

Come Follow Me Lesson 50
December 6-12
Articles of Faith; Official Declaration 1 and 2

The Articles of Faith

In 1842 a newspaper editor named John Wentworth asked the Prophet Joseph Smith about the history and beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Prophet wrote a letter to him, explaining “the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-day Saints” (History of the Church, 4:535). He included thirteen short statements about some of the Church’s doctrines and beliefs. These statements became known as the Articles of Faith and were accepted as scripture during the October 1880 general conference (see “Introductory Note” to the Pearl of Great Price). Of the Articles of Faith, Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “They contain direct and simple statements of the principles of our religion, and they constitute strong evidence of the divine inspiration that rested upon the Prophet Joseph Smith. “I encourage each of you to study the Articles of Faith and the doctrines they teach. . . . If you will use them as a guide to direct your studies of the Savior’s doctrine, you will find yourself prepared to declare your witness of the restored, true Church of the Lord. You will be able to declare with conviction: ‘We believe these things’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 30; or Ensign, May 1998, 24).

“The Prophet [Joseph Smith] was occasionally called on to explain the teachings and practices of Mormonism to outsiders. . . . In the spring of 1842, John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, asked Joseph Smith to provide him with a sketch of ‘the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-Day Saints’ [‘Church History,’ *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 1, 1842, 706]. . . . Joseph complied with this request and sent Wentworth a multi-page document containing an account of many of the early events in the history of the Restoration, including the First Vision and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The document also contained thirteen statements outlining Latter-day Saint beliefs, which have come to be known as the Articles of Faith. . . . “In 1851 the Articles of Faith were included in the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price[, which was] published in the British Mission. After the Pearl of Great Price was revised in 1878 and canonized in 1880, the Articles of Faith became official doctrine of the Church” (*Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 256–57).

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve explained: “What a great blessing it would be if every member of the Church memorized the Articles of Faith and became knowledgeable about the principles contained in each. We would be better prepared to share the gospel with others. . . . “The Articles of Faith [declare] comprehensively and concisely the essential doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They contain direct and simple statements of the principles of our religion, and they constitute strong evidence of the divine inspiration that rested upon the Prophet Joseph Smith” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 28, 30; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 23–24).

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
History of the Church, Vol. 4, pp. 535—541

1 WE ^abelieve in ^bGod, the Eternal Father, and in His ^cSon, Jesus Christ, and in the ^dHoly Ghost.

2 We believe that men will be ^apunished for their ^bown sins, and not for Adam’s ^ctransgression.

3 We believe that through the ^aAtonement of Christ, all ^bmankind may be ^csaved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4 We believe that the first principles and ^aordinances of the Gospel are: first, ^bFaith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, ^cRepentance; third, ^dBaptism by ^eimmersion for the ^fremission of sins; fourth, Laying on of ^ghands for the ^hgift of the Holy Ghost.

5 We believe that a man must be ^acalled of God, by ^bprophecy, and by the laying on of ^chands by those who are in ^dauthority, to ^epreach the Gospel and administer in the ^fordinances thereof.

6 We believe in the same ^aorganization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, ^bprophets, ^cpastors, ^dteachers, ^eevangelists, and so forth.

7 We believe in the ^agift of ^btongues, ^cprophecy, ^drevelation, ^evisions, ^fhealing, ^ginterpretation of tongues, and so forth.

8 We believe the ^aBible to be the ^bword of God as far as it is translated ^ccorrectly; we also believe the ^dBook of Mormon to be the word of God.

9 We believe all that God has ^arevealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet ^breveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10 We believe in the literal ^agathering of Israel and in the restoration of the ^bTen Tribes; that ^cZion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will ^dreign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be ^erenewed and receive its ^fparadisiacal ^gglory.

11 We claim the ^aprivilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the ^bdictates of our own ^cconscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them ^dworship how, where, or what they may.

12 We believe in being ^asubject to ^bkings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in ^cobeying, honoring, and sustaining the ^dlaw.

13 ^aWe believe in being ^bhonest, true, ^cchaste, ^dbenevolent, virtuous, and in doing ^egood to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we ^fhope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to ^gendure all things. If there is anything ^hvirtuous, ⁱlovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

JOSEPH SMITH

Articles of Faith 1:1—The Godhead

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “In common with the rest of Christianity, we believe in a Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. However, we testify that these three members of the Godhead are three separate and distinct beings. We also testify that God the Father is not just a spirit but is a glorified person with a tangible body, as is his resurrected Son, Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 112; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 84; see also D&C 130:22). Joseph Smith said: Everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organization of this earth, and relates to their dispensation of things to me on the earth; these personages, according to Abraham's record, are called God the first, the Creator; God the second, the Redeemer; and God the third, the witness or testator. (TPJS, 190.)

God the Father: 1. The Father is a Holy Man; He is Ahman, the Almighty Elohim. 2. Elohim is the Father of spirits. 3. The Father is the Creator. 4. The Father is the author of the plan of salvation.

Joseph Smith: If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by His power, was to make himself visible – I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form – like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with Him, as one man talks and communes with another. Oh how great the importance to make these things known unto all men so that they no longer worship gods of their own creating! It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another, and that He was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same

as Jesus Christ Himself did. The Father is a glorified, perfected, resurrected, exalted man who worked out his salvation by obedience to the same laws he has given to us so that we may do the same. King Follett Discourse, History of the Church, 6:305-6.

Jesus Christ: 1. He is the Firstborn. 2. He is the Creator. 3. He is the Promised Messiah. 4. He is the God of our Fathers. 5. He is the Son of God. 6. He is our Redeemer, Savior, Mediator, Intercessor, an Advocate. 7. He manifests and reveals the Father. 8. He is the Eternal Judge. 9. He is the Father.

The Holy Ghost. 1. He is a personage of spirit. 2. He is the Testator, Revelator, Comforter. 3. He uses the light of Christ in his ministry.

These three constitute the Godhead, and are one; the Father and the Son possessing the same mind, the same wisdom, glory, power and fullness of the mind, glory, and power; or, in other words, the spirit, glory, and power, of the Father, possessing all knowledge and glory, and the same kingdom, sitting at the right hand of power, in the express image and likeness of the Father, mediator for man, being filled with the fullness of the mind of the Father; or, in other words, the Spirit of the Father, which Spirit is shed forth upon all who believe on his name and keep his commandments. Lectures on Faith, 5:2.

Scriptures about three beings that make up the Godhead: Matt. 3:16-17; Matt. 17:1-8; Acts 7:55-56; 3 Nephi 11:7; JS-H 1:11-20.

Articles of Faith 1:2—The Fall of Adam and Eve

Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “Because of their transgression, Adam and Eve, having chosen to leave their state of innocence (see 2 Nephi 2:23–25), were banished [cast out] from the presence of God. This is referred to in Christendom as the Fall, or Adam’s transgression. It is a spiritual death because Adam and Eve were separated from the presence of God. . . . “All of their posterity were likewise banished from the presence of God (see 2 Nephi 2:22–26). However, the posterity of Adam and Eve were innocent of the original sin [partaking of the forbidden fruit] because they had no part in it. It was therefore unfair for all of humanity to suffer eternally for the transgressions of our first parents, Adam and Eve. It became necessary to settle this injustice; hence the need for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus in His role as the Savior and Redeemer” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 13–14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 12; see also Deuteronomy 24:16).

The three greatest events that ever have occurred or ever will occur in all eternity are these: 1. The creation of the heavens and the earth, of man, and of all forms of life. 2. The fall on man, of all forms of life, and of the earth itself from their primeval and paradisiacal state to their present mortal state; and 3. The infinite and eternal atonement, which ransoms man, all living things, and the earth also from their fallen state so that the salvation of the earth and of all living things may be completed. These three divine events – the three pillars of eternity – are inseparably woven together into one grand tapestry known as the eternal plan of salvation. Had there been no fall, there could have been no atonement. And if the earth and man and all living things had not been created in their physical and paradisiacal state, in a state of deathlessness, there could have been no fall. Bruce R. McConkie, *A Witness of the Articles of Faith*, 81.

Genesis 2, 3, 4 and Moses 3, 4.

From the Bible Dictionary we read:

Fall of Adam and Eve

The process by which mankind became mortal on this earth. The event is recorded in [Gen. 2–4](#) and [Moses 3–4](#). The Fall of Adam and Eve is one of the most important occurrences in the history of man. Before the Fall, there were no sin, no death, and no children. With the eating of the “forbidden fruit,” Adam and Eve became mortal, sin entered, and death became a part of life. Adam became the “first flesh” upon the earth ([Moses 3:7](#)), meaning that he and Eve were the first to become mortal. After Adam fell, the whole creation fell and became mortal. Adam’s Fall brought both physical and spiritual death into the world upon all mankind ([Hel. 14:16–17](#)).

The Fall was no surprise to the Lord. It was a necessary step in the progress of man, and provisions for a Savior had been made even before the Fall had occurred. Jesus Christ came to atone for the Fall of Adam and also for man’s individual sins.

