

General Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 132

The text of this section is [highly structured](#), which structures provides methods of correctly interpreting the meaning of the text. A careful review of the structure is recommended for in-depth analysis of this text.

In preparing to address this text, four points of doctrine will be addressed first: the ancient history of polygamy, the Doctrine of Eternal Marriage, the Holy Spirit of Promise, and the New and Everlasting Covenant.

Ancient History of the Practice of Polygamy

Polygamy was not a novel institution by Smith in the latter-days. Polygamy was practiced anciently and it's practice persisted to the times of Jesus. Many Christians assume polygamy is something the Lord didn't like, but tolerated in the Old Testament and later forbade in the New Testament. This is not the case, as the Lord issued commands governing its use in Old Testament times and Jesus never prohibited it while he did speak against adultery and sexual immorality (cf. Mark 7:21, John 8:11) and adulterous divorce (cf. Matt 19:3-9). Below is a list of scriptures dealing with governance of the practice of polygamy:

Exod. 21:10 Law of equality in polygamy regarding support of wives

Lev. 18:18 Prohibition of polygamously marrying sisters

Lev. 20:14 Prohibition of polygamously marrying mother and daughter

Deut. 17:17 Kings of Israel prohibited from pursuing polygamy for themselves

Deut. 21:15-17 Law of equity in polygamy regarding inheritance of the firstborn son

1 Tim. 3:2 (Titus 1:5) Bishops are to be husband of one wife (necessarily implying there were men who had more than one wife, otherwise the statement would not have been necessary)

Additional references to the practice of polygamy throughout the scriptures follow:

Gen. 16:1-11 Abraham, Sariah, and Hagar

Gen. 29:16-18 Jacob, Leah, and Rachel

Gen. 30:1-26 Jacob adds Bilhah, and Zilpah

2 Sam. 2:2 David's two wives at his anointing

2 Sam. 5:13 David takes more wives and concubines

2 Sam. 12:7-9 Nathan rebukes David over Uriah and Bathsheba

1 Kings 11:1-6 Solomon violates prohibition of Deut. 17 as did David by seeking "strange women", meaning Gentile foreigners

2 Chr. 13:21 Abijah's 14 wives

2 Chr. 24:3 Jehoida's 2 wives

Ezekiel 23 The Lord is presented as the figurative husband of two figurative wives who are unfaithful, namely Ephraim (the Northern 10 Tribes) and Judah (the Southern 2 Tribes)

Jacob 2:27-30 Lord commands Nephites to practice monogamy unless He otherwise commands them

It is plain from these references polygamy was practiced during Old Testament times and the Lord did not prohibit it. If it were something offensive to the Lord, He would not cast Himself, even figuratively, as being married to two women as in Ezekiel 23.

Doctrine of Eternal Marriage in the Bible

Among Christian denominations, only the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints practices eternal marriage. While there are no explicit references to eternal marriage in the Bible, does revelation contained within the Bible support such a

practice? To answer this question key passages from the Bible are reviewed.

The first marriage took place in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve. This marriage occurred prior to the Fall, in an eternal setting in the presence of God.

Genesis 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This [is] now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

There is no explicit mention of marriage, but it is plain from the context marriage is what is being referenced. Jesus considered it to be referring to marriage as he uses this passage in his argument against divorce:

Matthew 19:3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [them] at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Note when Jesus says "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" the emphasis is placed on the actions of God versus man. This same emphasis appears in another passage which addresses a similar subject:

Matthew 22:23 The same day came to him the Sadducees,

which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, 24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

In a discussion over the resurrection Jesus tangentially comments on marriage as well. He says to them "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God". He indicates they do not understand the power, or authority, of God and this is the source of their error, he then explains to them why they are wrong. As in the passage from Matt. 19 the core subject is that of authority, God's authority versus man's authority and the Sadducees do not understand God's authority. Jesus tells them plainly that whoever marries without God's authority is not married in the resurrection (cf. D&C 132:15-17). In Matt. 19 Jesus says what God puts together should not be parted by men, and in Matt. 22 Jesus says what men put together is of no consequence to God.

Other Christian denominations use the passage from Matt. 22 and ignore the authority issue to say there is no eternal marriage as "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven". Such a conclusion runs contrary to what Jesus says in Matt. 19 as it is plain that "from the beginning" God put man and wife together and they should not be separated by men.

When Adam and Eve were created they were married in God's presence prior to the Fall, necessarily implying God endorses marriage in an eternal setting. Whenever Jesus comments on the matter of marriage he makes it clear the core issue is that of authority. The other Christian denominations ignore the authority issue because they have no authority to perform eternal marriage. Instead, they seek to excuse themselves from it by arguing against it.

Holy Spirit of Promise

The phrase "Holy Spirit of promise" is used in two different contexts in the Scriptures. The less common usage is that of "the promised Holy Spirit", referred to in Luke 24:49, John 7:39, Acts 1:4, and D&C 88:3. In this case it is plain the reference is to a dispensation of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with ministering the gospel to all nations (cf. Matt. 28:16-20, Acts 10).

The most common usage is in reference to the Holy Spirit acting as an agent who ratifies the authenticity of various Priesthood acts, from baptism to eternal marriage (cf. v. 7), performed by mortals. This is the definition employed in D&C 132. Regarding this usage, cf. Gal. 3:14, Eph. 1:13, Eph. 4:30, 1 John 2:25, 1 John 3:9, Moroni 7:31, D&C 76:53, D&C 124:124.

Some assume the "Holy Spirit of promise" has reference to making one's calling and election sure. However, Smith unequivocally states that event is accompanied by a personal manifestation of the Lord Himself and not the Holy Spirit, cf. D&C 130:1-3, John 14:23, ct. John 14:16. References to being "sealed" by the Holy Spirit of Promise (cf. v. 26) do not mean that a person has had their calling and election made sure, but rather the Holy Spirit has ratified various Priesthood ordinances and endorsed promises placed upon their head.

