

APPENDIX 1

THE LDS PRIESTHOOD UNVEILED

Free Agency—the True Power and Authority

As explained throughout this **authorized** and **official** biography, one of Joseph Smith's final and most significant contributions to the religion that currently honors his name was the LDS Temple Endowment.¹ This sacred endowment was meant to reveal to his followers "the mysteries of God until [they knew] them in full."² It is the highest of all the "saving ordinances" embraced by the powerful LDS Church; and obtaining it is the greatest and most coveted desire of every Latter-day Saint.

The endowment presentation is a symbolic, theatrical, and conversational exposition given before a seated audience of "worthy," full-tithe paying, LDS/Mormon Church members. Dressed in white attire, the audience interacts with the movie media, which replaced the live presentation some number of years ago (*circa* 1990). Those thus seated come prepared with a robe, apron, sash, cap (males) or veil (females), with which those present adorn themselves and change on cue during the endowment presentation. The entire presentation—from the ostentatious entrance, to its delivery, and until one leaves the lavishly adorned interior of the expensive LDS Temple—leaves the participant with a feeling of peace and self-worth. The sense of pride felt in having received it overwhelms the member with an inflated sense of self-value and accomplishment, believing they have obtained something that the rest of the human race is not *worthy* to receive.

Under considerably more humble circumstances in Joseph's initial presentation, the endowment was created to deliver, *symbolically*, a full disclosure of what Joseph was not allowed to tell the people in his day, including the truth concerning priesthood power and authority.³ Had he disclosed the **real truth** in plainness, his followers would have risen up and killed him.⁴ With intended purpose and divine foresight, Joseph used priesthood names within the symbolism of the presentation to create the greatest stumbling block ever placed before the LDS/Mormon people. (A full disclosure of what Joseph intended for the endowment was published to the world in 2008.⁵)

The endowment presentation was finalized during the last few years of Joseph's mortal mission.⁶ The "endowment from on high" that was promised to his followers,⁷ *if* they became worthy to receive it, was finally "*delivered unto them [as] many things which they [could not] understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God [commanded Joseph to give it to them], that they may stumble.*"⁸

At the time of the endowment's finalization in 1842, Joseph Smith's life was in grave danger. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was being threatened with destruction from within by many dissenters (some being Joseph's close intimates) and also from without by numerous enemies and critics. Joseph accurately blamed this persecution on the LDS people because they "*were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness.*"⁹ Consequently, many prominent LDS leaders were conspiring against Joseph because they believed he was a fallen prophet. Others had already apostatized from

Joseph's teachings or had been excommunicated. This included the Three Witnesses to the authenticity of the gold plates, from which the *Book of Mormon* was translated. Most of these leaders would have rather seen Joseph killed than allow him to continue to mock the things that they valued and held dear in their pious hearts—including their presumed priesthood authority. The things that Joseph mocked were the very things that set them up above others and gave them their personal value, pride, power, and authority among the people.

Part of the anger and contention against Joseph was caused by the way he prepared the endowment for the people. In the presentation of the endowment, Joseph instructed the actor who played the role of Lucifer to wear the Masonic apron as "*an emblem of my (Lucifer's) power and priesthoods.*"¹⁰ The actor who plays "Adam," the character who symbolically represents a sincere seeker of truth, is confused by Lucifer's apron and asks, "*What is that apron you have on?*"

Lucifer responds and clarifies that it represents "*an emblem of my power and priesthoods.*"

In response, a confused Adam inquires, "*Priesthoods?*"

"*Yes, Priesthoods,*" Lucifer responds.¹¹

Before this symbolic interchange takes place between the actors who play Adam and Lucifer, the person receiving his or her temple endowment only hears one reference to "priesthood." This occurs when both male *and* female participants are dressed in *the garments of the Holy Priesthood* prior to viewing the presentation of the temple endowment.¹²

At a purposefully specified place during the endowment, all participants are dressed in the "Robes of the Holy Priesthood"—both men and women equally. Putting on the robes—which are exactly the *same* for both genders—was meant to symbolize human beings accepting the *power and authority* of their individual free agency. The ritual was meant to represent one assuming the personal responsibility and power to make one's own choices. The robe is placed on the *left* shoulder during the part of the presentation that represents one's mortal life upon earth. Being placed on the *left shoulder* represents the way in which humans act with the power of their free agency in mortality, i.e., *the lone and dreary world*, which is usually contrary to the commandments of God; thus the placement on the *left* shoulder in contrast to being placed on the *right*.¹³

The *power and authority* of every human being is established merely by one's singular creation into existence—an interminable license of free will to act for him or herself. This agency sets human beings apart from all other life forms in the Universe. Again, it was Joseph's intention that **the robes of the Holy Priesthood represent this human power and authority** and nothing else! This unique human agency is the "*power of God*" that gives all human beings the right to act and to be acted upon equally. It is the same agency shared in equality with the most advanced human beings in the Universe, i.e., the Gods.¹⁴ In essence, priesthood authority truly is the "power of God" given to all mortals to act "in God's name"; i.e., to empower and utilize ones' existence to the end of finding one's true happiness, or in other words, to act as God would act.