Latter-day revelation supports the biblical account of the Fall, showing that it was a historical event that literally occurred in the history of man. Many points in latter-day revelation are also clarified that are not discernible from the Bible. Among other things it makes clear that the Fall is a blessing and that Adam and Eve should be honored in their station as the first parents of the earth. Significant references are [2 Ne. 2:15–26](#); [9:6–21](#); [Mosiah 3:11–16](#); [Alma 22:12–14](#); [42:2–15](#); [D&C 29:34–44](#); [Moses 5:9–13](#). See also [Flesh](#).

Articles of Faith 1:3—The Atonement of Jesus Christ

Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught: “Our Savior has redeemed us from the sin of Adam, but what about the effects of our own sins? Since ‘all have sinned’ (Romans 3:23), we are all spiritually dead. Again, our only hope for life is our Savior, who, the prophet Lehi taught, ‘offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law’ (2 Nephi 2:7). “In order to lay claim upon our Savior’s life-giving triumph over the spiritual death we suffer because of our own sins, we must follow the conditions he has prescribed. . . . “Our third article of faith describes the Savior’s conditions” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 77; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 65; see also D&C 19:16–19).

From the Bible Dictionary we read:

Atonement

The word describes the setting “at one” of those who have been estranged and denotes the reconciliation of man to God. Sin is the cause of the estrangement, and therefore the purpose of atonement is to correct or overcome the consequences of sin. From the time of Adam to the death of Jesus Christ, true believers were instructed to offer animal sacrifices to the Lord. These sacrifices were symbolic of the forthcoming death of Jesus Christ and were done by faith in Him ([Moses 5:5–8](#)).

Jesus Christ, as the Only Begotten Son of God and the only sinless person to live on this earth, was the only one capable of making an atonement for mankind. By His selection and foreordination in the Grand Council before the world was formed, His divine Sonship, His sinless life, the shedding of His blood in the garden of Gethsemane, His death on the cross and subsequent bodily resurrection from the grave, He made a perfect atonement for all mankind. All are covered unconditionally as pertaining to the Fall of Adam. Hence, all shall rise from the dead with immortal bodies because of Jesus’ Atonement. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” ([1 Cor. 15:22](#)), and all little children are innocent at birth. The Atonement is conditional, however, so far as each person’s individual sins are concerned, and touches every one to the degree that he has faith in Jesus Christ, repents of his sins, and obeys the gospel. The services of the Day of Atonement foreshadowed the atoning work of Christ ([Lev. 4:23:26–](#)

32; Heb. 9). The scriptures point out that no law, ordinance, or sacrifice would be satisfactory if it were not for the Atonement of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:1–9; 2 Ne. 9:5–24; Mosiah 13:27–32).

Sin is lawlessness (1 Jn. 3:4); it is a refusal on men’s part to submit to the law of God (Rom. 8:7). By transgression man loses control over his own will and becomes the slave of sin (Rom. 7:14) and so incurs the penalty of spiritual death, which is alienation from God (Rom. 6:23). The Atonement of Jesus Christ redeems all mankind from the Fall of Adam and causes all to be answerable for their own manner of life. This means of atonement is provided by the Father (John 3:16–17) and is offered in the life and person of His Son, Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:19). See also [Fasts](#); [Sacrifices](#).

Articles of Faith 1:4—“The First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel”

Elder Howard W. Hunter, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “These four [principles and ordinances of Articles of Faith 1:4] are only the first of all the principles and ordinances of the gospel. Returning to the words of the Savior to the Nephites, we learn that after complying with these four, there must be a lifetime of compliance with the laws and commandments of the Lord, for he said, ‘. . . and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.’ (3 Ne. 27:16.) “The first principles alone are not sufficient; man is thereafter accountable in the eternal judgment for what he has done in life, whether good or evil” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 175; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 120; see also 2 Nephi 31:10–15).

Articles of Faith 1:5—How Are We Called of God?

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “The right to nominate [members to callings within the Church] rests with the superior officer or officers at whatever the level. But that nomination must be sustained—that is, accepted and confirmed—by the membership of the Church. The procedure is peculiar to the Lord’s church. There is no seeking for office, no jockeying for position, no campaigning to promote one’s virtues. Contrast the Lord’s way with the way of the world. The Lord’s way is quiet; it is a way of peace; it is without fanfare or monetary costs. It is without egotism or vanity or ambition. Under the Lord’s plan, those who have responsibility to select officers are governed by one overriding question: ‘Whom would the Lord have?’ There is quiet and thoughtful deliberation. And there is much of prayer to receive the confirmation of the Holy Spirit that the choice is correct” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 73; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 53; see also Hebrews 5:4).

Articles of Faith 1:6—The Organization of the True Church

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims to the world that this church is a restoration of Christ’s church. A restoration was necessary because prophets and Apostles, who were the foundation of the Lord’s original church, were put to death or otherwise taken. The Church today is built on a foundation of prophets and Apostles, with Jesus Christ as its chief cornerstone. It is therefore not a reformation, a revision, a reorganization, or a mere sect. It is the Church of Jesus Christ restored in these latter days” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 7; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 7; see also Ephesians 4:11–14).

Articles of Faith 1:7—Gifts of the Spirit

Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught: “In a priesthood blessing a servant of the Lord exercises the priesthood, as moved upon by the Holy Ghost, to call upon the powers of heaven for the benefit of the person being blessed. Such blessings are conferred by holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which has the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the Church (D&C 107:18, 67). “There are many kinds of priesthood blessings. As I give various examples, please remember that priesthood blessings are available for all who need them, but they are only given on request. . . . “Persons desiring guidance in an important

decision can receive a priesthood blessing. Persons who need extra spiritual power to overcome a personal challenge can receive a blessing. Expectant mothers can be blessed before they give birth. Many LDS families remember a sacred occasion where a worthy father gave a priesthood blessing to a son or daughter who was about to be married. Priesthood blessings are often requested from fathers before children leave home for other purposes, such as school, service in the military, or a long trip. . . . “Blessings given in circumstances such as I have just described are sometimes called blessings of comfort or counsel. They are usually given by fathers or husbands or other elders in the family. They can be recorded and kept in family records for the personal spiritual guidance of the persons blessed” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 44; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 36; see also D&C 46:11–26).

Articles of Faith 1:8—How Can We Get the Most Power from the Scriptures?

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “I thank the Almighty for my testimony of the Book of Mormon, this wonderful companion to the Holy Bible. . . . The test of the book is in its reading. I speak as one who has read it again and again and tasted of its beauty and depth and power. Could Joseph Smith, I ask you, the young man reared in rural New York largely without schooling, have dictated in so short a time a volume so complex in its nature and yet so harmonious in its whole, with so large a cast of characters and so extensive in its scope? Could he of his own abilities have created the language, the thought, the moving inspiration that has caused millions over the earth to read and say, ‘It is true?’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 71; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 51–52; see also Ezekiel 37:15–17).

Articles of Faith 1:9—We Believe in Continuous Revelation

Elder David B. Haight said: “A distinguishing feature of the Church is the claim to continuous revelation from the Lord. . . . Today, the Lord’s Church is guided by the same relationship with Deity that existed in previous dispensations. “This claim is not made lightly. I know there is revelation, as I am a witness to sacred things also experienced by others who administer His work. “The principle of revelation by the Holy Ghost is a fundamental principle of the Lord’s Church. Prophets of God receive revelation by this process. Individual members of the Church may also receive revelation to confirm truth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 7; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 7–8; see also Amos 3:7).

Articles of Faith 1:10—Christ Will Reign over Gathered Israel

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “Now, the gathering of Israel consists of joining the true church and their coming to a knowledge of the true God. . . . Any person, therefore, who has accepted the restored gospel, and who now seeks to worship the Lord in his own tongue and with the Saints in the nations where he lives, has complied with the law of the gathering of Israel and is heir to all of the blessings promised the Saints in these last days” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 439). Elder George Albert Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “God has said if we will honor Him and keep His commandments—if we will observe His laws He will fight our battles and destroy the wicked, . . . and this earth upon which we dwell, will be the celestial kingdom” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 49; see also D&C 45:64–71).

Articles of Faith 1:11—Religious Freedom

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “We believe in, sustain, uphold, support, and advocate freedom of worship for all men. And we are bold to declare that any government, political system, church, sect, cult, or group of worshippers that either denies men the freedom to worship as they choose or imposes on them a system or way of worship by force is not of God” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 657; see also Alma 21:22).

Articles of Faith 1:12—Obeying the Laws of the Land

Elder L. Tom Perry said: “All members of the Church should be committed to obeying and honoring the laws of the land in which they live. We should be exemplary in our obedience to the governments that govern us. The Church, to be of service to the nations of the world, must be a wholesome influence in the lives of individuals who embrace it, in temporal as well as spiritual affairs” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 86; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 71; see also D&C 134:1, 5).