New and Everlasting Covenant

In section 132 whenever the phrase "new and everlasting covenant" is employed, it is always referring specifically to the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, cf. D&C 131:2. However, the "of marriage" is frequently not included (cf. v. 4), which can lead to confusion. Be careful to qualify the usage by context to avoid mistaking references to the gospel in general with references to eternal marriage in specific.

The doctrine of eternal marriage is clearly part of the new and everlasting covenant of the gospel in general, but in this section eternal marriage is being addressed in specific to the exclusion of other gospel principles and ordinances which are obviously required for exaltation (cp. v. 26).

The appellation "new and everlasting" is not unique to this section, as is appears in D&C 22:1, and has reference to the dispensation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not necessarily "new" in the sense of being novel or contemporary to

our time setting, but new in the sense of not being in an Old Testament context.

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 132

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines-- 2 Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter. 3 Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same. 4 For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory. 5 For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world. 6 And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

v1-6 These verses form the introduction to the revelation. Joseph has asked the Lord concerning the ancient practice of polygamy and concubinage and wants to know how it was accounted as righteousness to them (v. 1). The Lord answers Joseph's question (v. 2), but also lets him know that in so doing the Lord reveals a Law that he must now observe (v. 3). If the Law is revealed and not obeyed the result is damnation (v. 4) because the Law must be observed in order to receive the blessing (v. 5). To receive the fulness of the blessing, one must obey the fulness of the Law (v. 6).

While people tend to focus on the polygamous aspects of the Law, because of its controversial nature, the broader context is that of eternal marriage. If people have eternal marriage made available to them and they reject it, then they are damned for it.

v1 Smith was apparently involved in the inspired translation of the Bible at the time the issues concerning polygamy and concubinage came to his mind, and therefore was pondering over

the matter.

With respect to concubines versus wives, wives were considered partners and had various legal rights under the Law. Divorce of a wife required the involvement of local Levitical Priests and specific legal procedures. Concubines were treated more like property, and did not have the legal status of wives. Concubines could be bought and sold as property, had no legal rights requiring divorce, and were typically Gentiles sold into slavery or captured in war.

The cases of David and Solomon keeping exotic foreign women for their personal pleasure, and ostensibly for diplomatic reasons, was not a common occurrence among the population in general.

v3 The revelation of a law makes one accountable for its appropriate application.

v4 The "new and everlasting covenant" being referenced here is specifically that of eternal marriage, cp. D&C 131:2. The revelation of this law makes it such that once it is made available, if you choose not take advantage of it you will be damned, which is the same as with any revealed ordinance.

"no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory", one must have the opportunity to accept it, as is the case with those angels described in v. 16-17.

v5 The eternal nature of eternal and polygamous marriage is presented, as it was "from before the foundation of the world". Clearly the doctrine of eternal marriage is something that would have been established premortally, the same as the rest of the Priesthood ordinances.

v6 The dichotomies of glory and damnation are presented, but unlike v. 4 here the question of damnation is not a matter of participating in it but rather one of obedience to the law after entering into the covenant. Thus, not only must one choose to participate in it, they must continue on in observing the law.

This is typical hard-line covenant-style rhetoric which could be applied to any type of ordinance or covenant. The somewhat didactic tone of v. 3-6 are probably intended to make is unambiguously clear this covenant of marriage is no different than any other religious covenant, in that it requires the

participation and endurance of the individual in order for them to reap the benefits. Failure to do so results in damnation.

One would assume this is done to avoid the type of self-serving interpretations and practices that could result from people taking a lax approach to the Laws concerning polygamous relationships, as occurred during Jacob's time, cf. Jacob 2-3.

7 And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and 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), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

8 Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. 9 Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name? 10 Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed? 11 And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was?

12 I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment--that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord. 13 And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God. 14 For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed.

v7-14 An exposition on authoritative ordinance making. Here we have a lengthy discussion on the necessity of performing ordinances using the Priesthood in accordance with the Lord's guidelines in order for the Lord to pay heed to them.

People must observe the Lord's dictates according to His chosen ways (v. 7). The Lord is under no obligation whatsoever to pay attention to things not done according to His dictates (v. 8-11). In order to approach the Lord people must do as He says (v. 12), otherwise it is just of the world and of no

eternal consequence (v. 13-14).

v7 There are two sets of agents involved in authoritative ordinances: mortal Priesthood-bearing ordinance administrators (i.e., "him who is anointed"), and angelic authorized ordinance documenters (i.e., "the Holy Spirit of promise"). If any form of covenant whatsoever is made without the proper Priesthood authority and is not sealed (i.e., documented, endorsed, ratified) by the Holy Spirit, then the Lord disregards it.

v8-11 The Lord makes it clear He is the one who dictates the manner in which things are done. We cannot do as we please and then expect the Lord to pay attention to us, cf. Matt. 7:21-23.

Verses 9-11 present three rhetorical questions, the answers to which are all clearly "No".

v9 "in my name", this is a common catchphrase for the Priesthood, or the Lord's authority. It arises from the Semitic idea that your name was indicative of the quality of your character. If you had a good name, it meant you were well-respected because you had shown yourself to be honest, forthright and able to keep all of your verbal contracts and obligations. The Lord takes great interest in maintaining the sanctity of His name, and the authority of the Priesthood is a direct offshoot of this as the Lord has made specific promises concerning those who covenant with Him, cp. Exod. 9:16, Exod. 32:13, Lev. 22:2, Deut. 18:19-20, Rom. 2:24.

v11 This verse echoes v. 5.

v12-14 The triple repeat, one in each verse, superlatively states none will approach the Father except by the Sons' Laws. As is indicated in v. 11, these Laws were received by the Son from the Father. All worldly contracts will be thrown down, as they have no consequence outside of the temporal setting of the world.

15 Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world. 16 Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering

servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. 17 For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever.

18 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power, then it is not valid neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word; when they are out of the world it cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass; they cannot, therefore, inherit my glory; for my house is a house of order, saith the Lord God.