Before Lucifer's character is introduced into the endowment ceremony, both the men and women share equal status in this symbolic holy priesthood. They each are clothed in *equal* undergarments that metaphorically symbolize their pre-mortal (as advanced human beings) and mortal creations. The Holy Priesthood was meant to be androgynous—having the characteristics of both male and female. Joseph was trying to express in symbolism that the pure Holy Priesthood, when exercised consistent with one's true humanity, is nothing more or less than an *order* of people, both men and women, who are committed to following Christ in the

way that they act and are acted upon in the exercise of their free will. In the beginning, Joseph called this order, “the holy priesthood, after the order of the Son of God.”¹⁵

In the early days of Joseph’s calling, this “holy order” was the only reference he intended for priesthood or authority. But over time, because the early Mormons refused to abide by the simple concepts of Christ’s teachings and desired a church and a priesthood that fit more comfortably with their former Christian beliefs, their perception and understanding of this *order* evolved. Like the ancient Jews before them, the people wanted someone to lead them and to take authority and responsibility over their lives. They gave away the inalienable human right and power guaranteed by their *own eternal* “priesthood” to someone other than themselves. They wanted a leader to be responsible for their actions—whatever the “prophet of God” told them to do, they would do, and put the accountability upon his shoulders. The “holy order of God” became a power and authority that Joseph knew did not exist—either in this world or in any other advanced human world in the Universe. Nevertheless, it gradually became a reality in the minds of the LDS people, especially the men’s. Therefore, because they desired it, God commanded it of Joseph.

A Witness’ Testimony About the Priesthood

David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses to the authenticity of the gold plates, later turned against Joseph and claimed that he was a fallen prophet for allowing the Holy Priesthood of God to evolve into the male-based patriarchal mess that it eventually became.

Whitmer wrote:

*This matter of “priesthood,” since the days of Sydney [sic] Rigdon, has been the great hobby and stumbling-block of the Latter Day Saints. Priesthood means authority; and authority is the word we should use. I do not think the word priesthood is mentioned in the New Covenant of the Book of Mormon. Authority is the word we used for the first two years in the church—until Sydney [sic] Rigdon’s days in Ohio. **This matter of the two orders of priesthood in the Church of Christ, and lineal priesthood of the old law being in the church, all originated in the mind of Sydney [sic] Rigdon. He explained these things to Brother Joseph in his way, out of the old Scriptures, and got Brother Joseph to inquire, etc. He would inquire, and as mouthpiece speak out the revelations just as they had it fixed up in their hearts.** As I have said before, according to the desires of the heart, the inspiration comes, but it may be the spirit of man that gives it. How easily a man can receive some other spirit, appearing as an Angel of Light, believing at the time that he is giving the revealed will of God; a doubt never entering his mind but what he is doing God’s will. Of course I believe that Brother Joseph gave every revelation—including the one on polygamy—in all good conscience before God. This is the way the High Priests and the “priesthood” as you have it, was introduced into the Church of Christ almost two years after its beginning—and after we had baptized and confirmed about two thousand souls into the church.*¹⁶

After Joseph was killed, Whitmer vehemently opposed the “priesthoods” (plural) that were embellished and changed to conform to Brigham Young’s church. He was with Joseph from the beginning and knew *how* the “revelations” that established church doctrine were

received and recorded. He blasted Brigham Young and other leaders, who aspired for control of the people's minds, for changing the original revelations to fit their own agendas.¹⁷

David Whitmer never denied the divine nature of the *Book of Mormon*, but in dealing with the ever-evolving LDS Church, he eventually found it very difficult to accept Joseph's continual efforts to give the people the desires of their hearts. Whitmer did not understand how unchangeable and everlasting truths could change.¹⁸ Whitmer believed in the God of early Mormonism. He could not accept the God that had evolved and developed by Joseph's neglecting to control the people, as he saw it. Whitmer never understood human free agency like Joseph did. Like many men, Whitmer believed humans needed to be controlled and told what to do to prevent chaos and anarchy. Joseph saw it a different way: "I teach them correct principles and let them govern themselves."¹⁹ The people rejected the "correct principles" Joseph taught them and, in governing themselves, received the priesthood power and authority they desired. (It will later be revealed how Joseph gave Whitmer a chance to have the priesthood *his* way by allowing him to choose the original group of Twelve Apostles for the LDS Church.)