Articles of Faith 1:13—How Can I Be Virtuous?

President Gordon B. Hinckley counseled: “We live in a time when the world considers virtue lightly. . . . “Be clean. Watch what you read. No good and much harm can come of reading pornographic magazines and other such literature. They will only stimulate within you thoughts that will weaken your discipline of yourself. No good will come of going to movies that are designed to take from you your money and give you in exchange only weakened wills and base desires” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 58–59; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 41; see also Philippians 4:8).

Official Declaration 1

(The first legislation in the United States against the practice of plural marriage came ten years after the doctrine was officially announced on 29 August 1852 by Elder Orson Pratt (see Historical Background for D&C 132). Stephen Harding, the non-Mormon governor of the Territory of Utah, was able to get Justin R. Morrill of Vermont to introduce a bill into Congress. The bill was signed into law 8 July 1862 by President Abraham Lincoln. The Anti-Polygamy Act of 1862 “defined plural marriage as bigamy, and made the contracting of such a marriage punishable by a fine of five hundred dollars and imprisonment for a term of five years” (Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, p. 432). This bill was the first of a flood of anti-Mormon legislation introduced during the next twenty-five years, most of which never passed (see Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 5:433–41, 610–11). In 1874 the Church decided to sponsor a case to test the validity of the law of 1862. George C. Bates, the United States Attorney for Utah, and George Q. Cannon were largely responsible for this idea. The leaders of the Church believed that the Supreme Court would rule the law unconstitutional since it infringed on the freedom of religion provision of the Constitution. George Reynolds was asked by the First Presidency to serve as the test case, and he furnished the evidence necessary to convict himself. On 5 May 1879 the Supreme Court ruled against Reynolds. They concluded that although religious liberty was protected by the First Amendment, the amendment did not give one the right to commit “immoral” or “criminal” acts sanctioned by religious doctrine. Once the constitutionality of the act of 1862 had been upheld by the highest court in the land, persecution of those who practiced plural marriage became more severe. In March 1882 Congress passed the Edmunds Bill. This law took away the right to vote from those who practiced plural marriage and made it illegal for them to hold any office or place of public trust (see Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, pp. 482–83). Five years later, in March 1887, Congress passed the Edmunds-Tucker Act. This law disincorporated the Church, dissolved the Perpetual Emigration Fund, gave the property of the Church to the government for the benefit of the common schools of Utah, and took away the right of Utah women to vote. During these trying times President John Taylor died in hiding on 25 July 1887, at Kaysville, Utah, and the mantle of leadership for the Church fell upon Wilford Woodruff. For at least a year prior to the Manifesto in 1890, President Wilford Woodruff had forbidden plural marriages to be performed in the Endowment House (see Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 3:193). This ban, however, was not publicized. President George Q. Cannon explained: “President Woodruff and others of us have been appealed to hundreds of times I might say. I can say for myself, that I have been appealed to many scores of times to get out something and to announce something. Some of our leading brethren have said: ‘Inasmuch as we have ceased to give permission for plural marriages to be solemnized, why cannot we have the benefit of that? Why

cannot we tell the world it so as to have the benefit of it? Our enemies are alleging constantly that we still practice this in secret, and that we are dishonest and guilty of evasion. Now, if we have really put a stop to granting permission to men to take more wives than one, why should not the world know it and we have the advantage of it?" These remarks have been made to us repeatedly. But at no time has the Spirit seemed to indicate that this should be done. We have waited for the Lord to move in the matter." (In *Millennial Star*, 24 Nov. 1890, p. 737.)

• **We should obey the laws of the nation in which we live. If those laws conflict with the laws of God, we should follow the counsel of the living prophet** (see Official Declaration 1; "President John Taylor," *Student Study Guide*, pp. 175–76, par. 13–14; "President Wilford Woodruff," *Student Study Guide*, p. 179, par. 8–10; see also Matthew 22:15–22; D&C 1:14, 38; 58:21–22; 90:3–5; Articles of Faith 1:12).

• **The Lord will never allow the President of the Church to lead its members astray** (see Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto, par. 1–2; see also D&C 64:38–39).

• **When enemies stop us from obeying one of God's commandments, the Lord accepts our efforts and may, through His living prophet, release us from that commandment** (see Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto, par. 3–9; see also Mosiah 5:5; D&C 56:3–4; 124:49).

(Through the years the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve have issued official documents for governing the Church or making announcements to the world. Generally, documents issued for governing the Church are called official declarations, whereas documents directed to the world are called proclamations. Two official declarations are included in the canonized scriptures of the Church. These declarations bear directly on key doctrines of the kingdom. A historical introduction explaining the circumstances that precipitated each document has been provided. Revelations of the Restoration, 1151)

(On 16 May 1843, in Ramus, Illinois, the Prophet Joseph Smith, said: "**Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory. . . . In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase**" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 300–301; D&C 131:1–4). On 12 July 1843, the Prophet dictated the revelation on the eternity of the marriage covenant, including plurality of wives, to his scribe William Clayton in Nauvoo. In addition to teaching the necessity of marriage for time and eternity as performed by the proper priesthood authority, this revelation announced the conditions under which the Lord permitted his servants to take plural wives. The keys to perform both eternal marriages and to authorize a plurality of wives had been given to Joseph Smith: "I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred" (D&C 132:7). Any ceremony to bind man and woman together beyond the period of mortal life or to give the right to take plural wives which is not

done under the direction of this authority will be of no efficacy or force when people are out of the world. "There is but one person on the earth at a time upon whom the keys of this sealing ordinance are conferred. That man is the Presiding High Priest, the President of the Church. He is the bearer of this authority, which he may exercise personally or he may commission others to exercise it under his jurisdiction, for such time, long or short, up to the end of his life, as he may desire. **"It was after the revelation of July, 1843, which provided that under certain conditions, which are clearly defined, a man may receive more than one woman to be his wife, that plural marriage became a recognized doctrine of the Church. Under this system family ties were established and relationships entered into which were held sacred and binding, not alone by those who accepted and entered into the order of plural marriage, but by all who had become members of the Church"** (Clark, *Messages*, 5:319). The years that followed witnessed ceaseless criticism of the Church and relentless persecution of those who had entered into the relationship of plural marriage. **Legislation regarding plural marriage was enacted by the Congress of the United States during the years 1862 to 1887 in three successive acts** known as the Morrill Act, the Edmunds Act, and the Edmunds-Tucker Act. **"Under the provisions of the Edmunds-Tucker law the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was disincorporated, the Perpetual Emigration Fund Company was dissolved, and all property belonging to the Church, with the exception of buildings used exclusively for religious worship, was escheated to the government. "Hundreds of men who had contracted plural marriages were heavily fined, and imprisoned. All persons who could not subscribe to a test oath which was provided especially for those who practiced or believed in the practice of plural marriage, were disfranchised. "It became obvious that no human power could prevent the disintegration of the Church, except upon a pledge by its members to obey the laws which had been enacted prohibiting the practice of polygamy"** (Clark, *Messages*, 5:320). It was under these circumstances that Wilford Woodruff, then the president of the Church, announced the Official Declaration to the Church and to the People of the United States, commonly referred to as the Manifesto. President Woodruff wrote in his journal: "I have arrived at a point in the history of my life as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where I am under the necessity of acting for the temporal salvation of the Church. . . . **and after praying to the Lord and feeling inspired, I have issued the following proclamation which is sustained by my counselors and the Twelve Apostles"** (Clark, *Messages*, 3:192). After reviewing the enactment of the law prohibiting the practice of plural marriage and the effects of its enforcement, President Woodruff, in this declaration, said: "Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the Court of last resort, I do hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use all my influence with the members of the church over which I preside to have them do likewise. . . . And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the laws of the land" (Clark, *Messages*, 3:193). The Manifesto was signed by President Woodruff as president of the Church. A motion in the October conference of that year called for the members of the Church to sustain what President Woodruff had done: **"I move that, recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the only man on the earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, we consider him fully authorized by virtue of his position to issue the manifesto which has been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 24th, 1890, and that as a Church in General Conference assembled, we accept his declaration concerning plural marriages as authoritative and binding"** (Clark, *Messages*, 3:195). The vote to sustain the motion was unanimous. Soon afterward, on 1 November 1891, President Woodruff provided additional understanding relative to the Manifesto: "I saw exactly what would come to pass if there was not something done. I have had this spirit upon me for a long time. But I want to say this: I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me to do what I did do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me

to write. I laid it before my brethren— such strong men as Brother George Q. Cannon, Brother Joseph F. Smith, and the Twelve Apostles. I might as well undertake to turn an army with banners out of its course as to turn them out of a course that they considered to be right. These men agreed with me, and ten thousand Latter-day Saints also agreed with me. Why? Because they were moved upon by the Spirit of God and by the revelations of Jesus Christ to do it" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 217). Revelations of the Restoration, 1151-54)

OFFICIAL DECLARATION—1

To Whom It May Concern:

Press dispatches having been sent for political purposes, from Salt Lake City, which have been widely published, to the effect that the Utah Commission, in their recent report to the Secretary of the Interior, allege that plural marriages are still being solemnized and that forty or more such marriages have been contracted in Utah since last June or during the past year, also that in public discourses the leaders of the Church have taught, encouraged and urged the continuance of the practice of polygamy— I, therefore, as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby, in the most solemn manner, declare that these charges are false. We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice, and I deny that either forty or any other number of plural marriages have during that period been solemnized in our Temples or in any other place in the Territory. One case has been reported, in which the parties allege that the marriage was performed in the Endowment House, in Salt Lake City, in the Spring of 1889, but I have not been able to learn who performed the ceremony; whatever was done in this matter was without my knowledge. In consequence of this alleged occurrence the Endowment House was, by my instructions, taken down without delay. Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise. There is nothing in my teachings to the Church or in those of my associates, during the time specified, which can be reasonably construed to inculcate or encourage polygamy; and when any Elder of the Church has used language which appeared to convey any such teaching, he has been promptly reproved. And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.