19 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them--Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths--then shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. 20 Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. 21 Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory. 22 For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me. 23 But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also. 24 This is eternal lives--to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law. 25 Broad is the gate, and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths;

and many there are that go in thereat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law.

v15-25 After the general discussion on authority (v. 7-14), marriage in specific is now addressed. The presentation covers three cases: temporal secular (v. 15-17), eternal without proper authority (v. 18), and eternal with proper authority (v. 19-25).

v15-17 These verses review the standard "till death do us part" marriage. No eternal union is claimed and none is granted. Verses 16-17 indicates those who choose this type of marriage, presumably when eternal marriage is available to them, become ministering angels, cp. Matt. 22:30. Note in Matt. 22:29 Jesus states "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." The "power of God" is referring to the authority or Priesthood, which is obviously an issue in the subject at hand as it is extensively addressed in this section.

Regarding ministering angels in Celestial glory, v. 17 indicates these ministering angels are "without exaltation", but "in their saved condition". Also, D&C 76:87-88 references the ministering of the Celestial to the Terrestrial, and we would determine those who go on to exaltation would not perform ministration duties per v. 20.

v18 An eternal marriage performed without the Lord's authority is of no consequence to the Lord. If the marriage ceremony is not performed by "him whom I have anointed and appointed" (i.e., the mortal Priesthood holder), and is not endorsed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, then the Lord disregards the allegedly eternal aspects of the ceremony. This echoes the general statement of v. 7, just applying it specifically to the case of marriage.

v19-25 Those who make an eternal covenant of marriage with the appropriate authority, and are faithful to all of their covenants will go on to exaltation and have eternal lives.

v19 "and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection", referring to the first and second phases of the First Resurrection as opposed to the Second Resurrection, the resurrection of damnation, as these persons are to be exalted and not damned. The first phase of the First Resurrection was at Christ's resurrection, and the second phase of the First

Resurrection will be at Christ's Second Coming.

v20 "from everlasting to everlasting" the phrase is defined as having a continuance of seeds, or eternal lives. This phrase is typically interpreted by Christians as meaning that God is uncreated.

"all things are subject unto them", cp. D&C 50:27.

"they have all power", cp. D&C 76:95.

v21-25 These verses indicate obedience to general gospel laws and principles, in addition to this covenant of eternal marriage, are required in order to achieve exaltation. One must also "know" Christ per Matt. 7:21-23 and D&C 93:1.

26 Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God.

27 The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord.

v26-27 These verses address penalties for violating the new and everlasting covenant in specific, and the possibilities for forgiveness. These two verses have caused considerable confusion because of the difficulty of interpretation. Some interpret these two verses to mean that once you have an eternal marriage that the only thing that stands between them and exaltation is the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Others interpret this verse to say eternal marriage is the ordinance of having one's calling and election made sure, and that you only then need to have it ratified by the Holy Spirit of Promise, and then you are guaranteed exaltation as long as you do not commit the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Neither of these readings is correct.

In order to determine the correct reading, the text will be parsed and commented on:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment,

If a couple is eternally married with the appropriate Priesthood Authority, cf. v. 7, 18. This is not a reference to having one's calling and election made sure, as that requires a personal manifestation of the Lord Himself per D&C 130:3, cf. John 14:23, Hela. 10:3-11.

and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies,

The "new and everlasting covenant" being referenced here is that of marriage in specific and not the gospel in general, cp. v. 4 and D&C 131:2. The sin against the marriage covenant would obviously be adultery. The "all manner of blasphemies" would indicate the profanation and violation of additional covenants in addition to that of eternal marriage, but not including the "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost".

and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood,

The limit to their forgivable sinning is that of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is called "murder wherein they shed innocent blood" because Jesus was the only truly innocent blood spilled, and they are willfully assenting to his murder. See below.

yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation;

So long as they do not commit the blasphemy

against the Holy Ghost they can still repent of the violation of their eternal marriage covenants and participate in the First Resurrection.

but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God.

While they can still repent, adultery against eternal marriage is a capital offense. In other words, the person who wishes to repent fully of adultery against an eternal marriage has to willfully consent to their own execution. Adultery was a capital offense under the Law of Moses (cf. Lev. 20:10, Deut. 22:22) and Paul apparently continued to advocate it as well, cf. 1 Cor. 5:5.

The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God;

While they can repent of adultery against eternal marriage, the unforgivable sin still remains unforgivable.

and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord.

Those who cannot remain faithful in their eternal marriage or who are unwilling to repent in the appropriate manner for their capital offense of adultery will not be exalted. The "this law" would equate with the "law" referenced in v. 19, line 3, namely eternal marriage.

28 I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was. 29 Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his

throne.

30 Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins--from whose loins ye are, namely, my servant Joseph--which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them.

31 This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself. 32 Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved. 33 But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.

34 God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law; and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises. 35 Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, commanded it. 36 Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac; nevertheless, it was written: Thou shalt not kill. Abraham, however, did not refuse, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. 37 Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods. 38 David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me. 39 David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord. 40 I am the Lord thy God, and I gave unto thee, my servant Joseph, an appointment, and restore all things. Ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you according to my word.

v28-40 The Lord indicates that all things anciently concerning the patriarchs were "by revelation and commandment and by His word (i.e., by Priesthood, cf. v. 19)." Thus, these were legal,

sanctioned acts. The specific cases of Abraham and David are treated in detail, and Moses, Isaac and Jacob are mentioned briefly.

The Lord emphasizes the Laws He is discussing are eternal, He got them from the Father and they were handed to mankind and by them mankind may be exalted, even as Abraham (v. 28-29). The promises given to Abraham deal with both eternal and temporal children (v. 30) and those who are of his lineage (v. 31) and enter into the same covenants and keep them can have the same promise (v. 32). But the promise is only for those who enter into the covenant (v. 33).

The Lord then reviews a number of cases of the ancient patriarchs, with particular emphasis on Abraham (v. 34-37) and David (v. 38-39). Abraham being the good example and David being the negative example.