There was good justification for David Whitmer's disgust with the way that the later church leaders presented and changed what Joseph originally taught as the "holy order of God" and the authority associated with it. Well did he write, "Authority is the word we used for the first two years in the church. ...I do not think the word priesthood is mentioned in the New Covenant of the Book of Mormon."²⁰ The "new covenant" to which Whitmer was referring was the message delivered to the people of the *Book of Mormon* during the visit of the resurrected Christ. The covenant made between Christ and the Nephites was the "fullness of the everlasting Gospel...as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants"²¹ and that Gospel did not include any priesthood authority.

To understand David Whitmer's contentions, many of which appear to be substantially valid, LDS/Mormon priesthood power and authority needs to be explained in its entirety. Understanding *how* and *why* the meaning and intent of the priesthood was introduced by Joseph, and then allowed to be changed and developed over time, will shed much-needed light on the difficult position Joseph was in as he assumed the role of a **true messenger who could not disclose the real truth.**

The Priesthood of the United States of America

There have been more arguments about the veracity and truth (or falsehood) of LDS priesthood authority than about any other point of Mormon doctrine, from Joseph's time until now. Whoever has been "properly" ordained to the "right" priesthood, office, and calling assumes that he has the authority to create doctrine through "divine revelation." Along with a pious fear of God that induces a believer to conjoin and subjugate himself to a religious leader, all other allusions and illusions held, by which one thus resigns free will to the supposed powers or "priesthoods" of another, gives the priesthood holder overt authority over the believer. This dominion of one person over another keeps the world chained in ignorance and in a state of continual hell (the opposite of peace). Joseph knew this truth and symbolically presented it in the "emblem of...power and priesthoods" of Lucifer's apron that is in the presentation of the LDS Temple Endowment.²² Joseph instructed Lucifer's character, thus adorned in his emblematic apron, to proclaim to the actor in the role of God: "I will take the treasures of the earth, and with gold and silver I will buy up armies and navies, popes and priests, and reign with blood and horror on the earth!"²³

The foundation of the United States of America was based on “priesthood” power and authority; and most of the Founding Fathers were active Masons. George Washington laid the cornerstone for the U.S. Capitol building on September 18, 1793 in a Masonic ceremony, while wearing an apron.²⁴ The apron was part of the Masonic attire worn by participants of the rituals of Masonry. At the time of its conception, the United States was infested with the attitude of freemasonry—believed by many even today to be one of the most dividing and arrogant “orders” of men ever devised. As explained in chapter thirty-five, Joseph disliked everything about Masonry. But to play his role in giving the LDS people what they wanted according to their desires, in spite of the **real truth**, he superficially supported any member’s desire to participate in Masonic fraternities and even superficially participated in Masonry himself for a time,²⁵ until he was kicked out for blasphemy.²⁶

Joseph chose to incorporate the Masonic apron into the presentation of the “holy temple endowment” by dressing Lucifer in it. When he did this, many of his most trusted friends and colleagues who were themselves loyal Masons, branded him a blasphemous and irreverent colleague for plagiarizing their Masonic ceremonies. Many later abandoned him as a fallen and false prophet.²⁷ They wondered how Joseph could do this and mock their great nation and its founding father (George Washington).

As mentioned, the LDS Church at that time had fallen into a precarious state of dissension from within and rising persecution from without. Joseph knew his time was very limited, so he couldn’t have cared less what others thought about him. So what if he had dressed Lucifer in the same apron that the “Father of the United States” wore when he symbolically laid the “cornerstone” of American power and authority? The United States government had not used their “authority” to act when called upon and supplicated to protect Joseph and his newly created religion.²⁸ Joseph was not vindictive though, because a lot of the persecution he blamed on the actions of the LDS people, themselves. However, he purposefully made the symbolic connection between Lucifer—the founder of all of the world’s philosophies and religions—and George Washington—the “father” of the present-day “one nation under God” that continually persecuted Joseph and the Saints. Joseph presented the god of this “one nation under god” as the “god of this world”—Lucifer himself!