WILFORD WOODRUFF

President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Lorenzo Snow offered the following:

“I move that, recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the only man on the earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, we consider him fully authorized by virtue of his position to issue the Manifesto which has been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 24th, 1890, and that as a Church in General Conference assembled, we accept his declaration concerning plural marriages as authoritative and binding.”

The vote to sustain the foregoing motion was unanimous. Salt Lake City, Utah, October 6, 1890.

EXCERPTS FROM THREE ADDRESSES BY PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF REGARDING THE MANIFESTO

The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty. (Sixty-first Semiannual General Conference of the

Church, Monday, October 6, 1890, Salt Lake City, Utah. Reported in *Deseret Evening News*, October 11, 1890, p. 2.) It matters not who lives or who dies, or who is called to lead this Church, they have got to lead it by the inspiration of Almighty God. If they do not do it that way, they cannot do it at all. . . . I have had some revelations of late, and very important ones to me, and I will tell you what the Lord has said to me. Let me bring your minds to what is termed the manifesto. . . . The Lord has told me to ask the Latter-day Saints a question, and He also told me that if they would listen to what I said to them and answer the question put to them, by the Spirit and power of God, they would all answer alike, and they would all believe alike with regard to this matter. The question is this: Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue—to continue to attempt to practice plural marriage, with the laws of the nation against it and the opposition of sixty millions of people, and at the cost of the confiscation and loss of all the Temples, and the stopping of all the ordinances therein, both for the living and the dead, and the imprisonment of the First Presidency and Twelve and the heads of families in the Church, and the confiscation of personal property of the people (all of which of themselves would stop the practice); or, after doing and suffering what we have through our adherence to this principle to cease the practice and submit to the law, and through doing so leave the Prophets, Apostles and fathers at home, so that they can instruct the people and attend to the duties of the Church, and also leave the Temples in the hands of the Saints, so that they can attend to the ordinances of the Gospel, both for the living and the dead? **The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. If we had not stopped it, you would have had no use for . . . any of the men in this temple at Logan; for all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners. This trouble would have come upon the whole Church, and we should have been compelled to stop the practice.** Now, the question is, whether it should be stopped in this manner, or in the way the Lord has manifested to us, and leave our Prophets and Apostles and fathers free men, and the temples in the hands of the people, so that the dead may be redeemed. A large number has already been delivered from the prison house in the spirit world by this people, and shall the work go on or stop? This is the question I lay before the Latter-day Saints. You have to judge for yourselves. I want you to answer it for yourselves. I shall not answer it; but I say to you that that is exactly the condition we as a people would have been in had we not taken the course we have. . . . **I saw exactly what would come to pass if there was not something done. I have had this spirit upon me for a long time. But I want to say this: I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me to do what I did do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me to write. . . . I leave this with you, for you to contemplate and consider. The Lord is at work with us.** (Cache Stake Conference, Logan, Utah, Sunday, November 1, 1891. Reported in *Deseret Weekly*, November 14, 1891.) Now I will tell you what was manifested to me and what the Son of God performed in this thing. . . . All these things would have come to pass, as God Almighty lives, had not that Manifesto been given. Therefore, the Son of God felt disposed to have that thing presented to the Church and to the world for purposes in his own mind. The Lord had decreed the establishment of Zion. He had decreed the finishing of this temple. He had decreed that the salvation of the living and the dead should be given in these valleys of the mountains. And Almighty God decreed that the Devil should not thwart it. If you can understand that, that is a key to it. (From a discourse at the sixth session of the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple, April 1893. Typescript of Dedicatory Services, Archives, Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

On 24 September 1890 President Wilford Woodruff met with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his two counselors. On the twenty-fifth President Woodruff recorded: “I have arrived at a point in the history of my life as the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where I am under the necessity of acting for the temporal salvation of the church. The United

States government has taken a stand and passed laws to destroy the Latter-day Saints on the subject of polygamy, or patriarchal order of marriage; and after praying to the Lord and feeling inspired, I have issued the following proclamation which is sustained by my counselors and the twelve apostles. [The Manifesto follows.]” (In Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 3:192.)

General conference convened on 4 October 1890, and on the third day, 6 October, Lorenzo Snow, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, presented the Manifesto to the body of the Church. It was unanimously accepted. Some, however, claimed that President Woodruff gave in to pressure and that the Lord had not really revealed that plural marriage was to cease. The fact that this declaration did not specifically mention revelation as the reason for stopping the practice seemed to fuel the criticism. A year later at a quarterly conference held at Brigham City, Utah, President Woodruff made it clear why he had made the decision to stop the practice of plural marriage:

“I have had some revelations of late, and very important ones to me, and I will tell you what the Lord has said to me. Let me bring your minds to what is termed the manifesto. The Lord has told me by revelation that there are many members of the church throughout Zion who are sorely tried in their hearts because of that manifesto, and also because of the testimony of the Presidency of this Church and the apostles before the master in chancery. Since I received that revelation I have heard of many who are tried in these things, though I had not heard of any before that particularly. Now, the Lord has commanded me to do one thing, and I fulfilled that commandment at the conference at Brigham City last Sunday, and I will do the same here today. The Lord has told me to ask the Latter-day Saints a question, and he also told me that if they would listen to what I said to them and answer the question put to them by the Spirit and power of God, they would all answer alike, and they would all believe alike with regard to this matter.

“The question is this: Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue—to continue to attempt to practice plural marriage, with the laws of the nation against it and the opposition of sixty millions of people, and at the cost of the confiscation and loss of all the temples, and the stopping of all the ordinances therein, both for the living and the dead, and the imprisonment of the First Presidency and Twelve and the heads of families in the Church, and the confiscation of personal property of the people (all of which of themselves would stop the practice); or, after doing and suffering what we have through our adherence to this principle to cease the practice and submit to the law, and through doing so leave the prophets, apostles and fathers at home, so that they can instruct the people and attend to the duties of the Church, and also leave the temples in the hands of the Saints, so that they can attend to the ordinances of the gospel, both for the living and the dead?

“The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. If we had not stopped it, you would have had no use for Brother Merrill, for Brother Edlefsen, for Brother Roskelley, for Brother Leishman, or for any of the men in this temple at Logan; for all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners. This trouble would have come upon the whole Church, and we should have been compelled to stop the practice. Now, the question is, whether it should be stopped in this manner, or in the way the Lord has manifested to us, and leave our prophets and apostles and fathers free men, and the temples in the hands of the people, so that the dead may be redeemed? . . .

“I saw exactly what would come to pass if there was not something done. I have had this spirit upon me for a long time. But I want to say this: I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me

to do what I did do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me to write. I laid it before my brethren—such strong men as Brother George Q. Cannon, Brother Joseph F. Smith, and the Twelve Apostles. I might as well undertake to turn an army with banners out of its course as to turn them out of a course that they considered to be right. These men agreed with me, and ten thousand Latter-day Saints also agreed with me. . . . Why? Because they were moved upon by the Spirit of God and by the revelations of Jesus Christ to do it.” (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, pp. 214–16.)

Some in the Church continued to practice plural marriage outside the borders of the United States. Many moved to Mexico, for example, so they would not have to terminate their marriages. Some of these thought that new plural marriages could be performed outside of the United States. Finally, on 8 January 1900, President Lorenzo Snow, who had succeeded President Woodruff, stated: “The Church has positively abandoned the practice of polygamy, or the solemnization of plural marriages, in this and every other State, and . . . no member or officer thereof has any authority whatever to perform a plural marriage or enter into such a relation” (*Deseret Evening News*, 8 Jan. 1900, p. 4).