Note Isaac is referenced in v. 37. According to the Biblical account Isaac only married Rebekah and had no concubines, and there is nothing suggesting he did in the present text either. The Lord indicates he "did none other thing than that [he was] commanded" and was ultimately exalted. We can therefore safely assume polygamy is not a requirement for exaltation while doing what the Lord commands is.

v33 The opportunity to participate and accept the covenants is part of the birthright of Abraham's lineage, but his children must still choose to enter into the same covenant as did Abraham in order to reap the same benefits.

v36 The Lord presents the events of Gen. 22 as an example of a situation where the Lord's commands seem to be conflicting when approached superficially. So is the case with polygamy.

v37 "Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children", the Biblical account only explicitly refers to Hagar as a concubine. However, in Gen. 25:1 we are informed Abraham takes another wife named Keturah. Then in Gen. 25:6 it says all of the sons of the concubines were sent away after listing the sons he had through Keturah. This implicitly makes Keturah a concubine, although she is labeled a "wife" in the preceding verses.

"they did none other thing than that which they were commanded", in context, this is referring specifically to their

actions regarding marriage, and cannot justifiably be used out of context to be taken to refer to other aspects of their lives in general.

v38 "Moses", the Bible never explicitly states Moses had multiple wives. We know of Zipporah from Exodus, and then we are later informed Moses takes an additional wife, a black woman from Ethiopia, cf. Num. 12:1. The Biblical text is mute as to whether Zipporah is still alive at that time, but this passage suggests she was. However, regardless of this, Moses is placed in the same category as David and Solomon who "received many wives and concubines". We know the history of David and Solomon from the Bible, but the Bible omits anything like this for Moses. The grouping in the present text suggests he may have had more wives than just Zipporah and the Ethiopian woman, or, perhaps Zipporah was still alive when he married the Ethiopian woman.

v39 "he hath fallen from his exaltation", David appears to be one that was not "destroyed in the flesh" per v. 26, and therefore failed to maintain his exaltation. One would assume the opportunity to repent of the adultery would not have been available to him because of his involvement in Uriah's death.

41 And as ye have asked concerning adultery, verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man receiveth a wife in the new and everlasting covenant, and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery and shall be destroyed. 42 If she be not in the new and everlasting covenant, and she be with another man, she has committed adultery. 43 And if her husband be with another woman, and he was under a vow, he hath broken his vow and hath committed adultery. 44 And if she hath not committed adultery, but is innocent and hath not broken her vow, and she knoweth it, and I reveal it unto you, my servant Joseph, then shall you have power, by the power of my Holy Priesthood, to take her and give her unto him that hath not committed adultery but hath been faithful; for he shall be made ruler over many.

v41-44 Definitions of adultery are delivered and legal plural marriage is not classified as adultery. The fact that the crime is a capital one is repeated (v. 41, cp. v. 26). Naturally, all of the judgements rendered here would apply to both husbands as well as wives, and all guilty parties receive the same penalty (v. 42-43). Innocent parties are spared and permitted to marry again without any impact on their eternal welfare (v. 44).

v41 "another man...not appointed unto her", i.e., per the legitimate means of remarriage detailed in v. 44.

45 For I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood, wherein I restore all things, and make known unto you all things in due time. 46 And verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins you remit on earth shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whosoever sins you retain on earth shall be retained in heaven. 47 And again, verily I say, whomsoever you bless I will bless, and whomsoever you curse I will curse, saith the Lord; for I, the Lord, am thy God. 48 And again, verily I say unto you, my servant Joseph, that whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give any one on earth, by my word and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings, and with my power, saith the Lord, and shall be without condemnation on earth and in heaven.

v45-48 Smith is identified as one who is "anointed and appointed (cf. v. 7, 18, 19)" to the power of administering the ordinance of eternal marriage. The Lord emphasizes the necessity of the appropriate authority in order to obtain a binding ordinance.

v48 "give", i.e., give in marriage.

49 For I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father. 50 Behold, I have seen your sacrifices, and will forgive all your sins; I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you. Go, therefore, and I make a way for your escape, as I accepted the offering of Abraham of his son Isaac.

v49-50 Smith's calling and election are made sure. The Lord has seen through his actions that Smith has completely reconciled himself to the Lord's will. Those times in the past where Joseph has sinned against the Lord are over and done with and Smith has repented of them, so they are forgiven.

51 Verily, I say unto you: A commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith, your wife, whom I have given unto you,

that she stay herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham, and that I might require an offering at your hand, by covenant and sacrifice. 52 And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God. 53 For I am the Lord thy God and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him. 54 And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law. 55 But if she will not abide this commandment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said; and I will bless him and multiply him and give unto him an hundredfold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds. 56 And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has trespassed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice.

v51-56 Emma Smith is commanded to accept all those that the Lord has given to Joseph to be additional wives. As Smith has received command concerning these things then he is justified as was Abraham and the other patriarchs referenced in v. 28-40.

v52, 54, 64 "destroyed", this destruction appears to be along the lines of a spiritual destruction, or damnation, where v. 26 and 41 are referring to a physical destruction. It would be read as such because the cases in v. 26 and 41 are of deception where only the Lord knows who is and who is not pure, and therefore the person goes undetected for capital punishment. In Emma's case, her rebellion against the commands of the Lord are not capital offenses as would be adultery.

57 And again, I say, let not my servant Joseph put his property out of his hands, lest an enemy come and destroy him; for Satan seeketh to destroy; for I am the Lord thy God, and he is my servant; and behold, and lo, I am with him, as I was with Abraham, thy father, even unto his exaltation and glory.

v57 This verse is a rather curious insertion where the Lord

digresses to warn Smith from "put[ting] his property out of his hands". One might assume it is presented as being reminiscent of the Abrahamic covenant, wherein Abraham is promised both children and land for inheritance (cf. Gen. 15), as Smith is correlated in the same verse with Abraham.

58 Now, as touching the law of the priesthood, there are many things pertaining thereunto. 59 Verily, if a man be called of my Father, as was Aaron, by mine own voice, and by the voice of him that sent me, and I have endowed him with the keys of the power of this priesthood, if he do anything in my name, and according to my law and by my word, he will not commit sin, and I will justify him. 60 Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him; for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands for his transgressions, saith the Lord your God.

v58-60 The Lord warns Smith's critics that they should not fault him for doing what is just according to the Lord concerning this matter of polygamy.