Joseph taught that the same authority and power that the United States government used, including the lawyers, enforcement authorities, and judges,²⁹ as well as the merchants and bankers who collectively controlled it—was also a type of priesthood, not unlike that of any religious authority. In theory, the priesthood of the elected officers of government was derived *from* the people through an authorizing document—the U.S. Constitution. Likewise, many Christian groups derive their “authority” and priesthood from a document—the Holy Bible. Joseph knew that the Masons claimed their *own* power and authority—yet *another* priesthood “of my...(Lucifer’s) priesthoods.”³⁰ He taught that most men are so much concerned about “the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men”³¹ that they negate the true purpose and meaning of a righteous power and authority, i.e., the priesthood of their foundationalized humanity. In other words, they negate the righteous acts that are aligned with the message of Christ.

Joseph conveyed his true feelings about the United States government while he was imprisoned in a jail at Liberty, Missouri in March of 1839. In Joseph’s experience, the government had not used its power *righteously*, as the law ostensibly provided within its statutes, in order to protect an individual’s right to religious freedom. Joseph was disgusted with political power and authority, as well as with the religious people who supported it. A few months before, in October of 1838, Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs had issued an

executive order to drive the Mormons out of Missouri, or kill them if they refused.³² With plenty of time on his hands to write his feelings—without disclosing what he was mandated not to reveal of the **real truth**—Joseph related his contempt for the United States and for the “priesthood or authority” of any man:

How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.

Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?

Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.

Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God.

We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

Hence many are called, but few are chosen.³³

The clues of his true feelings are found within the text, “a little authority, as they suppose,” which sum up Joseph’s thoughts about “priesthood or the authority of that man.” Whenever anyone exercises authority over another person, it cannot be done without being in direct violation of the simple and true gospel of Christ—something Joseph understood very well. His early followers, however, had rejected the simplicity of this Royal Law³⁴ and, therefore, did not understand or accept its importance in their lives.

Most men, Mormon or not, lust for power and authority over others. But according to the simple code of humanity established through the teachings of Christ—the **Royal Law**—*no one has the right to judge another free-willed being and set a measure for what he or she can or cannot do, as long as what the person is doing does not impede upon the free will of another.*

The men in the early LDS Church had their priesthood. The government of the United States had its own priesthood. Each free man claimed his own power and authority over others (especially slave owners), thus his own priesthood. Although it confused “Adam Lucifer was well within the parameters of **real truth** when he presented the apron he was wearing as “an emblem of my power and my priesthoods” (emphasis added). Joseph meant these “priesthoods” to encompass **all** assumed power and authority that mortals exercise over others, including those he *suffered* to come forth in his own religion.

Pure Religion, Undefined Before God

As indicated in the early chapters of this biography about Joseph's childhood, the idea that someone would profess to have some divine priesthood power and authority over another meant nothing to him. This was because in the minds of both his father and his idol and mentor, Alvin, it meant nothing. It was established that his grandfather Asael abhorred any power or authority that one human being held over another. A loyal follower of Thomas Paine's ideas, Grandpa Smith believed in the equality of men and women. He believed that any duty associated with religion should consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.³⁵ Asael Smith's favorite biblical passage of scripture was James 1:27:

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

No one controlled Asael Smith's mind or actions. He was a free man in every sense of the word.

As explained in an earlier chapter, Alvin Smith shared his grandfather's strong independence. But unlike Asael, Alvin was a consummate atheist who came to detest the Bible. Alvin believed that the Bible was a compilation of myths and stories invented by men to control the minds of other people. Even so, Joseph's oldest sibling was also open-minded and studied the Bible with a sincere desire to know if there were any truths in it. Alvin's intense study of the Bible helped him find its flaws and sustained his atheistic beliefs. He knew the Bible better than any of the Smiths. And when he explained to his family the role that the character Moses played in it, Alvin's insight continued to influence the young Joseph and prepare him to play his intended role as the latter-day Moses.³⁶

The Story of Moses and the Priesthood

The Old Testament mentions "priests" in relation to the story of Aaron and his sons. Moses was commanded to anoint them to help him teach the people.³⁷ The Bible introduces the concept that the Aaronic Priesthood would "be an everlasting (unchangeable) priesthood."³⁸ What Alvin discovered and discussed with his family about Moses and this priesthood established a mental foundation and perspective in the young Joseph that later sustained how he *suffered* the priesthood to be introduced into the church that came forth through his name.

According to the story in the Old Testament, there was no need for Aaron and his sons, or any priesthood for that matter, when Moses first became the spokesman for the people. However, the people had refused the **real truth**, which they would have received from God himself (according to the story) had they been willing. They had chosen Moses to be their spokesperson so they did not have to deal with God. Because of this, the people got what they wanted—a "prophet"/leader and the "priesthood"/authority. Like Joseph, Moses was commanded to give the people what they desired, even things that they could not understand.

