

LESSON 8

“The Restoration of The Priesthood”

D&C 13; 20:38-67; 27:12-13; 84:6-30; 107:1-20; 110:11-16; Joseph Smith – History 1:66-73; Oliver Cowdery’s account of the Restoration – Footnote to JS-H 1:71; Our Heritage, pages 11-14

OVERVIEW:

Definition and purpose of the priesthood. The restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood. The restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Blessings of the priesthood for all people. Priesthood offices, quorums, and duties.

What are priesthood keys? Priesthood keys authorize priesthood holders to preside over and direct the Church within a jurisdiction, such as a stake, ward or quorum. Presiding priesthood leaders receive these keys when they are set apart. All offices in the priesthood and organizations in the Church function under the direction of these presiding authorities.

SCRIPTURES:

THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS SECTION 13

Ordination of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Aaronic Priesthood along the bank of the Susquehanna River, near Harmony, Pennsylvania, May 15, 1829. HC 1: 39—42. The ordination was done by the hands of an angel, who announced himself as John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament. The angel explained that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the ancient apostles, who held the keys of the higher priesthood, which was called the Priesthood of Melchizedek. The promise was given to Joseph and Oliver that in due time the Priesthood of Melchizedek would be conferred upon them. See also Section 27: 7, 8, 12. (This is an extract from the Prophet’s history as recorded in Joseph Smith – History 1:66-75)

Keys and powers of Aaronic Priesthood are set forth.

1 UPON you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I ^aconfer the ^bPriesthood of Aaron, which holds the ^ckeys of the ministering of ^dangels, and of the gospel of ^erepentance, and of ^fbaptism by immersion for the remission of sins; (In stating that the Aaronic Priesthood "holds the keys" of the gospel of repentance, etc., reference is being made to the rights and privileges associated with the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood and not to the directing keys of the priesthood. This is a second and more general usage of the word "key" as used in the scriptures. It is with this broader sense of the word "key" in mind that, in response to the question "What is a key?" Joseph F. Smith explained, "It is the right or privilege which belongs to and comes with the Priesthood. . . . It is the right to enjoy the blessing of communication with the heavens, and the privilege and authority to administer in the ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to preach the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. That is a key. . . . We ordain boys . . . to that Priesthood which holds the keys of the ministering of angels and of the gospel of repentance and baptism by immersion for the remission of sin." Thus every holder of the Aaronic Priesthood has certain rights and privileges (i.e., keys) according to his calling in that priesthood. Studies in Scripture, 1:89-90.) and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until (Oliver used the word “that” instead of “until.”) the sons of ^gLevi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in ^hrighteousness. (Were Joseph and Oliver ordained to a specific office in the Aaronic Priesthood? Although John is loosely mentioned as having conferred "the Aaronic Priesthood," Joseph was specific in outlining the twofold nature of this confirmation saying, "he laid his

hands upon my head, and ordained me to a Priest after the order of Aaron, and to hold the keys of this Priesthood." Differentiating between the authority and the keys conferred on this occasion, Elder Bruce R. McConkie noted, "When John came, he did two things: He conferred upon Joseph and Oliver the Aaronic Priesthood—he gave them authority. The second thing that he did was to give them the keys of the priesthood, the keys of presidency, the right to preside in the Aaronic Priesthood, and the right to authorize either themselves or someone else to use the priesthood, within the field and scope that people are entitled to use that particular priesthood." As keys are not always conveyed when priesthood is conferred, President Joseph F. Smith emphasized that, "a distinction must be carefully made between the general authority, and the directing of the labors performed by that authority [i.e., keys]." Studies in Scripture, 1:88-89)

Joseph Smith – History 1:66-73:66 On the 5th day of April, 1829, ^aOliver Cowdery came to my house, until which time I had never seen him. He stated to me that having been teaching school in the neighborhood where my father resided, and my father being one of those who sent to the school, he went to board for a season at his house, and while there the family related to him the circumstances of my having received the plates, and accordingly he had come to make inquiries of me.

67 Two days after the arrival of Mr. Cowdery (being the 7th of April) I commenced to translate the Book of Mormon, and he began to ^awrite for me.

68 We still continued the work of translation, when, in the ensuing month (May, 1829), we on a certain day went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting ^abaptism for the ^bremission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. (From this statement and from Oliver Cowdery's account of the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, it can be reasonably deduced where Joseph and Oliver were in the process of translation when they went into the woods to inquire of the Lord relative to the necessity of baptism. Oliver said that it took place "after writing the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent" (note following the end of Joseph Smith-History, 59). This would place the work of translation in 3 Nephi 11. It will be remembered that Nephi's discourse on baptism (2 Nephi 31) was recorded on the small plates of Nephi, which were not translated until after the account of the ministry of the Savior and the books that followed it had been translated. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 117) While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a ^ccloud of light, and having laid his ^dhands upon us, (There could be little surprise that when the priesthood was lost the knowledge of how it was properly obtained was lost also. Here we learn that the way the priesthood is conferred is by the laying on of hands. This symbolizes the placing of God's hands upon those who are being commissioned to act in his stead (D&C 36:1-2). The same Hebrew word for hand means "power." Thus, symbolically, the laying on of hands represents the conferring of power. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 117-18) he ^eordained us, saying:

69 *Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the ^aPriesthood of ^bAaron, which holds the keys (The bishop of the ward holds the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood for directing the work of the Aaronic Priesthood in a ward.) of the ministering of angels, (As the Melchizedek Priesthood holds the keys or authority to perform the ordinances by which men come into the presence of God, so the Aaronic Priesthood holds the authority to perform the ordinances by which we are prepared to receive the ministration of angels. For instance, Joseph Smith said, "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" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 180-81). Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained: "In general, the blessings of spiritual companionship and communication are only available to those who are clean. . . . Through the Aaronic Priesthood ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, we are cleansed of our sins and promised that if we keep our*

covenants we will always have His Spirit to be with us. I believe that promise not only refers to the Holy Ghost but also to the ministering of angels, for 'angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ' (2 Nephi 32:3). So it is that those who hold the Aaronic Priesthood open the door for all Church members who worthily partake of the sacrament to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit of the Lord and the ministering of angels" (Conference Report, October 1998, 51). It becomes the right of all who are of the household of faith to enjoy this blessing. We need not suppose that the ministering of angels is always known or seen by those to whom they have ministered. It was the apostle Paul who said that "some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). "Angelic messages can be delivered by a voice or merely by thoughts or feelings communicated to the mind. President John Taylor described 'the action of the angels or messengers of God, upon our minds, so that the heart can conceive . . . revelations from the eternal world'" (Oaks, Conference Report, October 1998, 51). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 118-19) *and of the gospel of repentance, and of^c baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of^d Levi* (Charles W. Penrose: Now as to the "sons of Levi," spoken of by John the Baptist in his ordination of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. (D&C 13.) They are, or will be, descendants of Levi, holding the Priesthood of Aaron, who will make the offerings predicted by the prophets to be presented to the Lord in latter days in Zion and in Jerusalem. (See Malachi 3:2-4; D&C 124:38, and 128:24.) In Zion, men chosen of the Lord for the special work mentioned will be persons sanctified by the spirit unto "the renewing of their bodies." (D&C 84:32-34.) At Jerusalem they will be Levites by lineal descent, offering the sacrifices that will be required after the restoration spoken of in Zechariah 14:16-21, and many others of the prophets of old concerning "the restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-21.) (IE, August 1912, 15:952.)) *do offer again an offering unto the Lord in^e righteousness.* (The Aaronic Priesthood is a preparatory priesthood. As it was intended to prepare the nation of Israel for the coming of Christ in the meridian of time, so it is to prepare the covenant people of the Lord for the return of their King and the establishment of the millennial kingdom. What Malachi is telling us is that as the sons of Levi were to do a labor to prepare their people for the coming of Christ, in like manner they are to do a special labor in the last days to prepare those of the house of faith to receive that same Christ. Thus, John restores to Joseph and Oliver the very authority by which the sons of Levi will be purified and by which they will perform the same ordinances performed by their ancient counterparts. Amplifying what is involved here, Joseph Smith explained: "It is generally supposed that sacrifice was entirely done away when the Great Sacrifice [i.e.,] the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was offered up, and that there will be no necessity for the ordinance of sacrifice in future; but those who assert this are certainly not acquainted with the duties, privileges and authority of the Priesthood, or with the Prophets. "The offering of sacrifice has ever been connected and forms a part of the duties of the Priesthood. It began with the Priesthood, and will be continued until after the coming of Christ, from generation to generation. We frequently have mention made of the offering of sacrifice by the servants of the Most High in ancient days, prior to the law of Moses; which ordinances will be continued when the Priesthood is restored with all its authority, power and blessings. . . . These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings. This ever did and ever will exist when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood are sufficiently manifest; else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by the Holy Prophets be brought to pass. It is not to be understood that the law of Moses will be established again with all its rites and variety of ceremonies; this has never been spoken of by the prophets; but those things which existed prior to Moses' day, namely, sacrifice, will be continued. It may be asked by some, what necessity for sacrifice, since the Great Sacrifice was offered? In answer to which, if repentance, baptism, and faith existed prior to the days of Christ, what necessity for them since that time? The Priesthood has descended in a regular line from father to son, through their succeeding generations" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 172-73; see also Smith, History of the Church, 4:207-12). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 119-120. Joseph Fielding Smith: It should be remembered