61 And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood--if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else. 62 And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.

63 But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused, shall be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed; for they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified.

64 And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, if any man have a wife, who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my priesthood, as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God; for I will destroy her; for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law. 65 Therefore, it shall be lawful in me, if she receive not this law, for him to receive all things whatsoever I, the Lord his God, will give unto him, because she did not believe and administer unto him according to my word; and she then becomes the transgressor; and he is exempt from the law of

Sarah, who administered unto Abraham according to the law when I commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife.

v61-65 The mechanics of plural marriage are set forth. Verses 61-63 is the case where the husband is not commanded by revelation to take additional wives, but simply wants to. If this is the case and the first wife grants her consent then it is permissible and not adultery.

Verses 64-65 refer to instances where the husband is told to practice polygamy by revelation and command (connecting the "law of my priesthood" statement in v. 64 with that appearing in v. 58-60) as were the various cases described in v. 28-40, 51-56. In this case, the first wife holds the keys to the Law of Sarah in that she is to concede to the wedding but maintains the dominant position in the ensuing matriarchy. The benefits of the prominent position in such a matriarchy were to be exhibited in the relationship between Sarah and Hagar subsequent to her granting Abraham's marriage to Hagar. However, if it is by revelation and she refuses it, then she is rebelling against the Lord and will be "destroyed" (i.e., damned) and not exalted.

Especially note in the case of voluntary polygamy, the first wife's consent is required and there is no matter of her being "destroyed" if she rejects the husband's desire to take additional wives. Thus, in the voluntary case, the first wife had the final say in the matter, but it is not clear she has the right to the Law of Sarah.

The historical context is that of Emma being warned to observe the commandments of the Lord. Given this, it is plain the commands Joseph were of the variety described in v. 64-65 wherein the wife must observe the commands of the Lord and not that of v. 61-63 where the consent of the wife is necessary.

v63 "to multiply and replenish the earth...that they may bear the souls of men", this passage presents a very "traditional" view towards a woman's role in marriage. This role is the classical Old Testament theme that for a woman to bear many children was an honor and blessing from the Lord, cp. Gen. 1:22, Gen. 3:16, Gen. 29:31-30:13, Deut. 7:12-14, 1 Tim. 2:15, Jacob 2:30. The views of our contemporary culture run contrary to those presented here, which is an indictment of our contemporary culture.

66 And now, as pertaining to this law, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will reveal more unto you, hereafter; therefore, let

this suffice for the present. Behold, I am Alpha and Omega.
Amen.

v66 Conclusion with closing authority statement.

Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 132

While the revelation deals mainly with the subjects of authority and marriage, the controversial history of polygamy tends to overshadow that subject when it comes to history. During the Nauvoo period, polygamy at its peak was practiced by 2-4% of the population of the Church, depending on who's estimates you rely on. Those who did practice it were predominantly leaders of the Church who were capable of financially supporting a polygamous family.

While both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young kept a tight rein on the practice, the later application was liberalized until it was restricted by Official Declaration number 1. During that time the practice expanded to 5-15% of the population, depending on who's estimates you rely on.

The immediate historical context of the text of D&C 132 is that of conflict between Joseph and Emma over the practice. Joseph was already practicing polygamy and Emma did not approve of it, so while she knew he was doing it she did not give her consent. Hence the text of v. 61-65 differentiating between voluntary polygamy (v. 61-63) and commanded polygamy (v. 64-65). Hyrum was aware of the conflict between Joseph and Emma over the matter and he wished to persuade Emma of its truth, he himself having formerly being opposed to the practice. He was discussing the matter with Joseph and asked him to give a revelation from the Lord on the matter and then he would take it to Emma and convince her of its truth. Joseph didn't think Emma would be persuaded, but Hyrum insisted, and Joseph dictated the revelation with William Clayton acting as scribe. Hyrum did take the revelation to Emma and attempted to persuade her, but instead Emma harangued Hyrum. Subsequently, Emma persuaded Joseph to allow her to burn the original manuscript copy.

During that same period in American history in the same geographic area, there were other religious groups who adopted nontraditional practices with respect to marriage as well. The [United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming](#), or Shakers, were opposed to marriage, practiced strict celibacy, and lived communally with strict separation of the sexes. The [Oneida Community](#) observed a practice of complex marriage and communal living. Throughout the world [polygamy is still practiced today](#), principally among Muslim majority countries.

Historically, marriage was largely a [social construct](#)

focusing on the long-term survival and well-being of the families, but with Industrialization and the age of Romanticism, marriage changed into an individual pursuit based on intuition and emotion.

The text of this revelation was first published in the *Desert News*, pages 25-27, dated September 14, 1852. It was published as a broadsheet entitled "Seer", volume 1, number 1, pages 7-11, dated January, 1853. It was published in the *Millennial Star*, volume 15, number 1, pages 5-8, dated January 1, 1853. It was first published in the *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1876, pages 423-432.

Excerpt from Doctrine and Covenants Commentary

This Revelation is dated the 12th of July, 1843. William Clayton, who was Temple Recorder and private clerk of the Prophet Joseph at that time, relates the following:

"On the morning of the 12th of July, 1843, Joseph and Hyrum Smith came into the office of the upper story of the 'Brick-store,' on the bank of the Mississippi River. They were talking of the subject of plural marriage, [and] Hyrum said to Joseph, 'If you will write the Revelation on celestial marriage, I will take and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.' Joseph smiled and remarked, 'You do not know Emma as well as I do.' Hyrum repeated his opinion, and further remarked, 'The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity, and heavenly origin,' or words to that effect.... Joseph and Hyrum then sat down, and Joseph commenced to dictate the Revelation on Celestial Marriage, and I wrote it, sentence by sentence, as he dictated. After the whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct" (Hist. Rec. pp. 225-6).