Others claimed that the Manifesto was issued only for good public relations and that Church leaders secretly supported the practice. In 1904 President Joseph F. Smith, successor to President Lorenzo Snow, made the following official declaration in general conference:

“Now I am going to present a matter to you that is unusual and I do it because of a conviction which I feel that it is a proper thing for me to do. I have taken the liberty of having written down what I wish to present, in order that I may say to you the exact words which I would like to have conveyed to your ears, that I may not be misunderstood or misquoted. I present this to the conference for your action:

“Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff, of September 26, 1890, commonly called the Manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff and adopted by the Church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriages violative of the law of the land; I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and “I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church and will be liable to be dealt with, according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom.” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1904, p. 75.)

In October 1905 the Church accepted the resignations of Elders Matthias Cowley and John W. Taylor, both of whom had performed plural marriages after the Manifesto, from the Quorum of the Twelve. Elder Cowley continued as a faithful member of the Church, while John W. Taylor was later excommunicated for taking another plural wife after his resignation.

In 1911 President Joseph F. Smith again emphasized the Church’s stand: “And another thing, as we have announced in previous conferences— as it was announced by President Woodruff, as it was announced by President Snow, and as it was reannounced by me and my brethren, and confirmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, plural marriages have ceased in the Church. There isn’t a man today in this Church, or anywhere else, outside of it who has authority to solemnize a plural marriage—not one! There is no man or woman in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who is authorized to contract a plural marriage. It is not permitted, and we have been endeavoring to the utmost of our ability

to prevent men from being led by some designing person into an unfortunate condition that is forbidden by the conferences, and by the voice of the Church, a condition that has to some extent at least, brought reproach upon the people.” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1911, p. 8.) Since then every President of the Church has reiterated this stand and declared the doctrine of the Church to be against the practice of plural marriage.

(The Challenge of Plural Marriage)

The nature of plural marriage, with the requirements which it imposed upon those who would engage in its successful practice, made it a great challenge: requiring purity of heart, true charity, and considerable wisdom and administrative ability, particularly for the men. One of Joseph Smith's plural wives reported that he "said that the practice of this principle would be the hardest trial the Saints would ever have to test their faith." The Prophet himself was extremely reluctant to begin the practice of plural marriage until commanded to by a heavenly messenger. Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, who joined the Church in 1830 and was a confidante of the Prophet in some of these matters, quoted him as saying that the angel came "three times between the years of [18]34 and [18]42." Joseph endeavored to reason with the heavenly being, stating that the Book of Mormon taught that to take plural wives was "an abomination in the eyes of the Lord, and they were to adhere to these things except the Lord speak." But the angel declared: "Thus saith the Lord, the time has now come that I will raise up seed unto me as I spoke by my servant Jacob, as is recorded in the Book of Mormon."

The Prophet's associates initially looked upon the doctrine of plural wives with a similar reaction. John Taylor recalled that "it was one of the greatest crosses that ever was taken up by any set of men since the world stood." "It was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time," Brigham Young declared. "When I saw a funeral, I felt to envy the corpse its situation, and to regret that I was not in the coffin." Likewise, when Heber C. Kimball heard the Prophet teach the doctrine of plural marriage, "he said the shock was similar to that of an earthquake." And when the latter-day Seer commanded Elder Kimball "to take another wife, if it had been his death sentence he could not have felt worse."

It was only after Elder Kimball was directed three times to practice plural marriage, then commanded in the name of the Lord, that he obeyed. Having married Sarah Noon, an English convert, he wrote to his wife, Vilate, October 23, 1842, while on a mission in the southern part of Illinois: "My heart aches for you, and sometimes I can hardly speak without weeping and that before my brethren; for I have a broken heart and my head is a fountain of tears." Two days later he again wrote:

My feelings are of that kind that it makes me sick at heart, so that I have no appetite to eat. My temptations are so severe it seems sometimes as though I should have to lay down and die, I feel as if I must sink beneath it. I go into the woods every chance I have, and pour out my soul before God that he would deliver me and bless you my dear wife, and the first I would know I would be in tears weeping like a child about you and the situation that I am in; but what can I do but go ahead? My dear Vilate do not let it cast you down for the Lord is on our side; this I know from what I see and realize and I marvel at it many times. You are tried and tempted and I am sorry for you, for I know how to pity you. I can say that I never suffered more in all my life than since these things came to pass; and as I have said, so say I again, I have felt as if I should sink and die. Oh my God! I ask thee in the name of Jesus to bless my dear Vilate and comfort her heart and deliver her from temptation, and from all sorrow and open her eyes and let her see things as they are.

The introduction of [plural](#) marriage was a severe test in four major ways: First, there was the challenge of overcoming the force of tradition. To Lorenzo Snow, the Prophet "described the repugnance of his feelings, the natural result of the force of education and social custom, relative to the introduction of [plural](#) marriage." The idea of proposing marriage to a woman when he already had a wife was to John Taylor "a thing calculated to stir up feelings from the inmost depth of the human soul." Eliza R. Snow said: "It seemed as though all the prejudice of my ancestors for generations past congregated around me."

Second, there was the challenge of engaging in the new practice with pure motives, on the basis of principle rather than passion. The Prophet reportedly declared that the new principle "would cause the damnation of all who entered into it with *impure* motives, and none who acted unrighteously could stand, the trial would be so great." It "would damn more than it would save, because it was a holy principle that could not be trifled with."

Third, there was the challenge of practicing the new marital order in the setting of the pure love of Christ. Only then could it be practiced with success and become a refining and maturing influence in the lives of those who engaged in it. Of an interview with an inquirer from the East, Helen Mar Whitney wrote:

I did not try to conceal the fact of its having been a trial, but confessed that it had been one of the severest of my life; but that it had also proven one of the greatest of blessings. I could truly say it had done the most towards making me a Saint and a free woman, in every sense of the word; and I knew many others who could say the same, and to whom it had proven one of the greatest boons—a "blessing in disguise."

Finally, the practice of [plural](#) marriage presented an administrative challenge, particularly for the men. "Those who think that men have no trials in the [plural](#) order of marriage are greatly deceived," one who was involved in the practice all her mature life wrote. "The wives have far greater liberty than the husband, and they have the power to make him happy or very unhappy." Helen Mar Whitney observed:

For this cause, among others, there are not many men who are willing to take upon themselves these extra burdens and responsibilities, even for the sake of a higher glory hereafter. It certainly takes considerable religion and faith to stimulate a man who loves a quiet, easy-going life, to take up this cross, even with the hope of a future crown.

The Spirit of Obedience

Despite the challenges which confronted the Saints, those who were commanded by revelation to practice [plural](#) marriage were given the spirit of obedience through the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Not a spirit of lust, but of enlightenment prompted faithful individuals to obey the will of the Lord. Of his own experience, George Q. Cannon said:

When I had taken one wife, after I had returned from one of my missions, a spirit rested upon me that I could not resist; I felt that I should be damned if I refused or neglected to obey that law of God. It was not prompted by any improper feeling; it was not prompted by a feeling of lust, or a desire for women; but it was an overpowering anxiety to obey the commandments of God. . . . I have done that which I conscientiously believe to be the will of God; and I believe the majority of my brethren and sisters have done the same, have obeyed the principle in the same way.

The fact that a person had to be born of the Holy Spirit to *see* the kingdom of God was particularly true in order for him to see and accept the principle of [plural](#) marriage in its true light. Hyrum [Smith](#) confided to a friend that he fought that "principle until the Lord showed him it was true." Having reported that the Prophet taught Parley P. Pratt "the principle and told him his privilege," Vilate Kimball wrote to her husband, Heber, in a letter from Nauvoo, Illinois: "Sister Pratt told me that she had been railing against these things until a few days past; she said the Lord had shown her that it was all right, and wants Parley to go ahead."

Bishop Newel K. Whitney had a similar experience. He "was not a man that readily accepted of every doctrine, and would question the Prophet very closely upon principles if not made clear to his understanding." Like several others, he "was doubtful concerning the righteousness of this celestial order." So the Prophet "told him to go and inquire of the Lord concerning it, and he should receive a testimony for himself." Thereupon the Bishop and his wife "retired together and unitedly besought the Lord for a testimony whether or not this principle was from Him; and they ever after bore testimony that they received a manifestation and that it was so powerful they could not mistake it." "The Lord . . . revealed unto us His power and glory," Mrs. Whitney said. "We were seemingly wrapt in a heavenly vision, a halo of light encircled us." They never doubted thereafter. And they willingly gave Joseph [Smith](#) their daughter, Sarah Ann, as a [plural](#) wife, Bishop Whitney performing the ceremony, "which was the strongest proof that they could possibly give of their faith and confidence in him as a true Prophet of God."

When some leading members of the Twelve returned from a mission to England in the spring of 1841, Joseph [Smith](#) began immediately to instruct them in the order of celestial and [plural](#) marriage. Brigham Young later recalled that while he was in England, the Lord manifested to him "by visions and his Spirit" some things pertaining to the divine order of marriage. But he kept these things to himself until the Prophet talked with him and others upon his return home. "I saw that he was after something by his conversation," President Young explained, "leading my mind along, and others, to see how we could bear this." Finally, he continued, "I told Joseph what I understood, which was right in front of my house in the street, as he was shaking hands and leaving me." The Prophet turned and looked his trusted follower in the eyes and said, "Brother Brigham, are you speaking what you understand,—are you in earnest?" Elder Young replied, "I speak just as the Spirit manifests to me." Joseph then exclaimed: "God bless you, the Lord has opened your mind."