that the great temple, which is yet to be built in the city of Zion, will not be one edifice, but twelve. Some of these temples will be for the lesser priesthood. [History of the Church, vol. 1, pp. 357-59.] When those temples are built, it is very likely that provision will be made for some ceremonies and ordinances which may be performed by the Aaronic Priesthood and a place provided where the sons of Levi may offer their offering in righteousness. This will have to be the case because all things are to be restored. There were ordinances performed in ancient Israel in the tabernacle when in the wilderness, and after it was established at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, and later in the temple built by Solomon. The Lord has informed us that this was the case and has said that in those edifices ordinances for the people were performed. [D&C 124:28-29.] D&C 13 1These temples that we now have, however, the Lord commanded to be built for the purpose of giving to the saints the blessings which belong to their exaltation, blessings which are to prepare those who receive them to "enter into his rest,. . . which rest is the fulness of his glory," and these ordinances have to be performed by authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which the sons of Levi did not hold. [D&C 84:24.] The sacrifice of animals will be done to complete the restoration when the temple spoken of is built; at the beginning of the millennium, or in the restoration, blood sacrifices will be performed long enough to complete the fulness of the restoration in this dispensation. Afterwards sacrifice will be of some other character. [3 Nephi 9:10-20.] (Doctrines of Salvation, 1956, 3:93-94.))

70 He said this Aaronic Priesthood had not the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter; (The Holy Ghost was first conferred upon men in this dispensation in the meeting at which the Church was organized which took place 6 April 1830.) and he commanded us to go and be baptized, and gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and that afterwards he should baptize me.

71 Accordingly we went and were baptized. I ^abaptized him first, and afterwards he baptized me—after which I laid my hands upon his head and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood, and afterwards he laid his hands on me and ordained me to the same Priesthood—for so we were commanded.* (Immediately after they had baptized each other Joseph and Oliver were directed by John to reordain each other. Though no explanation is given it would appear that the Baptist was establishing the order of the kingdom— that is, that baptism must precede receipt of the priesthood. Their so doing also reaffirms the principle that angels do not do for us what we can do for ourselves. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 121)

72 The ^amessenger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called ^bJohn the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of ^cPeter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which Priesthood, he said, would in due time be conferred on us, and that I should be called the first ^dElder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second. (Oliver was assistant President to Joseph. Later, after Oliver is excommunicated, Hyrum Smith becomes the assistant President.) It was on the fifteenth day of May, 1829, that we were ordained under the hand of this messenger, and baptized.

73 Immediately on our coming up out of the water after we had been baptized, we experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and ^aprophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation.

(Section 20 is an inspired document, but it is not a revelation from Christ like the preceding sections. This is often called the Constitution of the Church. When the 1835 edition of the Book of Commandments was organized, Section 1 was first, then section 20 and then 107, which pertains to the

duties of the priesthood. There is no mention in Section 20 of the duties of apostle, high priest or seventy. These offices won't be needed until we get to section 107 as the Church grows.)

D&C 20: 38 The ^aduty of the elders, priests, teachers, deacons, and members of the church of Christ—
An ^bapostle is an ^celder, and it is his calling to ^dbaptize;

39 And to ^aordain other elders, priests, teachers, and deacons;

40 And to administer ^abread and wine—the ^bemblems of the flesh and blood of Christ—

41 And to ^aconfirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of ^bhands (The laying on of hands represents the placing of God's hand or power upon the head of the one being blessed.

Revelations of the Restoration, p. 166) for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures;

42 And to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church;

43 And to confirm the church (In the same ordinance in which someone is given the gift of the Holy Ghost they are also confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Membership in the Church can be obtained in no other way. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 167) by the laying on of the hands, and the giving of the Holy Ghost;

44 And to take the ^alead of all meetings.

45 The elders are to ^aconduct the ^bmeetings as they are ^cled by the Holy Ghost, according to the commandments and revelations of God.

46 The ^apriest's duty is to preach, ^bteach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament, (In the early history of the Church, those holding the office of a priest were, on occasion, called to serve as missionaries. This was the case with Wilford Woodruff, who observed, "I went out as a priest, and my companion as an elder, and we traveled thousands of miles, and had many things manifested to us. I desire to impress upon you the fact that it does not make any difference whether a man is a priest or an apostle, if he magnifies his calling. A priest holds the key of the ministering of angels. Never in my life, as an apostle, as a seventy, or as an elder, have I ever had more of the protection of the Lord than while holding the office as a priest" (Discourses, 300). Again Woodruff testified, "I had the administration of angels while holding the office of a priest" (Discourses, 298). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 167-68)

47 And visit the house of each member, and exhort them to ^apray ^bvocally and in secret and attend to all ^cfamily duties. (Home teachers)

48 And he may also ^aordain other priests, teachers, and deacons. (Teachers and deacons may not ordain other deacons or teachers. This is the duty of priests.)

49 And he is to take the ^alead of meetings when there is no elder present;

50 But when there is an elder present, he is only to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize,

51 And visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties.

52 In all these duties the priest is to ^aassist the elder if occasion requires.

53 The ^ateacher's duty is to ^bwatch over the ^cchurch always, and be with and strengthen them; (Home teachers)

54 And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither ^ahardness with each other, neither lying, ^bbackbiting, nor ^cevil ^dspeaking;

55 And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty.

56 And he is to take the lead of meetings in the absence of the elder or priest—

57 And is to be assisted always, in all his duties in the church, by the ^adeacons, if occasion requires.

58 But neither teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize, administer the ^asacrament, or lay on ^bhands;

59 They are, however, to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ.

60 Every ^aelder, ^bpriest, teacher, or deacon is to be ^cordained ^daccording to the gifts and callings of God unto him; and he is to be ^eordained by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is in the one who ordains

him.

61 The several elders composing this church of Christ are to ^ameet in conference once in three months, or from time to time as said conferences shall direct or appoint; (Now it's every six months.)

62 And said conferences are to do whatever church business is necessary to be done at the time.

63 The elders are to receive their licenses from other elders, by ^avote (common consent) of the church to which they belong, or from the conferences (today this means stake conference or stake priesthood meeting, or in individual ward sacrament meeting within the stake.).

64 Each priest, teacher, or deacon, who is ordained by a priest, may take a certificate from him at the time, which ^acertificate, when presented to an elder, shall entitle him to a license, which shall authorize him to perform the duties of his calling, or he may receive it from a conference.

65 No person is to be ^aordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the ^bvote of that church; (Common consent. Joseph F. Smith: No man can preside in this Church in any capacity without the consent of the people. [Sec. 26:2.] The Lord has placed upon us the responsibility of sustaining by vote those who are called to various positions of responsibility. No man, should the people decide to the contrary, could preside over any body of Latter-day Saints, as they are assembled in conference or other capacity, by the uplifted hand, to sustain or to reject; and I take it that no man has the right to raise his hand in opposition, or with contrary vote, unless he has a reason for doing so that would be valid if presented before those who stand at the head. In other words, I have no right to raise my hand in opposition to a man who is appointed to any position in this Church simply because I may not like him, or because of some personal disagreement or feeling I may have, but only on the grounds that he is guilty of wrongdoing, of transgression of the laws of the Church which would disqualify him for the position which he is called to hold. This is my understanding of it. (CR, June 1919, p. 92.))

66 But the presiding elders, traveling bishops, (In February 1831 Edward Partridge became the first man called to serve as a bishop in this dispensation (D&C 41:9). In December of that same year Newel K. Whitney was also called to serve in that capacity (D&C 72). These men served as regional or traveling bishops: Whitney for Ohio and the eastern states, Partridge for Missouri. Congregations of the Saints were not divided into what are now called wards, presided over by a standing bishop, until the early 1840s in Nauvoo. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 168) high councilors, high priests, and elders, may have the privilege of ordaining, where there is no branch of the church that a vote may be called.