This was not the first mention of the subject among the Saints. Sarah Ann Kimball and many others knew of it in 1842, and Joseph B. Noble heard of it in the fall of 1840. Orson Pratt says that the Prophet Joseph, in the forepart of 1832, while he was living at the house of Father Johnson at Hiram, Ohio, told

Church members that he had enquired of the Lord concerning this doctrine, and received the answer that it was true, but that the time to practice it had not come (Discourse by Orson Pratt, Salt Lake City, October 7th, 1869). Consequently, the Law of the Church remained as stated in Doctrine and Covenants 42:22, and as it is to-day, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else." (Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, Doctrine and Covenants Commentary, pages 820-821)

Excerpt from The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith

Because the Prophet had learned of and begun to practice plural marriage several years earlier, and because he started performing eternal marriages in 1841, many have concluded that section 132 was revealed years earlier, and merely written down in July 1843. A more accurate interpretation is that while Joseph Smith may have received revelation on matters contained in section 132 prior to 1843, this revelation (its form, language, and message) was unquestionably received for the first time in the summer of 1843.

Joseph Smith learned of the principle of plural marriage as early as July 1831, near Independence, on the border of Missouri and what later became Kansas. Moreover, available evidence attests that the Prophet began to take additional wives by 1836, in Kirtland, Ohio. Although plural marriage did not become a law of the Church until its public announcement in 1852, Joseph Smith, and later Brigham Young, did instruct a select number of faithful Mormon brethren to take additional wives before that date.

Whereas the concept of plural marriage appears to have had its birth in Kirtland, the principle of eternal marriage developed at Nauvoo. A combination of both principles was taught privately by the Prophet, beginning in 1841. From the beginning Joseph's wife, Emma, appears to have objected to his taking additional wives. Her refusal to accept the doctrine and to support her husband in righteousness resulted in a year's delay in administering the blessings of the temple endowment to women because Joseph desired his wife to be the first woman to receive the ordinance. Finally, in May 1843 she consented to the Prophet's taking plural-eternal wives, but by July she had reversed her position and was adamant. Hyrum Smith, William Law, and William Marks, presiding Church leaders, also were bitterly opposed to the doctrine, and while Law and Marks could never

assent to the implications of the practice, the Prophet's brother, Hyrum, was converted to it on 26 May 1843.

Section 132 was received on the morning of 12 July 1843 at the request of Hyrum Smith, who hoped that a written revelation on the subject would assuage Emma's feelings. Hyrum was fairly confident that if the Prophet would write down a revelation on celestial marriage, he could take it for Emma to read and thereby regain her support. William Clayton took down the ten-page revelation at Joseph Smith's dictation in the "small office upstairs in the rear of [the Prophet's Red Brick] store." An entry in the Clayton diary for 12 July 1843 states the following:

This A.M. I wrote a Revelation consisting of 10 pages on the order of the priesthood, showing the designs in Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon having many wives & concubines &c. After it was wrote Prests. Joseph & Hyrum presented it and read it to E[mma]. who said she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious.

Towards evening on 12 July Bishop Newel K. Whitney received permission to copy the revelation. About mid-day on 13 July Joseph C. Kingsbury, store-clerk for Bishop Whitney, carefully took a copy, which both Whitney and Kingsbury proofread against the original. The Kingsbury copy, which was given to Brigham Young in March 1847, was used to publish the revelation five years later. Whereas the Clayton copy was burned, the Kingsbury copy is still in existence. (Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pages 293-294)

Excerpts from History of the Church

In 1878, in company with President Joseph F. Smith, Elder Pratt visited several states east of the Mississippi in the capacity of a missionary; and at Plano, Illinois, at a meeting of the so-called Reorganized Church of the Latter-day Saints, he was invited by the presiding officer, a Mr. Dille, and the meeting, to occupy the time, which he did. In his remarks, according to his own and his companion's report of the meeting-

"Elder Pratt gave a plain, simple narration of his early experience in the Church, relating many interesting incidents connected with its rise;

explained the circumstances under which several revelations were received by Joseph, the Prophet, and the manner in which he received them, he being present on several occasions of the kind. Declared [that] at such times Joseph used the Seerstone when inquiring of the Lord, and receiving revelation, but that he was so thoroughly endowed with the inspiration of the Almighty and the spirit of revelation that he often received them without any instrument, or other means than the operation of the spirit upon his mind. Referred to the testimony which he received of the truth of the great latter-day work while yet a boy. Testified that these things were not matters of belief only with him, but of actual knowledge. He explained the circumstances connected with the coming forth of the revelation on plural marriage. Refuted the statement and belief of those present that Brigham Young was the author of that revelation; showed that Joseph Smith the Prophet had not only commenced the practice himself, and taught it to others, before President Young and the Twelve had returned from their mission in Europe, in 1841, but that Joseph actually received revelations upon that principle as early as 1831. Said: 'Lyman Johnson, who was very familiar with Joseph at this early date, Joseph living at his father's house, and who was also very intimate with me, we having traveled on several missions together, told me himself that Joseph had made known to him as early as 1831, that plural marriage was a correct principle. Joseph declared to Lyman that God had revealed it to him, but that the time had not come to teach or practice it in the Church, but that the time would come.' To this statement Elder Pratt bore his testimony. He cited several instances of Joseph having had wives sealed to him, one at least as early as April 5th, 1841, which was some time prior to the return of the Twelve from England. Referred to his own trial in regard to this matter in Nauvoo, and said it was because he got his information from a wicked source, from those disaffected, but as soon as he learned the truth, he was satisfied.

(B. H. Roberts, Introduction to Volume 5 of History of the Church, page xxxi-xxxii)

Wednesday, 12.-I received the following revelation in the presence of my brother Hyrum and Elder William Clayton:-

[text of D&C 132 quoted]

Hyrum took the revelation and read it to Emma.

I directed Clayton to make out deeds of certain lots of land to Emma and the children.

Thursday, July 13, 1843.-I was in conversation with Emma most of the day, and approved of the revised laws of the Legion....