Other reports also reveal the spiritual witness which was given of the new law, when the Saints met the challenge to obey the Prophet's counsel. Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner related her introduction to the law of [plural](#) marriage to the appearance of the angel who directed Joseph [Smith](#) to begin its practice. In a signed statement, she reported that the angel promised him that she "should have a witness" of the divine nature and origin of [plural](#) marriage. She then said:

And an angel came to me, it went through me like lightning. I was afraid. Joseph said he came with more revelation and knowledge than Joseph ever dare[d] reveal.

In a more detailed explanation, she said of the Prophet:

I talked with him for a long time, and finally I told him I would never be sealed to him until I had a witness. . . .

"Well," said he, "pray earnestly, for the angel said to me you should have a witness." . . .

I made it a subject of prayer, . . . and if ever a poor mortal prayed, I did.

A few nights after that an angel of the Lord came to me and if ever a thrill went through a mortal, it went through me. I gazed upon the clothes and figure, but the eyes were like lightning. They pierced me from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. I was frightened almost to death for a moment. I tried to waken my aunt, but I could not. The angel leaned over me and the light was very great although it was night. When my aunt woke up, she said she had seen a figure in white robes pass from our bed to my mother's bed and pass out of the window.

Joseph came up the next Sabbath. He said, "Have you had a witness yet?"

"No."

"Well," said he, "the angel expressly told me you should have."

Said I, "I have not had a witness, but I have seen something I have never seen before. I saw an angel, and I was frightened almost to death. I did not speak."

He studied a while and put his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands. He looked up and said, "How could you have been such a coward?"

Said I, "I was weak."

"Did you think to say, 'Father, help me?'"

"No."

"Well, if you had just said that your mouth would have been opened, for that was an angel of the living God. He came to you with more knowledge, intelligence and light than I ever dared to reveal."

Having obtained an interview with Lucy Walker, Joseph [Smith](#) said: "I have been commanded of God to take another wife, and you are the woman." While she was still struggling with her feelings at the announcement, he explained: "If you pray sincerely for light and understanding . . . you shall receive a testimony of the correctness of this principle." This she finally received.

It was near dawn of another sleepless night when my room was lighted up by a heavenly influence. To me it was, in comparison, like the brilliant sun bursting through the darkest cloud. My soul was filled with a calm, sweet peace that "I never knew." Supreme happiness took possession of me, and I received a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truth of [plural](#) marriage, which has been like an anchor to the soul through all the trials of life. I felt that I must go out into the morning air and give vent to the joy and gratitude that filled my soul. As I descended the stairs, President [Smith](#) opened the door below, took me by the hand and said: "Thank God, you have the testimony. I too have prayed." He led me to the chair, placed his hands upon my head, and blessed me with every blessing my heart could possibly desire.

Finally, Benjamin F. Johnson gave a similar testimony. When Joseph [Smith](#) informed him that he was "required to take other wives" and desired him to ask his sister, Almira, to be one of them, Elder

Johnson exclaimed, "But how can I teach my sister what I myself do not understand, or show her what I do not myself see?"

"When you open your mouth to talk to your sister," the Prophet promised, "light will come to you and your mouth will be full and your tongue loose."

The promise was abundantly fulfilled. "When with great hesitation and stammering I called my sister to a private audience, and stood before her shaking with fear," Elder Johnson testified; "just as soon as I found power to open my mouth, it was filled, for the light of the Lord shone upon my understanding, and the subject that had seemed to [be] dark now appeared of all subjects pertaining to our gospel the most lucid and plain; and so my sister and myself were converted together."

Reasons for plural marriage:

1. Raising up seed unto Christ.
2. Fulfilling God's promises to Abraham
3. Providing tabernacles for noble spirits
4. Reforming society morally and spiritually

Official Declaration 2

One principle that sets Latter-day Saints apart from every other religion is that we believe in modern revelation. Without it: What would we know about the Godhead? How would we know who was to be the President of the Church or the bishop of a ward? As the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob taught, “No man knoweth of [God’s] ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, . . . despise not the revelations of God” (Jacob 4:8). As you study Official Declaration 2, ponder the great blessing that this important revelation is to Church members throughout the world.

(On Thursday, 1 June 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball, while meeting with his counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve in the Salt Lake Temple, indicated that for months he had been giving prayerful consideration to the matter of conferring the priesthood upon those of all races and that he felt the need for divine guidance. He explained that he had spent many hours in the upper room in the temple pleading with the Lord for counsel and direction. He indicated his hope that the Lord would give a revelation and resolve the matter. He further stated that if it was the mind and will of the Lord that the Church continue in the present course, he was willing to sustain and support that decision and defend it to the death. He said he hoped for a clear affirmation so there would be no question in anyone's mind. All present were invited to express their views on the matter, which they did. A strong spirit of unity existed. At the conclusion of this discussion, President Kimball asked his counselors in the presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve to join with him in prayer. President Kimball then importuned the Lord with great fervor and faith. The prayer offered by President Kimball was dictated by the Holy Ghost. "On this occasion," recalled one of those who was present, "because of the importuning and the faith, and because the hour and the time had arrived the Lord in his providences poured out the Holy Ghost upon the First Presidency and the Twelve in a miraculous and marvelous manner, beyond anything that any then present had ever experienced. The revelation came to the President of the Church; it also came to each individual present. There were ten members of the Council of the Twelve and three of the First Presidency there assembled. The result was that President Kimball knew, and each one of us knew, independent of any other person, by direct and personal revelation to us, that the time had now come to extend the gospel and all its blessings and all its obligations, including the priesthood and the blessings of the house of the Lord, to those of every nation, culture, and race, including the black race. There was no question whatsoever as to what happened or as to the word and message that came" (McConkie, *Sermons and Writings*, 166-67). In what is perhaps the most perfect illustration of the law of witnesses in this dispensation, the marvelous outpouring of the Holy Ghost—described by some present as "cloven tongues of fire"—fell upon the prophet who stood at the head of the Church and twelve other prophets, seers, and revelators. When he ceased to pray, there was a great Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit such as none of those present had ever before experienced. The experience cannot be confined to words. It was something that could only be felt in the hearts of the recipients and which can only be understood by the power of the Spirit. The announcement was carried in the *Deseret News* of Friday, 9 June 1978, without editorial comment.

Following is the letter that appeared over the signature of the First Presidency:

"June 8, 1978

"To all general and local priesthood officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world:

"Dear Brethren:

"As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that people of many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, and have joined the Church in ever-increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords. "Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in

God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance. "He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows there from, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness. "We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel.

"Sincerely Yours,
"Spencer W. Kimball
"N. Eldon Tanner
"Marion G. Romney
"The First Presidency"

("LDS Church Extends Priesthood to All Worthy Members," Tanner, "Revelation on the Priesthood," 16). This letter was read in the October general conference of that year, and the vote to "accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord" was unanimous in the affirmative. Revelations of the Restoration, 1154-56)

OFFICIAL DECLARATION—2

To Whom It May Concern:

On September 30, 1978, at the 148th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the following was presented by President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church:

In early June of this year, the First Presidency announced that a revelation had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church. President Kimball has asked that I advise the conference that after he had received this revelation, which came to him after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple, he presented it to his counselors, who accepted it and approved it. It was then presented to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who unanimously approved it, and was subsequently presented to all other General Authorities, who likewise approved it unanimously.

President Kimball has asked that I now read this letter:

June 8, 1978

To all general and local priesthood officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world:

Dear Brethren:

As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that

people of many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, and have joined the Church in ever-increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel.

Sincerely yours,

SPENCER W. KIMBALL
N. ELDON TANNER
MARION G. ROMNEY

The First Presidency

Recognizing Spencer W. Kimball as the prophet, seer, and revelator, and president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is proposed that we as a constituent assembly accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord. All in favor please signify by raising your right hand. Any opposed by the same sign.

The vote to sustain the foregoing motion was unanimous in the affirmative.

Salt Lake City, Utah, September 30, 1978.