(Common consent)

67 Every president of the high priesthood (or presiding elder) (President of the Church), ^abishop, high councilor, and ^bhigh priest, is to be ordained by the direction of a ^chigh council (The stake high council is to sustain all Melchizedek priesthood advancements and all ordinations to bishop.) or general conference.

D&C 27:12 And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ^aordained you and confirmed you to be ^bapostles, and especial ^cwitnesses of my ^dname, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them; (What is the date of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood? This text confirms the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood, for which we have no date or official account. Erastus Snow, who served as an apostle for nearly forty years, gives the following account of the restoration of the higher priesthood: "In due course of time, as we read in the history which he [Joseph Smith] has left, Peter, James and John appeared to him— it was at a period when they were being pursued by their enemies and they had to travel all night, and in the dawn of the coming day when they were weary and worn who should appear to them but Peter, James and John, for the purpose of conferring upon them the Apostleship, the keys of which they themselves had held while upon the earth, which had been bestowed upon them by the Savior. This Priesthood conferred upon them by those three messengers embraces within it all offices of the Priesthood from the highest to the lowest. As has been often taught us that the keys of the presidency of this Apostleship

represent the highest authority conferred upon man in the flesh. And by virtue of these keys of Priesthood the Prophet Joseph from time to time proceeded to ordain and set in order the Priesthood in its various quorums as we see it today in the Church" (Journal of Discourses, 23:183). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 203. In 1878, Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith visited David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses who was closely associated with the Prophet during this period. The first question Pratt asked Whitmer was, "Can you tell the date of the bestowal of the Apostleship upon Joseph, by Peter, James, and John?" David's answer was, "I do not know, Joseph never told me." The earliest explicit reference to the priesthood having been restored is found in D&C 18, given in June 1829. Joseph mentioned that this revelation was intended to "illustrate the nature of our calling to this priesthood, as well as that of others who were yet to be sought after." In this revelation directed to Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer the Lord said: "I speak unto you, even as unto Paul mine apostle, for you are called even with that same calling with which he was called" (D&C 18:9). Because this revelation is dated simply June 1829, it has been difficult to establish the date of the restoration with any more precision than sometime between 15 May and the end of June, 1829. Recent research shows evidence, however, that this event very likely occurred sometime between the 15th and 29th of May, 1829. The evidence in support of this conclusion is as follows: (1) Oliver Cowdery wrote a letter to Hyrum Smith dated 14 June 1829 which contained a considerable amount of wording identical to that found in section 18, strongly suggesting that the revelation contained in section 18 had been given by that time. (2) David Whitmer affirmed that Joseph and Oliver spent the month from 1 June to 1 July 1829 at the Whitmer farm, which is about three days journey from where the Melchizedek Priesthood was restored. Being busily occupied in the translation of the Book of Mormon, it is unlikely that they would have taken nearly a week sometime between the 1st and 14th of June to make a round-trip journey to Harmony. (3) With the likelihood that the priesthood was restored before Joseph and Oliver moved to Fayette where they arrived approximately 1 June, coupled with the fact that the distance was about three days, the probable time of the restoration is narrowed to between 15 May and 29 May. The Appearance of Peter, James, and John: Regrettably, there exists no detailed first-hand account of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood other than to mention that it was restored by the two resurrected beings Peter and James, together with John the Beloved who had been translated. An interesting secondhand description of what transpired comes from Addison Everett in a letter he wrote in 1881. Brother Everett relates that he overheard a conversation between Joseph and his brother Hyrum a few days before their martyrdom in which Joseph told how he and Oliver had been arrested at Colesville for preaching and were being held at the home of the Justice of the Peace. Their attorney, Mr. Reid, helped them escape through a window as a mob had begun to gather in front of the house. Everett goes on to say, "it was night and they traveled through brush and water and mud, fell over logs, etc., until Oliver was exhausted; then Joseph helped him along through brush and water, almost carrying him. They traveled all night, and just at the break of day Oliver gave out entirely and exclaimed, "O Lord! Brother Joseph, how long have we got to endure this thing?" They sat down on a log to rest and Joseph said that at that very time Peter, James, and John came to them and ordained them to the Apostleship. They had 16 or 17 miles to go to get back to Mr. Hales, his father-in-law's, but Oliver did not complain any more of fatigue." Elder Erastus Snow gave a similar account of Joseph and Oliver's experience in a conference address delivered in 1882: "It was at a period when they were being pursued by their enemies and had to travel all night, and in the dawn of the coming day when they were weary and worn who should appear to them but Peter, James, and John, for the purpose of conferring upon them the Apostleship, the keys of which they themselves had held while upon the earth, which had been bestowed upon them by the Savior." Studies in Scripture, 1:92-94)

13 Unto whom I have ^acommitted the ^bkeys of my kingdom, and a ^cdispensation of the ^dgospel for the ^elast times; and for the ^ffulness of times, in the which I will gather together in ^gone all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; (Peter, James, and John committed three things to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery: the Melchizedek Priesthood; the keys of that priesthood, meaning the right to preside over all of its functions and offices; and the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times. The

holding of such keys is properly referred to as the apostleship, for keys are the distinctive characteristic of that office. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 203. With the Melchizedek Priesthood restored, Joseph and Oliver could administer the higher ordinances of the gospel which communicate the spiritual blessings of the Church by which members can ultimately become sanctified and inherit eternal life (see D&C 84:20 and 107:18-19). In addition to the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood which was restored, there were special keys and powers which the Lord gave Peter, James, and John and which were subsequently conferred by them on Joseph and Oliver. The Lord revealed, **"I have committed [unto Peter, James, and John] the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times" (D&C 27:13). Thus when these ancient apostles appeared to Joseph and Oliver, they declared themselves "as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times" (D&C 128:20). Having received the keys of the kingdom, Joseph and Oliver could preside in the Melchizedek Priesthood and build up the Church or Kingdom upon the earth. The conferral of the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times was an appointment for Joseph and Oliver to preside jointly over this last and most glorious dispensation. Aside from these keys being taken from Oliver when he lost his standing in the Church and given to Joseph's older brother Hyrum, these keys were not passed on to others, but continue to reside with Joseph and Hyrum. Presiding under Adam, who holds the keys of all dispensation under the direction of Jesus Christ, they will stand throughout eternity at the head of this dispensation.** Studies in Scripture, 1:96-97. What was the calling of Oliver and then Hyrum in the Church? They were Assistant Presidents or Co-Presidents to Joseph Smith. Essentials in Church History, p. 581.)

(These next verses are the priesthood line of authority of Moses. Verses 6-31 are a parenthetical insertion into the revelation.)

D&C 84: 6 ^aAnd the ^bsons of Moses, according to the Holy Priesthood which he received under the ^chand of his father-in-law, ^dJethro; (The descent of this authority, or divine power, from Adam to Moses is here given in the Lord's own words to Joseph Smith. Moses received it from Jethro, a priest of the house of Midian. The Midianites were descendants of Abraham, through the children of Keturah, wife of Abraham, therefore the Midianites, who were neighbors to the Israelites in Palestine, were related to the Israelites, and were Hebrews. As descendants of Abraham they were entitled through their faithfulness to his blessings (see Abraham 2:9-11), and in the days of Moses and preceding them, in Midian the Priesthood was found. Joseph Fielding Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:338)

7 And Jethro received it under the hand of Caleb;

8 And Caleb received it under the hand of Elihu;

9 And Elihu under the hand of Jeremy;

10 And Jeremy under the hand of Gad;

11 And Gad under the hand of Esaias;

12 And Esaias received it under the hand of God.

13 ^aEsaias also lived in the days of Abraham, and was blessed of him—

14 Which ^aAbraham received the priesthood from ^bMelchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till ^cNoah;

15 And from Noah till ^aEnoch, through the lineage of their fathers;

16 And from Enoch to ^aAbel, who was slain by the ^bconspiracy of his brother, who ^creceived the priesthood by the commandments of God, by the hand of his father ^dAdam, who was the first man—

17 Which ^apriesthood ^bcontinueth in the church of God in all generations, and is without ^cbeginning of days or end of years.

