?

Denver: We don't live 365 years. We're going to have to do it with bigger steps instead of our little...

Comment: Shuffle...

Question #21: What about the children of divorce that are tattered? I keep going back to talk to, from divorce, marriage divorce, where the world takes us out to do whatever is

necessary to not even survive, and can take you away? What about the children of divorce, because those outside looking in, there's a lot of [inaudible]. What about them?

Denver: One of the promises that was made by the Lord to John for those in the last days who are going to connect up with him is that Christ intends to wipe away every tear. It's going to be difficult to be in the presence of the Lord and not feel like He's given enough to take care of everything that has gone wrong in every one of our individual lives. I don't know how we can feel the wounds in His hands and wrists and feel the wound in His side, and kneel and behold the wounds in His feet, and then tell Him He didn't do enough, or what He offers to us is insufficient.

Families are intended to be a place of joy, not a place of combat, and many families have degenerated into places of abuse and combat. That article in the Salt Lake Tribune that I referred to is harrowing. I read that. This was an eight-year-old child! I read that and I can't witness child abuse depicted in a movie and not get upset. I get up and go to the bathroom. I turn the volume down and stop watching the TV. Everyone who has gone through anything like that is going to be made whole. The Savior's wipe away every tear means exactly that. He has that ability. Probably every one of us sitting here have legitimate complaints about someone else, and you may have legitimate complaints about someone else who is here. Christ has a bigger reason to complain about every one of us, and His mission is unfulfilled when we don't allow those things to be washed away in what He did. The abuses, the indignities, the things that were heaped upon the Lord are almost beyond description. Mel Gibson didn't quite get it, although it was very Catholic.

I assume we're now getting phone calls from home asking where we are. It's been longer than I thought. Thanks for coming. You'll want to tune in online in March and we'll address some of that. It's going to be broadcast live.

[Inaudible audience comments]

The topic is dangerous but when Christ talks about that gathering, which is Zion, the gathering which He refers to is the feminine, it's the hen gathereth chicks under her wings. That subject has led repeatedly to hostility, abuse, apostasy, degradation, and so it's got to be handled with care. Right at the outset it's got to be put into balance, into a framework that says, be careful.

Comment: Good luck.

[Transcript v2.2]