(On Thursday, 1 June 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball, while meeting with his counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve in the Salt Lake Temple, indicated that for months he had been giving prayerful consideration to the matter of conferring the priesthood upon those of all races and that he felt the need for divine guidance. He explained that he had spent many hours in the upper room in the temple pleading with the Lord for counsel and direction. He indicated his hope that the Lord would give a revelation and resolve the matter. He further stated that if it was the mind and will of the Lord that the Church continue in the present course, he was willing to sustain and support that decision and defend it to the death. He said he hoped for a clear affirmation so there would be no question in anyone's mind. All present were invited to express their views on the matter, which they did. A strong spirit of unity existed. At the conclusion of this discussion, President Kimball asked his counselors in the presidency

and the Quorum of the Twelve to join with him in prayer. President Kimball then importuned the Lord with great fervor and faith. The prayer offered by President Kimball was dictated by the Holy Ghost. "On this occasion," recalled one of those who was present, "because of the importuning and the faith, and because the hour and the time had arrived the Lord in his providences poured out the Holy Ghost upon the First Presidency and the Twelve in a miraculous and marvelous manner, beyond anything that any then present had ever experienced. The revelation came to the President of the Church; it also came to each individual present. There were ten members of the Council of the Twelve and three of the First Presidency there assembled. The result was that President Kimball knew, and each one of us knew, independent of any other person, by direct and personal revelation to us, that the time had now come to extend the gospel and all its blessings and all its obligations, including the priesthood and the blessings of the house of the Lord, to those of every nation, culture, and race, including the black race. There was no question whatsoever as to what happened or as to the word and message that came" (McConkie, *Sermons and Writings*, 166-67). In what is perhaps the most perfect illustration of the law of witnesses in this dispensation, the marvelous outpouring of the Holy Ghost—described by some present as "cloven tongues of fire"—fell upon the prophet who stood at the head of the Church and twelve other prophets, seers, and revelators. When he ceased to pray, there was a great Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit such as none of those present had ever before experienced. The experience cannot be confined to words. It was something that could only be felt in the hearts of the recipients and which can only be understood by the power of the Spirit. The announcement was carried in the *Deseret News* of Friday, 9 June 1878, without editorial comment. *Revelations of the Restoration*, p. 1154-55)

The history of black membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can be divided between the era from 1830 to June 1878 and the period since then.

HISTORY. Though few in number, blacks have been attracted to the Church since its organization. Early converts (such as Elijah Abel) joined during the 1830s; others (such as Jane Manning James) joined after the Saints moved to Illinois. Among those who came to Utah as pioneers were Green Flake, who drove Brigham Young's wagon into the Salt Lake Valley, and Samuel Chambers, who joined in Virginia as a slave and went west after being freed. Throughout the twentieth century, small numbers of blacks continued to join the Church, such as the Sargent family of Carolina County, Virginia, who joined in 1906; Len and Mary Hope, who joined in Alabama during the 1920s; Ruffin Bridgeforth, a railroad worker in Utah, converted in 1953; and Helvecio Martins, a black Brazilian businessman, baptized in 1972 (he became a general authority in 1990). These members remained committed to their testimonies and Church activities even though during this period prior to 1878 black members could not hold the priesthood or participate in temple ordinances.

The reasons for these restrictions have not been revealed. Church leaders and members have explained them in different ways over time. Although several blacks were ordained to the priesthood in the 1830s, there is no evidence that Joseph Smith authorized new ordinations in the 1840s, and between 1847 and 1852 Church leaders maintained that blacks should be denied the priesthood because of their lineage. According to the book of Abraham (now part of the Pearl of Great Price), the descendants of Cain were to be denied the priesthood of God (Abr. 1:23-26). Some Latter-day Saints theorized that blacks would be restricted throughout mortality. As early as 1852, however, Brigham Young said that the "time will come when they will have the privilege of all we have the privilege of and more" (Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives, Feb. 5, 1852), and increasingly in the 1960s, Presidents of the Church taught that denial of entry to the priesthood was a current commandment of God, but would not prevent blacks from eventually possessing all eternal blessings. Daniel H. Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, "Blacks," 125.

Question: "Since the government has adopted a non-segregation policy, how can the Church maintain a doctrine of segregation which denies Negroes the right to hold the priesthood?"

Answer: During the past decade there has arisen in this country, the United States, a wave of "non-segregation," that is, that there should be an equality in all things between the white races and the black or Negro race. This doctrine of social equality and the common mingling of these races is said to be made for the purpose of eventually eliminating the Negro race by absorption through intermarriage. This matter of amalgamation to a great degree has been enforced by the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. This tendency for "equality" in all things, has brought a flood of correspondence from all parts of the Church asking how it is that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands out in opposition and teaches a doctrine of segregation denying the Negro the right to hold the priesthood. Some of these letters border on a spirit of resentment and claim that the Church is guilty of a great injustice, since "all men were created free and equal." This answer is written to place us in the right light before the members.

No church or other organization is more insistent than The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that the Negroes should receive all the rights and privileges that can possibly be given to any other in the true sense of equality as declared in the *Declaration of Independence*. They should be equal to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." They should be equal in the matter of education. They should not be barred from obtaining knowledge and becoming proficient in any field of science, art or mechanical occupation. They should be free to choose any kind of employment, to go into business in any field they may choose and to make their lives as happy as it is possible without interference from white men, labor unions or from any other source. In their defense of these privileges the members of the Church will stand.

NEGROES MAY ENJOY CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

In the matter of religion they also may choose any faith they please. The Church does not bar them from membership, and we have members of the Negro race in the Church. If a Negro is baptized and remains true and loyal, he will enter the celestial kingdom, but it is not the authorities of the Church who have placed a restriction on him regarding the holding of the priesthood. It was not the Prophet Joseph Smith nor Brigham Young. It was the Lord! If a Negro desires to join the Church, we will give him all the encouragement that we can, but we cannot promise him that he will receive the priesthood.

Let us reason together. In the Book of Moses, Chapter 4, and in the Book of Abraham, Chapter 3, we are taught that there was a council held in heaven and our Eternal Father presented a plan by which we could come down on the earth and receive tabernacles (bodies) of flesh and bones for our spirits which are begotten sons and daughters unto God. We learn also that one third of those spirits rebelled against the plan and followed Satan. For this they were denied bodies of flesh and bones and have to remain spirits. Why do not those who complain about the Negro and the priesthood also complain about the punishment which was given to this third of the spirits? *They were denied even the blessings of bodies!* Was this an injustice on the part of our Eternal Father? Well, there were other spirits there who were not faithful in the keeping of this first estate. (Abraham 3:23-28.) Yet they have not sinned away their right to receive bodies and come to earth and receive the resurrection. They were restricted in the privileges that were given to those who keep their first estate and who were promised to have "glory added upon their heads for ever and ever." (*Ibid.*, 3:26.) Therefore the Lord prepared a way through the lineage of Cain for these spirits to come to the earth, but under the restriction of priesthood.

RESTRICTION OF PRIESTHOOD

Let me call your attention to the following passages from the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price:

And the Lord said unto me: Prophecy; and I prophesied, saying: Behold the people of Canaan, which are numerous, shall go forth in battle array against the people of Shum, and shall slay them that they shall utterly be destroyed; and the people of Canaan shall divide themselves in the land, and the land shall be barren and unfruitful, and none other people shall dwell there but the people of Canaan; For behold, the Lord shall curse the land with much heat, and the barrenness thereof shall go forth forever; and there was a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people. And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent; And Enoch also beheld the residue of the people which were the sons of Adam; and they were a mixture of all the seed of Adam save it were the seed of Cain, for the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them. (Moses 7:7, 8, 12, 22.)

And from the Book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price:

Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth. From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land. The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden. When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land. Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal. Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the priesthood. Now Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry. (Abraham 1:21-27.)

OTHER REASONS WHY NEGRO CANNOT HOLD PRIESTHOOD

Kindly see chapters 15 and 16, in *The Way to Perfection*, for further light in relation to the reason why the Negro cannot receive the priesthood. In brief, it is as follows: Because of transgression in the first estate which deprives him in this second estate. Since Cain slew his brother Abel in order to obtain all the rights of priesthood to descend through his lineage, the Lord decreed that the children of Cain should not have the privilege of bearing the priesthood until Abel had posterity who could have the priesthood and that will have to be in the far distant future. When this is accomplished on some other world, then the restrictions will be removed from the children of Cain who have been true in this "second" estate.

We can well imagine that there will be many, after the resurrection, both men and women, who will be assigned to the telestial, and the terrestrial kingdoms, and that there will be many who will complain and accuse our Heavenly Father of injustice because he will deprive so many of his children of the exaltation. We may well believe that the cry will go forth from some that God is unjust because he has restricted so many from receiving the blessings of the priesthood and placed them in these kingdoms

notwithstanding they are judged according to their works. Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, 2:184-88.

THE SEED OF CAIN AFTER THE FLOOD

The question has been asked, "What evidence do we have that the negro of the present day is the descendant of Cain, and why is it he cannot have the Priesthood?" There is no definite information on this question in the Bible, and profane history is not able to solve it. From the Pearl of Great Price and the teachings of Joseph Smith and the early elders of the Church who were associated with him, we do obtain some definite instruction in regard to this matter.