18 And the Lord confirmed a ^apriesthood also upon ^bAaron and his ^cseed, throughout all their generations, which priesthood also continueth and ^dabideth forever with the priesthood which is after the

holiest order of God. (The record of Joseph Smith that the Aaronic Priesthood is to remain on the earth "until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness" (D&C 13, italics added) may suggest to some that the Aaronic Priesthood is only temporary. Oliver Cowdery's earlier account is perhaps a bit more precise, using the word "that" instead of "until." In a special conference held 21 October 1848 in Kanesville, Iowa (now Council Bluffs), Oliver Cowdery, who had been excommunicated 11 April 1838, arose to seek forgiveness of the Church and bore this testimony: "I was present with Joseph when an holy angel from God came down from heaven and conferred on us, or restored the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, and said to us at the same time, that it should remain upon the earth while the earth stands." This statement is consistent with the Lord's declaration that the Aaronic Priesthood "continueth and abideth forever with the priesthood which is after the holiest order of God" (D&C 84:18, italics added). There are several ways in which the Aaronic Priesthood may be considered eternal in duration. In one respect everyone who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood also holds the Aaronic Priesthood for the following reasons: (1) The greater comprehends the lesser so that all who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood ipso facto hold the Aaronic Priesthood. (2) When a person receives the Aaronic Priesthood and subsequently receives the Melchizedek Priesthood, none of the former authority is taken away. In another respect it has been taught that the Church on earth, down to the office of Deacon, has been organized after the pattern of the Church which exists in Heaven. This would imply that somewhere in our Father's house, there is a place for the ministration of this lesser order of the priesthood. At least one realm in which this priesthood will minister is in the earths that will always be passing through a temporal existence. With respect to the functioning of the Aaronic Priesthood on this earth after it has "passed away" and become celestialized, Joseph Fielding Smith has explained, "As long as we have temporal things on the earth this priesthood is necessary. Eventually, when the earth is celestialized, I suppose all priesthood will be of the higher order." Studies in Scripture, 1:90-91)

19 And this greater ^apriesthood (Melchizedek Priesthood) administereth the gospel (The priesthood can exist without the Church, but the Church cannot exist without the priesthood.) and holdeth the ^bkey of the ^cmysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the ^dknowledge of God. (It is the purpose of the high or holy priesthood to bring the children of God back into his presence both in this life and in the world to come. The ordinances (rites or rituals) of the priesthood are designed to prepare both men and women to stand in the presence of God. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 591. It is impossible for men to obtain the knowledge or the mysteries of the kingdom or the knowledge of God, without the authority of the Priesthood. Secular learning, the study of the sciences, arts and history, will not reveal these vital truths to man. It is the Holy Priesthood that unlocks the door to heaven and reveals to man the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. It is this Divine Authority which makes known the knowledge of God! Is there any wonder that the world today is groping in gross darkness concerning God and the things of his kingdom? We should also remember that these great truths are not made known even to members of the Church unless they place their lives in harmony with the law upon which these blessings are predicated. (D. & C. 130:20-21.) Joseph Fielding Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:338)

20 Therefore, in the ^aordinances thereof, the power of ^bgodliness is manifest.

21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the ^aauthority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is ^bnot manifest unto men in the flesh;

22 For without this no ^aman can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.

23 Now this ^aMoses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to ^bsanctify his people that they might ^cbehold the face of God; (What Moses tried to do among the children of Israel is what fathers are supposed to do. To bring his family to the temple that they might be sanctified to be worthy of beholding the face of God.)

24 But they ^ahardened their hearts and could not endure his ^bpresence; therefore, the Lord in his ^cwrath, for his ^danger was kindled against them, swore that they should not ^eenter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory.

25 Therefore, he took ^aMoses out of their midst, and the Holy ^bPriesthood also; (Although the higher or

holy priesthood was taken from the children of Israel, Joseph Smith told us that "all the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 181). We should here observe also that when the scripture says the Lord took Moses and the holy priesthood out of the midst of Israel, it means that he took from them the prophet who held the keys and who could authorize the priesthood to be conferred upon others. Any who thereafter held either the keys or the Melchizedek Priesthood gained them by special dispensation. The Aaronic Priesthood thus became the priesthood of administration; it was in effect the priesthood of Israel; it handled the affairs of the Church and officiated in the offering of sacrifices. However, there were at many times and may have been at all times prophets and worthy men who held the Melchizedek Priesthood. Joseph Smith said, "All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself." (Teachings, p. 181.) Bruce R. McConkie, Promised Messiah, p. 412)

26 And the lesser ^apriesthood (Aaronic Priesthood) continued, which priesthood holdeth the ^bkey^c of the ^cministering of angels (The Melchizedek Priesthood is empowered to bring us into the presence of God. The Aaronic Priesthood possesses the authority by which we may receive the ministering of angels. Thus, it is the right of those holding this priesthood to be instructed and blessed by angels. It is also their right to perform those ordinances that entitle those who do not hold the priesthood to also enjoy the ministering of angels. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 594) and the ^dpreparatory gospel;

27 Which ^agospel is the gospel of ^brepentance and of ^cbaptism, and the ^dremission of sins, and the ^elaw of ^fcarnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel until ^gJohn, whom God raised up, being ^hfilled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.

28 For he was baptized while he was yet in his childhood (At age 8), and was ^aordained by the angel of God (It would appear that the giving of such a blessing required the higher priesthood, which Zacharias did not hold. Having, as did his son, the companionship of the Holy Ghost, Zacharias could and did prophesy relative to his ministry (Luke 1:67-80), but he did not seek to bless him. If what was taking place was a matter of conferring the Aaronic Priesthood, Zacharias could have done that. Indeed, as the rightful heir of the office of Aaron, it would have been his right and responsibility to do so. Suffice it to say, angels simply don't come to do what the Lord has already commissioned someone else to do. It should also be noted that the Aaronic Priesthood in that day was not conferred upon a man until he was thirty years of age (Numbers 4:1-3.) Revelations of the Restoration, p. 596. Did John receive the Aaronic Priesthood when 8 days old? No. Luke says: "The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." Later John is to say: "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me," such and such things. (John 1:33.) Who sent him we do not know. We do know that "he was baptized while he was yet in his childhood [meaning, when he was eight years of age], and was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power [note it well, not to the Aaronic Priesthood, but] 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." (D&C 84:24.) We do not know when he received the Aaronic Priesthood, but obviously it came to him after his baptism, at whatever age was proper, and before he was sent by one whom he does not name to preach and baptize with water. Bruce R. McConkie, Mortal Messiah 1:384-85. President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "The reason Zacharias could not ordain John is because of the fact that John received certain keys of authority which his father, Zacharias, did not possess. Therefore this special authority had to be conferred by this heavenly messenger, who was duly authorized and sent to confer it. John's ordination was not merely the bestowal of the Aaronic Priesthood, which his father held, but also the conferring of certain essential powers peculiar to the time among which was the authority to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews and to make straight the way of the Lord. Moreover, it was to prepare the Jews and other Israelites for the coming of the Son of God. This great authority required a special ordination beyond the delegated power that had been given to Zacharias or any other priest who went before him, so the angel of the Lord was sent to John in his childhood to confer it.) at the time he was ^beight days old unto this

power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to ^cmake straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the ^dcoming of the Lord, in whose hand is given ^eall power. (For John to have conferred the authority and keys of the Aaronic Priesthood on Joseph and Oliver, he had to have possessed them himself. These powers he received in mortality, being the firstborn son in the lineage of Aaron (see D&C 84:27-28). While the tribe of Levi had a hereditary right to the Aaronic Priesthood, only the firstborn of the sons of Aaron had a legal right to the presidency or the keys of this priesthood. In speaking of the presidency of this priesthood a revelation in our day states: "No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant and the firstborn of Aaron" (D&C 68:18; cf. 107:16). In reference to John's authority, President Joseph Fielding Smith observed that "by divine right of descent, he was the rightful presiding priest of the Aaronic order in Israel. This authority had come to him by lineage. . . . Had the Church of God been in existence with the Jews in that day, instead of the Jews being in a dreadful state of apostasy, then John the Baptist would have taken his proper place as the presiding priest of the Aaronic order." 11 With the coming of John the Baptist, Joseph and Oliver received all of the rights of the Aaronic Priesthood that were vested in Aaron and were thus literally "called and ordained even as Aaron" (D&C 27:8). Studies in Scripture, 1:89)

29 And again, the ^aoffices of elder and bishop are necessary ^bappendages belonging unto the high priesthood. (The phrase "high priesthood" has been used to refer to the Melchizedek Priesthood and the office of a high priest in that priesthood. As used here, and in many of the early documents of the Restoration, it refers to the office of high priest rather than the Melchizedek Priesthood. Thus, in the present text, we are being told that the offices of "elder" and "bishop" are appendages to the office of high priest. It would be redundant to say that they were appendages to the Melchizedek Priesthood, as all priesthood offices are appendages to the priesthood. It naturally follows that no office or combination of offices in the priesthood could be greater than the priesthood itself. In like manner, section 107 also uses the phrase "high priesthood" in reference to the office of high priest. There we read that "there must needs be presiding elders to preside over those who are of the office of an elder; and also priests to preside over those who are of the office of a priest; and also teachers to preside over those who are of the office of a teacher, in like manner, also the deacons—wherefore, from deacon to teacher, and from teacher to priest, and from priest to elder, severally as they are appointed, according to the covenants and commandments of the church. Then comes the High Priesthood, which is the greatest of all" (D&C 107:60-64; emphasis added). The text having listed the offices of deacon through elder says, "Then [after these offices] comes the High Priesthood, which is the greatest of all." Given that the purpose of the text is to place the offices of the priesthood in their respective order, not to distinguish the obvious fact that the Melchizedek Priesthood is greater than the Aaronic, we can only conclude that its purpose is to tell us that the office of a high priest "is the greatest of all," which would be in harmony with the previous direction that if high priests and elders are both present the high priests are to preside (D&C 107:10-11). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 597)

30 And again, the offices of ^ateacher and deacon are necessary appendages belonging to the lesser priesthood, which priesthood was confirmed upon ^bAaron and his sons.