Friday, 14.-Spent the day at home. I was visited by a number of gentlemen and ladies who had arrived from Quincy on a steamboat. They manifested kind feelings....

Saturday, 15.-Spent the day at home. Weather very hot....

Sunday, 16.-Preached in the morning and evening at the stand in the Grove, near the west of the Temple, concerning a man's foes being those of his own household.

"The same spirit that crucified Jesus is in the breast of some who profess to be Saints in Nauvoo. I have secret enemies in the city intermingling with the Saints, etc.... and slightly touched upon the subject of the everlasting covenant, showing that a man and his wife must enter into that covenant in the world, or he will have no claim on her in the next world. But on account of the unbelief of the people, I cannot reveal the fullness of these things at present." (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 5, pages 500-510, July 12-16, 1843)

In the afternoon, rode to the prairie to show some of the brethren some land. Evening, at home, and walked up and down the streets with my scribe. Gave instructions to try those persons who were preaching, teaching, or practicing the doctrine of plurality of wives: for, according to the law, I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom the power and its keys are conferred; and I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 6, page 46, October 5, 1843)

Excerpts from Journal of Discourses

In [July 12] 1843, the law on celestial marriage was written [at Nauvoo, Illinois] , but not published, and was known only to perhaps one or two hundred persons. It was written from the dictation of Joseph Smith, by Elder William Clayton, his private secretary, who is now in this city [Salt Lake City, Utah]. This revelation was published in 1852, read to a general conference, and accepted as a portion of the faith of the Church. Elder Orson Pratt went to Washington and there published a work called the Seer, in which this revelation was printed, and a series of articles showing forth the law of God in relation to marriage. (George A. Smith, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 14, pages 213-214, August 13, 1871)

Emma Smith, the widow of the Prophet, is said to have maintained to her dying moments that her husband had nothing to do with the patriarchal order of marriage, but that it was Brigham Young that got that up. I bear record before God, angels and men that Joseph Smith received that revelation, and I bear record that Emma Smith gave her husband in marriage to several women while he was living, some of whom are to-day living in this city, and some may be present in this congregation, and who, if called upon, would confirm my words. But lo and behold, we hear of publication after publication now-a-days, declaring that Joseph Smith had nothing to do with these things. Joseph Smith himself organized every endowment in our Church and revealed the same to the Church, and he lived to receive every key of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods from the hands of the men who held them while in the flesh, and who hold them in eternity. (Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 23, page 131, May 14, 1882)

Excerpt from Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants

Section 132 of the D&C was first written on July 12, 1843; however, the principled of eternal marriage and plurality of wives were known by the Prophet several years prior to that time. In the case of the eternal marriage covenant, it was taught in Kirtland as early as 1835, for in that year William W. Phelps wrote the following to his wife:

A new idea, Sally, if you and I continue faithful to the end, we are certain to be one in the Lord throughout eternity; this is one of the most glorious consolations we can have in the flesh. [Journal History of the Church, May 26, 1835]

The principle of plurality of wives was similarly known at an early date. Orson Pratt, who was well acquainted with the circumstances under which this doctrine was revealed, said:

I will tell you what the Prophet Joseph said in relation to this matter in 1831, also in 1832, the year in which the law commanding the members of this Church to cleave to one wife only was given. Joseph was then living in Portage county, in the town of Hiram, at the house of Father John Johnson. Joseph was very intimate with that family, and they were good people at that time, and enjoyed much of the Spirit of the Lord. In the fore part of the year 1832, Joseph told individuals, then in the Church, that he had inquired of the Lord concerning the principle of plurality of wives, and he received for answer that the principle of taking more wives than one is a true principle, but the time had not yet come for it to be practiced. That was before the Church was two years old. The Lord has His own time to do all things pertaining to His purposes in the last dispensation; His own time for restoring all things that have been predicted by the ancient prophets. [Orson Pratt, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, October 7, 1869, Journal of Discourses, reporter David W. Evans, XIII (London, England, 1871), 193.]

The exact time at which the Lord considered the principle should be lived is hard to determine because of the differing accounts. It seems as though an angle of the Lord threatened Joseph with destruction before he was willing to begin its practice. This event happened in 1840; [Brigham H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), II, 100-102.] however, there is some evidence that the Prophet was sealed prior to that date to at least one plural wife. [Max H. Parkin, "The Nature and Cause of Internal and External Conflict of the Mormons in Ohio between 1830 and 1838" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1966), p. 174]

In another early account, Newel K. Whitney testified that his daughter was called by revelation in 1842 and was the first sealed as a plural wife to the Prophet who had the permission of both parents to do so. He wrote:

Newel's daughter Sarah was wedded to Joseph, the first woman in this dispensation to be given in plural marriage by and with the consent of both parents. Her father officiated at the ceremony. The revelation concerning this is still in existence, though never published. It bears the date July 27, 1842 and was given through the Prophet to Bishop Whitney. The ceremony preceded by nearly a year the written document of the revelation on Celestial marriage, first committed to paper July 12, 1843. The principle itself was first made know to the Prophet some years earlier.

The original manuscript of the revelation, as taken down by Wm. Clayton, the prophet's scribe, was given by Joseph to Bishop Whitney for safe keeping. He retained possession of it until the Prophet's wife, Emma, persuaded her husband to let her see it, on receiving it from his hands, threw it into the fire and destroyed it. Bishop Whitney, foreseeing the probable fate of the manuscript, had taken the precaution before delivering it up, to have it copied by his clerk, the late Jos. C. Kingsbury, who executed the task under his personal supervision. It was this same copy of the original that Bishop Whitney surrendered to Pres. Brigham Young at Winter Quarters in 1846-47 and from that document "polygamy" was published to the work in the year 1852. [Maude Smith, Biography of Newel K. Whitney (typescript of three pages), p. 3]

In any event, the principles expounded in Section 132 were known some years prior to the time Joseph Smith wrote this revelation. What caused, or motivated, the Prophet at that time to write it may be explained somewhat by Elder Charles Smith as follows:

Elder Charles Smith made some remarks referring in the course thereof to the Revelation on Celestial Marriage-- said in relation thereto that the Patriarch Hyrum Smith met with the Elders in Nauvoo in the winter of 1843-4 and there told them that the doctrine of Plurality of Wives had bothered him considerably and he felt constrained to ask

therein Abraham, Moses, David & others could be justified before God in practicing this to him repugnant doctrine--He asked his brother the Prophet Joseph to ask the question of the Lord--Joseph did so and the Revelation given 12 July 1843 was the answer. [St. George Historical Record, November 26, 1882]

On the morning of July 12, 1843, Joseph and Hyrum Smith arrived together at Joseph's office. William Clayton, Joseph's private clerk, was already there when they came in, and he later recorded their conversation. He wrote:

On the morning of the 12th of July, 1843; Joseph and Hyrum Smith came into the office in the upper story of the brick store, on the bank of the Mississippi river. They were talking on the subject of plural marriage. Hyrum said to Joseph, 'If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage, I will take it and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.' Joseph smiles and remarked, 'You do not know Emma as well as I do.' Hyrum repeated his opinion, and further remarked, 'The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman to its truth, purity and heavenly origin,' or words to that effect. Joseph then said, 'Well, I will write the revelation and we will see.' He then requested me to get paper and prepare to write. Hyrum very urgently requested Joseph to write the revelation by means of the Urim and Thummim, but Joseph in reply, said he did not need to, for he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end.

Joseph and Hyrum then sat down and Joseph commenced to dictate the revelation on celestial marriage, and I wrote it, sentence by sentence, as he dictated. After the whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through, slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct. He then remarked there was much more that he could write on the same subject, but what was written was sufficient for the present.

Hyrum then took the revelation to read to Emma. Joseph remained with me in the office until Hyrum returned. When he came back, Joseph asked him how he had succeeded. Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger.

Joseph quietly remarked, 'I told you you did not know Emma as well as I did.' Joseph then put the revelation in his pocket, and they both left the office.

The revelation was read to several of the authorities during the day. Towards evening Bishop Newel K. Whitney asked Joseph if he had any objects to his taking a copy of the revelation; Joseph replied that he has not, and handed it to him. It was carefully copied the following day by Joseph C. Kingsbury. Two or three days after the revelation was written Joseph related to me and several others that Emma had so teased, and urgently entreated him for the privilege of destroying it, that he became so weary of her teasing, and to get rid of her annoyance, he told her she might destroy it and she had done so, but he had consented to her wish in this matter to pacify her, realizing the he knew the revelation perfectly, and could rewrite it at any time if necessary.

The copy made by Joseph C. Kingsbury is a true and correct copy of the original in every respect. The copy was carefully preserved by Bishop Whitney, and but few knew of its existence until the temporary location of the Came of Israel at Winter Quarters, on the Missouri River, in 1846. [HC, V, 32, 33]

The story in the above quote of Emma Smith brining the original copy of the revelation has an interesting counterpart in the traditions of the Smith family. According to Byron Joseph Smith, a descendant of Samuel H. Smith, Emma had Joseph put the manuscript on the mantle above the fireplace and then she used firetongs to place it in the fire in order to be able to say she had never even touched a revelation on the subject. [Personal interview with B.J. Smith, January 1971]

In the account by William Clayton, Joseph Kingsbury is said to have made a copy of the revelation for Bishop Newel K, Whitney. Once Emma Smith burned the original, this was the only copy remaining. Elder Kingsbury made the following sworn statement concerning his part in the recording the revelation:

In reference to the affidavit of Elder William Clayton, on the subject of the celestial order of patriarchal marriage, published in the Deseret Evening News of May 20th, 1886, and particularly as to the statement made therein concerning myself, as having copied the original revelation written by Brother Clayton at the dictation of

the Prophet Joseph, I will say that Bishop Newel K. Whitney, handed me the revelation above referred to either on the day it was written or the day following, and stating what it was, asked me to take a copy of it. I did so, and then read my copy of it to Bishop Whitney, we compared it with the original which he held in his hand while I read to him. When I finished reading, Bishop Whitney pronounced the copy correct, and Hyrum Smith coming into the room at the time to fetch the original, Bishop Whitney handed it to him. I will also state that this copy, as also the original are identically the same as that published in the present edition [1886] of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. [HC, V, 33, 34]

It is this Joseph Kingsbury copy of Section 132 that Brigham Young used at the time he decided to have it published in the Deseret News. The following is his statement on this occasion:

The original copy of this revelation was burnt up, William Clayton was the man who wrote it from the mouth of the prophet. In the meantime, it was in bishop Whitney's possession. He wished the privilege to copy it, which brother Joseph granted. Sister Emma burnt the original. The reason I mention this, is, because that the people who did know of the Revelation, suppose it was not now in existence

.
This revelation has been in my possession many years; and who had known it? None but those who should know it. I keep a patent lock on my desk, and there does not anything leak out that should not. [Deseret News Extra [Salt Lake City], September 14, 1852, pp. 24, 25]

As an interesting sidelight, Joseph F. Smith felt the revelation would have been written differently had it been intended for publication. He said:

When the revelation was written, in 1843, it was for a special purpose, by the request of the Patriarch Hyrum Smith, and was not then designed to go forth to the church or to the world. It is most probably that had I been then written with a view to its going out as a doctrine of the church, it would have been presented in a somewhat

different form. There are personalities contained in a part of it which are not relevant to the principle itself, but rather to the circumstances which necessitated its being written at that time. Joseph Smith, on the day it was written, expressly declared that there was a great deal more connected with the doctrine which would be revealed in due time, but this was sufficient for the occasion, and was made to suffice for the time. And indeed, I think it much more than many are prepared to live up to even now. [Joseph F. Smith, Address delivered in Salt Lake City, July 7, 1878, Journal of Discourses, reporter George F. Gibbs, XX (London, England, 1880), 29.]]

(Robert J. Woodford, The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants, Doctoral Thesis, Brigham Young University, April 1974, pages 1731-1737)

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