THE CURSE CONTINUED THROUGH HAM'S POSTERITY

It is generally believed that the curse placed on Cain was continued in his posterity and that through the seed of Ham this curse was brought through the flood. Since Ham was the son of Noah, we must conclude that it was not Ham who had the black skin and was a descendant of Cain. However, there is in the Church the general belief that Ham married a woman who was a descendant of Cain, and in this way the curse of Cain was continued after the flood in Ham's posterity. Some of the brethren who were associated with the Prophet Joseph Smith have declared that he taught this doctrine. That the wife of Ham was a descendant of Cain seems to be embodied in the following passages in the Book of Abraham:

Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth. From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land. The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden. When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterwards settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang the race which preserved the curse in the land.-Abraham 1:21-24.

EGYPTUS

We see that the wife of Ham was named *Egyptus*, which name signifies "that which is forbidden." We know it was the custom in those early times to give to children names conveying a definite meaning based upon some striking event connected with birth or early life, or to point out and fix attention on some peculiarity of character or habit which they may have formed. Frequently, in later life, names were changed because some outstanding event in or characteristic of the life of the individual was discovered. In this manner the name of Esau was changed. At his birth he was called Esau because he was covered with "an hairy garment," but later in life when he sold his birthright his name was changed to Edom because of that event, and his descendants were known as Edomites. So it appears very probable that *Egyptus* was so named because she partook of the curse of her fathers. Moreover, this thought is strengthened in the statement that *from Ham* sprang the race which preserved the curse in the land. The implication seems to be very strong that this curse preserved through the seed of Ham was a curse which came from the other side of the flood. Elder B. H. Roberts several years ago discussed this question as follows:

Now, why is it that the seed of Ham was cursed as pertaining to the Priesthood? Why is it that his seed "could not have right to the Priesthood?" Ham's wife was named "Egyptus," which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden; * * * and thus from Ham sprang the race which preserved the curse in the land." Was the wife of Ham, as her name signifies, of a race with which those

who held the Priesthood were forbidden to intermarry? Was she a descendant of Cain, who was cursed for murdering his brother? And was it by Ham marrying her, and she being saved from the flood in the ark, that "the race which preserved the curse in the land" was perpetuated? If so, then I believe that race is the one through which it is ordained those spirits that were not valiant in the great rebellion in heaven should come; who, through their indifference or lack of integrity to righteousness, rendered themselves unworthy of the Priesthood and its powers, and hence it is withheld from them to this day.-Contributor 6:297.

NO NEUTRALS IN HEAVEN

President Brigham Young, answering a question put to him by Elder Lorenzo D. Young in a meeting held December 25, 1869, in Salt Lake City, said that Joseph Smith had declared that the negroes were not neutral in heaven, for all the spirits took sides, but "the posterity of Cain are black because he (Cain) committed murder. He killed Abel and God set a mark upon his posterity. But the spirits are pure (i. e. innocent. See D. C. 93:38.) that enter their tabernacles and there will be a chance for the redemption of all the children of Adam, except the sons of perdition."-J. H., Dec. 25, 1869.

WHEN THE CURSE WILL BE REMOVED

On another occasion in a discourse President Brigham Young said:

Cain conversed with his God every day, and knew all about the plan of creating this earth, for his father told him. But, for the want of humility, and through jealousy, and an anxiety to possess the kingdom, and to have the whole of it under his own control, and not allow any body else the right to say one word, what did he do? He killed his brother. The Lord put a mark on him * * * When all the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity. He deprived his brother of the privilege of pursuing his journey through life, and of extending his kingdom by multiplying upon the earth; and because he did this, he is the last to share the joys of the kingdom of God.-J. D. 2:142-143.

President Woodruff, in his journal, records the words of President Young as follows:

The Lord said, I will not kill Cain, but I will put a mark upon him, and that mark will be seen upon the face of every negro upon the face of the earth; and it is the decree of God that that mark shall remain upon the seed of Cain until the seed of Abel shall be redeemed, and Cain shall not receive the Priesthood, until the time of that redemption. Any man having one drop of the seed of Cain in him cannot receive the Priesthood; but the day will come when all that race will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have.-History of Wilford Woodruff, p. 351.

These remarks indicate the enormity of the offense of Cain. He sinned against the light, having been taught by the Almighty, and knowing perfectly the plan of salvation. Moreover, he was cursed and his posterity after him because he cut off Abel in his youth without posterity.

A SKIN OF BLACKNESS

President Young also gave this explanation:

Why are so many of the inhabitants of the earth cursed with a skin of blackness? It comes in consequence of their fathers rejecting the power of the holy Priesthood, and the laws of God. They will go down to their death. And when all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the holy Priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will then come up and possess the Priesthood.-J. D. 11:272.

It was well understood by the early elders of the Church that the mark which was placed on Cain and which his posterity inherited was the black skin. The Book of Moses informs us that Cain and his descendants were black. Enoch taught the Gospel among all the people everywhere, *except* the people of Canaan. The people of Canaan lived before the flood, and were descendants of Cain. Is it not probable that Ham named his son Canaan after Cain or one of the descendants of Cain, who gave his name to the land in which the posterity of Cain lived before the flood?

THE PEOPLES OF CAINAN AND CANAAN

The Cainanites, who lived in the land of Cainan, from whence Enoch came, were a righteous people and evidently were descendants of Seth. Then there must have been another people called Canaanites who were a black race and the descendants of Cain. Speaking of these peoples, Enoch said:

I came out from the land of Cainan, the land of my fathers, a land of righteousness unto this day. And my father taught me in all the ways of God.-Moses 6:41.

And the Lord said unto me: Prophecy; and I prophesied, saying: Behold the people of Canaan, which are numerous, shall go forth in battle array against the people of Shum, and shall slay them that they shall utterly be destroyed; and the people of Canaan shall divide themselves in the land, and the land shall be barren and unfruitful, and none other people shall dwell there but the people of Canaan; For behold, the Lord shall curse the land with much heat, and the barrenness thereof shall go forth forever; and there was a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all the people. And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent.-Moses 7:7-8 and 12. And it came to pass that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth; and he beheld, and lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Behold mine abode forever. And Enoch also beheld the residue of the people which were the sons of Adam; and they were a mixture of all the seed of Adam save it were the seed of Cain, for the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them.-Moses 7:21-22.

CURSED AS PERTAINING TO THE PRIESTHOOD

From these references we discover that the children of Cain were in all respects very much like the children of Ham. The Canaanites before the flood preserved the curse in the land; the Gospel was not taken to them, and no other people would associate with them. The Canaanites after the flood also preserved the curse in the land and were denied the rights of Priesthood. Abraham informs us that through Egyptus, daughter of Ham-who evidently bore the same name as her mother-Egypt was inhabited and named, and that her sons could not hold the Priesthood. These facts are recorded in the words of Abraham as follows:

Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal. Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate the order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first

patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood. Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry.-Abraham 1:25-27.

President George A. Smith, speaking of the negro race, in a discourse, September 23, 1855, said: "When Cain brought a curse upon his own head and that of his household, his after generations bear the same curse. The curse that came upon Canaan, the son of Ham, was extended to a great portion of the human race, and has continued to the present day."-J. H. Sept. 23, 1855.

A SERVANT OF SERVANTS

President Brigham Young, at another time said: "The seed of Ham, which is the seed of Cain descending through Ham, will, according to the curse put upon him, serve his brethren, and be a 'servant of servants' to his fellow creatures, until God removes the curse; and no power can hinder it."-J. D. 2:184.

The name of Ham is also rather significant, for it means "swarthy" or "black." It is possible that this is an appellation given to the third son of Noah because of the part he played in preserving through his lineage-and that most likely, as we have tried to show, through his wife Egyptus-the race of blacks upon whom the curse was placed. Piecing together the evidence as we discover it in holy writ and in tradition, we are brought to the conclusion that Ham, through Egyptus, continued the curse which was placed upon the seed of Cain. Because of that curse this dark race was separated and isolated from all the rest of Adam's posterity before the flood, and since that time the same condition has continued, and they have been "despised among all people."

This doctrine did not originate with President Brigham Young but was taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith. At a meeting of the general authorities of the Church, held August 22, 1895, the question of the status of the negro in relation to the Priesthood was asked and the minutes of that meeting say:

"President George Q. Cannon remarked that the Prophet taught this doctrine: That the seed of Cain could not receive the Priesthood nor act in any of the offices of the Priesthood until the seed of Abel should come forward and take precedence over Cain's offspring."

Joseph Smith has left very little on record in his own words outside of the Pearl of Great Price. During the course of a discussion in Nauvoo in 1842, on the question as to whether the negroes or the Indians have received the greater ill-treatment from the whites, the Prophet Joseph said: "The Indians have greater cause to complain of the treatment of the whites, than the negroes, or sons of Cain." (D. H. C. 4:501.) But we all know it is due to his teachings that the negro may be baptized and enter the Church; and some of these unfortunate people have been baptized and have proved their faithfulness and worthiness before the Lord, in this their second estate, setting examples in righteousness which many of the sons of Shem and Japheth could emulate with everlasting profit. Surely the Lord will remember their faithfulness and reward them accordingly. Joseph Fielding Smith, Way to Perfection, 103-111.