D&C 107:1-20:1 THERE are, in the church, two ^apriesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and ^bAaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood. (Aaronic and Levitical are synonymous. Aaron and his sons after him held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood and acted in the full majesty and power of this Levitical order; many of their functions were comparable to those of bishops and priests in this dispensation. Though the rest of the ordained Levites held the fulness of the Aaronic Priesthood (Heb. 7:5) and participated in the offering of sacrifices, they did not hold the keys of the Aaronic ministry; many of their functions were comparable to those of teachers and deacons in this dispensation. (Num. 3; 4; 2 Chron. 29; Mal. 3:3; D. & C. 13; Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 3, pp. 111-114.) Mormon Doctrine, p. 9-10.)

2 Why the first is called the ^aMelchizedek Priesthood is because ^bMelchizedek was such a great high

priest.

3 Before his day it was called *the* ^a*Holy Priesthood, after the* ^b*Order of the Son of God.*

4 But out of ^arespect or ^breverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, (This phrase affirms that a church organization existed in Old Testament times.) called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood.

5 All other authorities or offices in the church are ^aappendages to this priesthood. ("The priesthood is greater than any of its offices. No office adds any power, dignity, or authority to the priesthood. All offices derive their rights, prerogatives, graces, and powers from the priesthood. This principle may be diagramed by dividing a circle into segments. The priesthood is the circle; the segments of the circle are the callings or offices in the priesthood. Anyone who serves in a segment of the circle must possess the power of the whole circle. No one can hold an office in the priesthood without first holding the priesthood" (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 595-96). Further, there is no advancement from one office to another within the Melchizedek Priesthood. Every elder holds as much priesthood as an apostle or as the President of the Church, though these latter officers hold greater administrative assignments in the kingdom. It follows, also, that any holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood could perform any priestly function he was appointed to do by the one holding the keys of the kingdom. Normally a priesthood bearer works in the particular segment of the priesthood circle in which his primary responsibility lies. (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., pp. 148-149; *Teachings*, p. 112.) *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 595-96)

6 But there are two divisions or grand heads—one is the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the other is the Aaronic or ^aLevitical Priesthood. (Some argue that the Aaronic and Levitical Priesthoods are different priesthoods. This revelation, however, does not support such a distinction. *Revelations of the Restoration*, p. 787)

7 The office of an ^aelder comes under the priesthood of Melchizedek.

8 The ^aMelchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, (The right of presidency—commonly referred to as holding keys—is the right to preside, direct, or govern. When someone becomes a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, for instance, all the keys of the kingdom are conferred upon him. Wherever he goes in the Church, a member of the Twelve is the presiding officer, unless a more senior member of the Twelve is also present. In a sense, the Twelve hold every office in the Church, for they preside over all offices and auxiliaries. They do not preside because they hold priesthood but because they have been given the keys or "right of presidency." *Revelations of the Restoration*, p. 787) and has power and ^bauthority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things.

9 The ^aPresidency of the High Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, have a right to officiate in all the offices in the church. (Do members of the First Presidency have to be apostles? Joseph F. Smith: We have the council of the first presidency consisting of three presiding high priests who are called of God and appointed to preside over the Church and over the Priesthood of God, and I want to say here that it does not follow and never has followed that the members of the first presidency of the Church are necessarily to be ordained apostles. They hold by virtue of their rights as presidents of the Church all the keys and all the authority that pertains to the Melchizedek Priesthood, which comprehends and comprises all of the appendages to that priesthood, the lesser priesthood and all the offices in the priesthood from first to last, and from least to greatest. (CR, April 1913, p. 4.) Who have been members of the First Presidency without being ordained apostles? Jess Gause, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, John Willard Young, William Law, John Rex Winder, Daniel H. Wells, Charles W. Nibley, Henry Thorpe Beal Isaacson, John C. Bennett.)

10 ^aHigh priests after the order of the Melchizedek Priesthood have a ^bright to officiate in their own ^cstanding, under the direction of the presidency, (Under the direction of the First Presidency high priests can be called to positions of presidency and to administer spiritual things. This revelation notes that their office encompasses that of an elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood and the offices of priest, teacher, and

deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood. It does not include the office of seventy, which belongs to the Melchizedek Priesthood, or the office of bishop, which belongs to the Aaronic Priesthood. The suggestion here is that seventies were to hold general authority status rather than be a part of the local organization. It was not necessary to include the office of bishop in this verse because a bishop, which is an office in the Aaronic Priesthood, must also be a high priest (D&C 68:19). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 788. Joseph F. Smith: Today the question is, which is the greater—the High Priest or the Seventy, the Seventy or the High Priest? I tell you that neither of them is the greater, and neither of them is the lesser. Their callings lie in different directions, but they are from the same Priesthood. If it were necessary, the Seventy, holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, as he does, I say IF IT WERE NECESSARY—he could ordain a High Priest; and if it were necessary for a High Priest to ordain a Seventy, he could do that. Why? Because both of them hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. Then again, if it were necessary—though I do not expect the necessity will ever arise—and there was no man left on earth holding the Melchizedek Priesthood except an Elder, that Elder, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and by the direction of the Almighty, could proceed, and should proceed, to organize the Church of Jesus Christ in all its perfection, because he holds the Melchizedek Priesthood. But the house of God is a house of order, and while the other offices remain in the Church, we must observe the order of the Priesthood, and we must perform ordinances and ordinations strictly in accordance with that order, as it has been established in the Church through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors. (CR, October 1903, p. 87.) in administering spiritual things, and also in the office of an elder, ^dpriest (of the Levitical order), teacher, deacon, and member.

11 An elder has a right to officiate in his stead when the high priest is not present.

12 The high priest and ^aelder are to administer in spiritual things, agreeable to the covenants and commandments of the church; and they have a right to officiate in all these offices of the church when there are no higher authorities present. (The Church policies indicate that a person is not to be ordained a high priest only because of his age, but only at the time he is called to a position that requires him to be a high priest, such as a member of a bishopric, high council, stake presidency, high priest group leadership.)

13 The second priesthood is called the Priesthood of ^aAaron, because it was conferred upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations. (From the days of Aaron to the time of Christ, the only priesthood known generally among the house of Israel in the Old World was the Aaronic, or Levitical, Priesthood. The right to hold this priesthood was limited to those who were of the tribe of Levi. With the coming of the gospel in the meridian day came the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood. The Aaronic Priesthood was retained, with the right to hold it again extended to all the tribes of Israel. Following the same pattern, both priesthoods have been restored in our day. Notwithstanding the fact that both priesthoods can be held by all worthy males, regardless of the tribe of Israel from which they descend, the promises given to those of the tribe of Levi "throughout all their generations" are still remembered and will be honored as a part of the restoration of all things. See Doctrine and Covenants 68:13-21; 84:31; 107:69-71. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 788)

14 Why it is called the lesser priesthood is because it is an ^aappendage to the greater, or the Melchizedek Priesthood, (In all things the Aaronic Priesthood acts under the direction of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Those holding the higher priesthood can function in all the offices and capacities of the lesser priesthood; it is unnecessary to have received the Aaronic Priesthood before receiving the higher priesthood. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 788) and has power in administering outward ordinances.

15 The ^abishopric is the presidency of this priesthood, and holds the ^bkeys or authority of the same. (This refers to the presiding bishop of the Church and his counselors. Ward bishoprics did not function as we now know them until after the Saints had moved west. This is a specialized usage of the word bishopric peculiar to Latter-day Saints. More generally the word simply refers to an office or calling (see Acts 1:20; D&C 114:2). According to this revelation, the presiding bishop and his counselors hold the keys restored by John the Baptist to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and thus give direction and leadership

to all who hold the Aaronic Priesthood. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 789)

16 No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, (Presiding Bishop) except he be a ^aliteral descendant of ^bAaron. (According to section 68, should a person qualify as a literal descendant of Aaron he must also meet the qualifications of being called by the First Presidency, be worthy to be a bishop, and be ordained by proper authority (D&C 68:20). All bishops serving in the Church today are High Priests, as none have yet qualified to be a bishop due to their lineage. Further, President Joseph Fielding Smith has written regarding the priesthood office that a literal descendant of Aaron might claim: The office of Presiding Bishop of the Church is the same as the office which was held by Aaron. It is the highest office, holding the Presidency in the Aaronic Priesthood. It was this office which came to John the Baptist, and it was by virtue of the fact that he held the keys of this power and ministry that he was sent to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to restore that Priesthood, May 15, 1829. The person who has the legal right to this presiding office has not been discovered; perhaps he is not in the Church, but should it be shown by revelation that there is one who is the firstborn among the sons of Aaron, and thus entitled by birthright to this Presidency, he could "claim" his "anointing" and the right to that office in the Church. Studies in Scripture, Vol 1.)

17 But as a high priest of the ^aMelchizedek Priesthood has authority to officiate in all the lesser offices, he may officiate in the office of ^bbishop when no literal descendant of Aaron can be found, provided he is called and ^cset apart and ordained unto this power by the hands of the ^dPresidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

18 The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the ^akeys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—

19 To have the privilege of receiving the ^amysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the ^bheavens opened unto them, to commune with the ^cgeneral assembly and church of the ^dFirstborn, and to enjoy the communion and ^epresence of God the Father, and Jesus the ^fmediator of the new covenant. (The Melchizedek Priesthood was restored in order that the children of God might once again be brought into his presence. It is not future worlds to which this promise is directed but to the mortal and corruptible state in which we now reside. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 790. Orson F. Whitney: Not only by the gift of prophecy, but by the power of seership, Joseph Smith was able to forecast the future. It was by that miraculous power that he saw the Father and the Son. It was by that wonderful power that he and Oliver Cowdery saw Jehovah, Moses and Elijah in the Kirtland Temple; and by which also Joseph and Sidney gazed upon the glories of the celestial, terrestrial and telestial worlds. By that marvelous power the Prophet, in all probability, beheld the great organization of the Church of God in heaven; for while organizing the councils and quorums of the Priesthood, he said: [Sec. 107:93, quoted.] Now, if he saw the Seventies in vision, why not the Apostles? Why not the First Presidency? Why not the stakes and wards, with their presiding officers, and even the auxiliary organizations? Who can say that he did not see them? Who can say that these quorums of the Priesthood, these auxiliary societies and associations, the Church of God in its entirety as it exists upon the earth, are not a reflex of the Church of God in heaven, so far as it is adapted to our present conditions, so far as it has been found necessary to organize it here; the eventual outcome to be a perfect Church, corresponding in every particular to the Church of the First Born; and this that the will of God may be done upon earth even as it is done in heaven? (CR, April 1912, p. 51.))

20 The ^apower and authority of the lesser, or ^bAaronic Priesthood, is to hold the ^ckeys of the ministering of angels, and to ^dadminister in outward ^eordinances, (A primary charge given to the Aaronic Priesthood is to tend to temporal things, while the primary charge given the higher priesthood is to tend to spiritual things.) the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the ^fremission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments.

(April 3, 1836 was Easter Sunday and the day of the Jewish Passover. These next three visions bring priesthood keys that correspond to the three-fold mission of the Church. Moses – proclaim the gospel; Elias – Perfect the Saints; Elijah – Redeem the dead.)

D&C 110:11-16:11 After this ^avision closed, the heavens were again ^bopened unto us; and ^cMoses appeared before us, and committed unto us the ^dkeys of the ^egathering of Israel (When Moses gave the keys of the gathering of Israel to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, it meant that they alone held the presidency over this event. Thus everything that happens relative to the gathering of Israel that constitutes the fulfillment of prophecy must take place under their direction, or under that of their legal and lawful successors as possessors of those keys, or that presidency. To be gathered is to be baptized for the remission of sins. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 889) from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the ^fnorth. (Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "'We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes' (A of F 10). This inspired language leaves the clear impression that the gathering of Israel is one thing and the restoration of the Ten Tribes is another. Why this distinction? Are not the Ten Tribes a part of Israel? And if Israel is to be gathered, surely in the very nature of things this would include the gathering of the major portion of that ancient and favored people. "An immortal Moses, appearing in resurrected glory on the 3rd day of April, 183[6], in the Kirtland Temple, committed unto his mortal fellowservants, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, 'the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north' (D&C 110:11). Again there is a distinction between Israel as a whole and the Ten Tribes who are the dominant portion of Jacob's seed. All scripture comes by the power of the Holy Ghost and is verily true. When special and unusual language is used, there is a reason. Holy writ is not idle chatter; it is the mind and will of the Lord; it says what he wants said. And so it now behooves us to learn why it is one thing to gather Israel from the four parts of the earth and yet another to lead the Ten Tribes from the land of the north. "We have already seen that all Israel, including specifically and pointedly the Ten Tribes, is scattered in all the nations of the earth, upon all the islands of the sea, and among every people who dwell on this planet. . . . "We are also aware that the Ten Tribes were first taken as a body into Assyria; that they went out from Assyria, northward, in a body, under prophetic guidance; and that they were then splintered and driven and scattered into all places and among all peoples. These Ten Tribes, no matter where they are located, are in nations and places known in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the ancient prophets as the north countries. Hence, their return to Palestine at least will be from the land of the north. "The tribe of Ephraim is one of the Ten Tribes; and her people became wanderers in the nations, where they now reside and where they are now being found and gathered, one of a city and two of a family, into the stakes of Zion in those nations. This gathering of Israel is not to an American Zion; it is not to Palestine and the ancient holy land; it is not to any central place or location. Rather, it is to the holy places of safety that are now being set up in all nations as rapidly as our strength and means permit. As we have seen, this gathering of Ephraim falls in the category of the gathering of Israel and not of the leading of the Ten Tribes from the land of the north. This gathering of Ephraim is into the stakes of Zion in all the nations of the earth. There are, of course, isolated and unusual instances of people from the other lost tribes gathering with Ephraim, but these are few and far between. The gathering of these other tribes is not yet, but by and by. . . . But with the Ten Tribes, in part at least, it will be another thing. They are destined to return (at least in large and representative numbers) to the same soil where the feet of their forebears walked during the days of their mortal pilgrimage. They are to return to Palestine. At least a constituent assembly will congregate there in the very land given of God to Abraham their father. Others will, of course, be in America and in all lands, but the formal return, the return from the north countries, will be to the land of their ancient inheritance" (Millennial Messiah, 319-21). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 890-91. Joseph Fielding Smith: The ten tribes from the land of the north: Notwithstanding all that has been written, there are many members of the Church who think that these "lost tribes" were scattered among the nations and are

now being gathered out and are found through all the stakes and branches of the Church. They reach this conclusion because the general opinion is that these tribes went into the North, and it is the northern countries from whence most of gathered Israel has been found. . . . Whether these tribes are in the North or not, I am not prepared to say. As I said before, they are "lost" and until the Lord wishes it, they will not be found. All that I know about it is what the Lord has revealed, and He declares that they will come from the North. He has also made it very clear and definite that these lost people are separate and apart from the scattered Israelites now being gathered out. If this be not true, then the commission of Moses to the Prophet Joseph Smith is without meaning, wherein we read: [Sec. 110:9, quoted.] The statement that the tribes are to be led from the North harmonizes perfectly with the words of Jeremiah (Jer. 16:14-15) and Section 133, verses 26 to 34. Surely there must be a time when this great body of people will come to the children of Ephraim to receive their blessings. At their presence the mountains will tremble; they shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down. They will bring forth their rich treasures to the children of Ephraim, at whose hands they shall receive the rich blessings which the Gospel and its ordinances offer them. Speaking of this, Elder Orson F. Whitney has said: "It is maintained by some that the lost tribes of Israel—those carried into captivity about 725 B.C.—are no longer a distinct people; that they exist only in a scattered condition, mixed with the nations among which they were taken by their captors, the conquering Assyrians. If this be true, and those tribes were not intact at the time Joseph and Oliver received the keys of the 'gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth.' What need to particularize as to the Ten Tribes, if they were no longer a distinct people? And why do our Articles of Faith give these tribes a special mention?" (See Saturday Night Thoughts, p. 174.) Another striking statement pointing to the fact that these people are now in a body in preparation for their return is the statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith at the conference held in Kirtland, June 3 to 6, 1831. At this conference the Prophet said: "John the Revelator was then among the ten tribes of Israel who had been led away by Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion." The Savior also bore witness that these tribes were in a body like the Nephites and he would visit them. [3 Nephi 15:20 and 16:1-4.] (Signs of the Times, 1943, pp. 158-60.) (Bruce R. McConkie: "The Lost Tribes are not lost unto the Lord. In their northward journeyings they were led by prophets and inspired leaders. They had their Moses and their Lehi, were guided by the spirit of revelation, kept the law of Moses, and carried with them the statutes and judgments which the Lord had given them in age past. They were still a distinct people many hundreds of years later, for the resurrected Lord visited and ministered among them following his ministry on this continent among the Nephites. (3 Ne. 16:1-4; 17:4.) Obviously he taught them in the same way and gave them the same truths which he gave his followers in Jerusalem and on the American continent; and obviously they recorded his teachings, thus creating volumes of scripture comparable to the Bible and Book of Mormon. (2 Ne. 29:12-14.) In due course the Lost Tribes of Israel will return and come to the children of Ephraim to receive their blessings. This great gathering will take place under the direction of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for he holds the keys of 'the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.' (D. & C. 110:11.) Keys are the right of presidency the power to direct; and by this power the Lost Tribes will return, with 'their prophets' and their scriptures to 'be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim.' (D. & C. 133:26-35.)" (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 455-8) In 721 BC, the ten northern tribes of Israel were taken captive into Assyria. From there they were led into the lands of the north and were thereafter lost from the annals of history. They have thus come to be known as the ten lost tribes. Much discussion and extended speculation have taken place as to their whereabouts and the manner in which they will return and be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance. It is common for Latter-day Saints, for example, to cite numerous legends or reminiscences of persons who supposedly heard Joseph Smith state that these Israelites are in the center of the earth, on a knob attached to the earth, on the North Star, or on another planet. We shall focus in our discussion of this subject upon what the Book of Mormon teaches on the matter. In one of his concluding testimonies in

the Book of Mormon, Mormon said: "I write unto all the ends of the earth; yea, unto you, twelve tribes of Israel" Mormon 3:18. If words mean what they say and Mormon knew whereof he spoke, the twelve tribes of Israel were then scattered from one end of the earth to the other and but waiting for the message of the Book of Mormon that they might be gathered. When the ten tribes return, among the sacred treasures that they will have with them will be the Book of Mormon. Because he wrote so eloquently on this subject, we here quote extensively from Elder Bruce R. McConkie: Our friend Mormon, as he nears the end of his divinely appointed work, that of preserving the everlasting word as it was had among the Nephites, says: I write unto you Gentiles, and also unto you, house of Israel, when the work shall commence, that ye shall be about to prepare to return to the land of your inheritance.' Then as though this salutation was not sufficient, and lest any should be confused as to the people to whom the Book of Mormon shall go, Mormon wrote: 'Yea, behold, I write unto all the ends of the earth; yea, unto you, [the] twelve tribes of Israel.' The Book of Mormon is written to the twelve tribes of Israel. And this includes the lost Ten Tribes. For that matter, the New Testament is addressed to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. (James 1:1) And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me; therefore I write unto you all – all the house of Israel. Why" That ye may believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, which ye shall have among you; and also that the Jews, the covenant people of the Lord, shall have other witness besides him whom they saw and heard, that Jesus, whom they slew, was the very Christ and the very God. And I would that I could persuade all ye ends of the earth to repent and prepare to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (Mormon 3:17-22) That is to say, all Israel, the Lamanites and the Ten Tribes included, shall be gathered if and when they believe the Book of Mormon. The Ten Tribes shall return after they accept the Book of Mormon; then they shall come to Ephraim to receive their blessings, the blessings of the house of the Lord, the blessings that make them heirs of the covenant God made with their father Abraham. But, says one, are they not in a body somewhere in the land of the north? Answer: They are not; they are scattered in all nations. The north countries of their habitation are all the countries north of their Palestinian home, north of Assyria from whence they escaped, north of the prophets who attempted to describe their habitat. And for that matter, they shall also come from the south and the east and the west and the ends of the earth. Such is the prophetic word. But, says another, did not Jesus visit them after he ministered among the Nephites? Answer: Of course he did, in one or many places as suited his purposes. He assembled them together in exactly the same way he gathered the Nephites in the land Bountiful so that they too could hear his voice and feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet. Of this there can be no question. And we suppose that he also called twelve apostles and established his kingdom among them even as he did in Jerusalem and in the Americas. Why should he deal any differently with one branch of Israel than with another? Query: What happened to the Ten Tribes after the visit of the Savior to them near the end of the thirty-fourth year following his birth? Answer: The same thing that happened to the Nephites. There was righteousness for a season, and then there was apostasy and wickedness. Be it remembered that darkness was destined to cover the earth – all of it – before the day of the restoration, and that the restored gospel was to go to every nation and kindred and tongue and people upon the face of the whole earth, including the Ten Tribes of Israel... And finally, says yet another, will they not come with their prophets and seers? Answer. There is no other way they or any people can be gathered. Of course they will be led by their prophets, prophets who are subject to and receive instructions from, and prophets who report their labors to the one man on earth who holds and exercises all of the keys of the kingdom in their fullness. Did not Paul say that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, and that God is not the author of confusion? (1 Corinthians 14:32-33) the Lord's house is a house of order; it has only one head at one time; Christ is not divided. In this day when the head of the Church can communicate with all men on earth, there is no longer any need to one kingdom in Jerusalem and another in Bountiful and others in whatever place or places the Ten Tribes were when Jesus visited them. This is the promised day when there shall be one God, one Shepherd, one prophet, one gospel, one church, and one kingdom for all the earth. Bruce R. McConkie, Millennial Messiah, p. 215-17) In speaking of the return of the lost tribes, a modern revelation attests:

“He [Christ] shall command the great deep, and it shall be driven back into the north countries, and the islands shall become one land; and the land of Jerusalem and the land of Zion shall be turned back into their own place, and the earth shall be like as it was in the days before it was divided.” And now we note the millennial setting for this gathering: “And the Lord, even the Savior, shall stand in the midst of his people and shall reign over all flesh. And they who are in the north countries shall come in remembrance before the Lord, and their prophets shall hear his voice, and shall no longer stay themselves. (D&C 133:23-26) As to the prophets among the ten tribes in our day, Elder McConkie has written: “Their prophets are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They are stake presidents and bishops and quorum presidents who are appointed to guide and direct the destinies of their stakes and wards and quorums. Millennial Messiah, p. 326. That is, the ten tribes shall be gathered into the fold in the same way as all others: missionaries shall search them out, they shall hear the message of the Restoration through the Book of Mormon, shall be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and shall thereafter locate themselves in the quorums and wards and stakes where the Saints congregate. We frequently hear that when the ten tribes return they will bring their scriptures with them. This idea, though not found specifically in scripture, is generally inferred from Nephi’s prophecy: And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews. (2 Nephi 29:13) will they not bring their scriptures with them? Elder McConkie asked. Probably not; at least there is no such promise. Yes, we and they will have their scriptures; and those scriptures will tell of the visit of the Risen Lord among their forebears. How they shall be brought to light is not known. It may be in much the same way the Book of Mormon was revealed to the world. And once again it will be by or under the direction of the President of the Church, for he holds the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom and of the things that are sealed and hidden up. New Witness, p. 521. In summary, to those who argue that the ten tribes are presently together in one large body – totally organized and empowered as members of the Church – we might consider the following: 1. It is an established doctrine of the Church, one easily sustained by each of the standard works, that there was a universal apostasy after the mortal ministry of Christ. That such an apostasy embraced the ten tribes is evident in the Allegory of Zenos (Jacob 5:29-49). 2. It is an equally well-established doctrine that in the last days there would be a universal restoration of the gospel. That is, the gospel restored to the earth though the Prophet Joseph Smith is the gospel that is destined to go to those of every nation, kindred, tongue and people. There is no justification to suppose that every nations, kindred, tongue and people does not include the ten tribes. Indeed, if the ten tribes were together in a body in 1830 with their prophets, why the necessity of a Joseph Smith and the return of a host of ancient prophets with their keys and authority to him? Surely it all these things were already on the earth the Lord would not ignore them and start from scratch with some other people. 3. The keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north – a phrase which seems to mean, more generally, from their scattered condition – were given to the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Keys are the right of presidency, the directing power. They imply responsibility. How could the prophet claim to preside over a people and an event unknown to him? This would be akin to calling a man to preside over some foreign mission but (a) refusing to tell him where the mission was located or (b) allowing him any contact with the people. According to the analogy, all he would be afforded would be an invitation to the mission reunion. Truly, It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church. (D&C 42:11) DCBM, 4:104-107))

12 After this, ^aElias appeared, (The identity of Elias – whether he be Noah, Abraham himself, or a prophet named Elias from the days of Abraham – is not clearly known. Studies in Scripture, 1:425. Discussions about the identity and mission of Elias demand attention and a careful reading of the texts involved. Two doctrines and a number of prophets are involved. First, Elias is a title properly given to a

prophet whose office or calling is that of a forerunner, that is, one who prepares the way for something greater. The Aaronic Priesthood, for instance, could be called the Priesthood of Elias because it is a preparatory priesthood. It prepares the way for that which is greater (JST Matthew 17:11, 13). Second, there is a doctrine of Elias that pertains to restoration rather than preparation (JST Matthew 17:9-10). Scripture speaks of John the Baptist as an Elias of preparation (Luke 1:16-17; JST John 1:21-22) and Christ as an Elias of restoration (JST John 1:26-28). The name Elias can also be a title for those prophets who play a part in the restoration of all things. For instance, John the Revelator is referred to as Elias in section 77 (vv. 9 and 14); in the present text another prophet is identified as an Elias restoring keys from the dispensation of Abraham. In section 27 we are told that Gabriel (whom the Prophet Joseph Smith identified as Noah) holds the keys of the restoration of all things (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 157; D&C 27:5-6). The identity of the Elias in the present text is not entirely certain. It could have been Abraham himself or Melchizedek, either of whom could have restored keys from that dispensation. **It is frequently said that it was Noah**, because he is identified as an Elias in Doctrine and Covenants 27:5-6. This, however, seems unlikely, as Noah's life did not overlap that of Abraham (Bible Dictionary, 636). It is something of a strain on the order of heaven to suppose that Noah would restore the keys of a dispensation in which he did not live. Further, the text from which this conclusion is made identifies Noah as holding the keys of the restoration of all things. This seems to mean that all the Eliases who came to restore keys in this dispensation (or in the meridian of time) did so under Noah's direction, not that he restored all the keys (McConkie, Millennial Messiah, 103-4, 115-21; McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 219-22). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 891-92. Joseph Fielding Smith: Elias came and restored the gospel of Abraham. Who was Elias? Well, Elias was Noah, who came and restored his keys. "The priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed, as in Gen. 1:26, 27, 28. He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel; he stands next in authority to Adam in the priesthood; he is called of God to this office, and was the father of all living in his day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held keys first on earth, and then, in heaven." [HC 3:385-86.] It was Gabriel who appeared to Zacharias and promised him a son, and who appeared to Mary and announced the coming of the Son of God as recorded by Luke. It was also Gabriel as an Elias who is mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 27, verse 7, and was Gabriel or Noah, who stands next to Michael or Adam in the priesthood. (CR, April 1960, p. 72.) and committed the ^bdispensation of the ^cgospel of Abraham, (The gospel of Abraham is that power and authority distinctive to Abraham and the covenant that God made with him. A "dispensation" of that gospel is the giving of it anew, or its restoration to those willing to enter into a like covenant. Thus all promises made to Abraham relative to his seed—the endless continuation of his family and his eternal relationship with his wife Sarah—are granted to all who receive that same gospel. The keys to perform the ordinances were restored by the Elias spoken of in this verse; the keys to seal this and all gospel ordinances were restored by Elijah. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 892) saying that in us and our seed all ^dgenerations after us should be ^eblessed.

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

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

15 To ^aturn the ^bhearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse— (Precisely on the day that Elijah's appearance took place, Jews throughout the world were engaged in the celebration of the Passover, the annual commemoration of the day over three thousand years before when the angel of death had passed over the firstborn of Israel whose dwellings were marked by the blood of lambs. Since the time of Malachi—from about 500 B.C.—Jews world-wide waited with anxious anticipation for the coming of Elijah. Alfred Edersheim has written: "Hence to

this day, in every Jewish home [which formally celebrates the Paschal feast], at a certain part of the Paschal service—just after the 'third cup,' or the 'cup of blessing,' has been drunk—the door is opened to admit Elijah the prophet." Elijah did come, but not to Jewish homes. He came rather to the house of the Lord, and to his legal administrators; there he bestowed priesthood keys of inestimable worth and eternal import. Studies in Scripture, 1:427)

16 Therefore, the ^akeys of this ^bdispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful ^cday of the Lord is near, even at the doors. (Three months before his death, Joseph Smith instructed the Latter-day Saints concerning the mission of Elijah: "The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is that ye have power to hold the key of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth."

Elijah restored the keys whereby individuals and families may (through the blessings of the holy temple) develop line upon line to the point where they receive the "fulness of the priesthood," and thus become kings and priests, queens and priestesses unto God in the patriarchal order. "Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood," Joseph had taught earlier, "are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings." 32 Through the powers delivered by Elias (via the marriage discipline of the Fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) eternal family units—here and hereafter—are created. Through the powers delivered by Elijah, families may be sealed unto eternal life, inasmuch as "the power of Elijah is sufficient to make our calling and election sure." Studies in Scripture, 1:428)

Oliver Cowdery's account:

JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY

Footnote

*Oliver Cowdery describes these events thus: "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, 'Interpreters,' the history or record called 'The Book of Mormon.'

"To notice, in even few words, the interesting account given by Mormon and his faithful son, Moroni, of a people once beloved and favored of heaven, would supersede my present design; I shall therefore defer this to a future period, and, as I said in the introduction, pass more directly to some few incidents immediately connected with the rise of this Church, which may be entertaining to some thousands who have stepped forward, amid the frowns of bigots and the calumny of hypocrites, and embraced the Gospel of Christ.

"No men, in their sober senses, could translate and write the directions given to the Nephites from the mouth of the Savior, of the precise manner in which men should build up His Church, and especially when corruption had spread an uncertainty over all forms and systems practiced among men, without desiring a privilege of showing the willingness of the heart by being buried in the liquid grave, to answer a 'good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'

"After writing the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent, it was easy to be seen, as the prophet said it would be, that darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people. On reflecting further it was as easy to be seen that amid the great strife and noise concerning religion, none had authority from God to administer the ordinances of the Gospel. For the question might be asked, have men authority to administer in the name of Christ, who deny revelations, when His testimony is no less than the spirit of prophecy, and His religion based, built, and sustained by immediate revelations, in all ages of the world when He has had a people on earth? If

these facts were buried, and carefully concealed by men whose craft would have been in danger if once permitted to shine in the faces of men, they were no longer to us; and we only waited for the commandment to be given ‘Arise and be baptized.’

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

“But, dear brother, think, further think for a moment, what joy filled our hearts, and with what surprise we must have bowed, (for who would not have bowed the knee for such a blessing?) when we received under his hand the Holy Priesthood as he said, ‘Upon you my fellow-servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer this Priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon earth, that the Sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness!’

“I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit! Man may deceive his fellow-men, deception may follow deception, and the children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till naught but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave; but one touch with the finger of his love, yes, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity, strikes it all into insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind. The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel, the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me past description, and I shall ever look upon this expression of the Savior’s goodness with wonder and thanksgiving while I am permitted to tarry; and in those mansions where perfection dwells and sin never comes, I hope to adore in that day which shall never cease.”—*Messenger and Advocate*, vol. 1 (October 1834), pp. 14—16.

Our Heritage, Pages 11-14: **Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods**

When the angel Moroni first met with Joseph Smith on the Hill Cumorah in September 1823, he gave important instructions about the restoration of priesthood authority to the earth, including the following declaration: “When [the gold plates] are interpreted *the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some*, and they shall begin to proclaim this gospel and baptize by water, and after that they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands.” 10

In the spring of 1829, Joseph participated in the partial fulfillment of the angel's words. As he and Oliver Cowdery were translating the Book of Mormon, they found mention of baptism for the remission of sins. On 15 May they sought further knowledge on the subject from the Lord in prayer. While offering up their petition on the banks of the Susquehanna River, the two men were visited by a heavenly messenger. He identified himself as John the Baptist of New Testament times. Laying his hands on the heads of Joseph and Oliver, he said, "Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins" (**D&C 13:1**).

After this ordination, Joseph and Oliver baptized one another as commanded by John the Baptist and ordained each other to the Aaronic Priesthood. John told them that "this Aaronic Priesthood had not the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter."

He also said that "he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which Priesthood, he said, would in due time be conferred on us" (**JS—H 1:70, 72**; see also **JS—H 1:68–72**).

The Prophet said of this experience: "Immediately on our coming up out of the water after we had been baptized, we experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation" (**JS—H 1:73**).

Later, Peter, James, and John appeared to Joseph and Oliver and conferred upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood. They also bestowed the keys of God's kingdom upon them (see **D&C 27:12–13**; **D&C 128:20**). The Melchizedek Priesthood is the highest authority given to men on earth. With this authority, the Prophet Joseph Smith was able to organize the Church of Jesus Christ in this dispensation and begin to establish the various priesthood quorums as they are known in the Church today.