Initially, Moses was the ONLY ONE who had any authority to act in the place of God on behalf of the people. Moses would sit and judge the people from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, saw all that he was compelled to do for the people, Jethro asked,

*What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto evening?*³⁹

Moses answered his father-in-law, saying,

*Because the people come unto me to inquire of God. When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I make known to them the statutes of God and his laws.*⁴⁰

Jethro responded,

*The thing that thou doest is not good! Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that are with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.*⁴¹

*Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.*⁴²

That sure sounded good to Moses! Who would want to sit and listen to the complaints, murmurings, and rantings and give continual counsel expected by the people from morning until evening? Moses needed someone to help him. He called those whom he chose “servants” of the people.⁴³ The ancient Hebrews called these servants “cohens,” which was the word used in the biblical text and translated into the English language as “priests.” The authority Moses gave these servants (according to the story) was the “everlasting priesthood.”

Alvin found one major flaw in how this priesthood first began: GOD NEVER COMMANDED IT!

Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.

Alvin pointed out that God was upset with the people for rejecting Him and requesting a spokesman instead of getting their counsel directly from Him. According to the Hebrew legend, God told Moses that He wanted to speak to the people Himself. The people were afraid and refused to speak with God or hear his voice. They told Moses,

*Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*⁴⁴

Alvin explained that the Bible account stated that God wasn't too happy about the people's attitude. He expounded that God *allowed* Moses to establish an order of priesthood by which the people lost their direct connection with God, which inhibited their own free agency and caused them to give up their individual power and free will to a man—Moses—exactly as they desired it!

The young Joseph was extremely impacted by what his older brother argued with the more religious part of their family and friends about the Bible. He never forgot these things as he embarked on his own mission to exemplify Moses in every way. He gave the people what they desired, "and because they desired it God [did] it, that they may stumble."⁴⁵ And stumble they did and continue to do.

Alvin Smith was absolutely right! He discovered biblical proof of people giving up their free will to the authority of others because of their innate fears and ignorance. He argued these points with any preacher who dared attempt to convince him that he could not learn from God without depending upon a religion and written scripture or upon a "divinely chosen" spokesperson. Alvin was not afraid to approach God and ask for information. As an atheist, Alvin believed that god only existed in the human mind. He futilely argued the fact with others and would often offend those who constantly depended on religious rhetoric to define their reality. But it was this older brother's tenacity, independence, and intelligence that one day motivated Joseph to search for the answers to his own questions without depending on others. As the religion evolved that he was mandated to *suffer* to come forth by his own hand, Joseph often reflected on what he had learned from Alvin about biblical priesthood authority.

The Priesthood in Relation to Christ

In September 1823, Joseph was informed of the existence of the gold plates and his mission to translate them. From this date until May 1829, Joseph never once considered organizing a church, let alone introducing any specially designated authority or priesthood, in order to fulfill his mission. His only concern was translating the record, which contained a "fullness of the everlasting Gospel as delivered by the Savior." And when he was finished translating what Christ delivered to the ancient people, he knew that Christ did not mention anything—not even a word—about priesthood. And in what he had translated up to that point, Christ had not laid his hands upon anyone's head to give them power and authority over others.

The only power and authority that was given to Nephi and the other apostles according to the part of the record that was translated at that time, was conveyed *by the voice* of Christ alone. He never laid his hands upon them to confer this power. At one point, he touched "with his finger" the disciples whom he had chosen, "save it were the three who were to tarry."⁴⁶ This gesture was certainly a far cry from the "laying on of hands" dictated by the LDS/Mormons in their ordinations. What is not explained in the record was the purpose for the touch—and it had nothing to do with conferring any power or authority, or he would have also touched "the three who *were* to tarry."

Thus, with a single touch, Christ, a resurrected being with advanced technology and knowledge unknown to mortals, used his intelligence and power to *manipulate* the DNA patterns of the other apostles so that they would live to "the age of a man."⁴⁷ He basically cured any inherited or acquired diseases and defects they had, and made them immune to any others that might have ended their lives before the natural age at which a mortal man

usually dies. The “three who [would] tarry” had their DNA manipulated later when they were “caught up into the heavens”;⁴⁸ therefore, they were not “touched...with his finger” at the same time as the others.

By the command of his voice, he gave the apostles the authority to do one thing and one thing only: baptize the people in preparation of them receiving **his doctrine**. His doctrine was the same doctrine he gave to the twelve whom he had chosen at Jerusalem. To these he also gave power—not by ordination, but by the intelligence he conveyed to them in the mysteries he taught with his own voice through the words of his mouth.

In both hemispheres, Christ commanded his apostles to teach the people **only** what he had taught them—“**nothing varying** from the words which Jesus had spoken”!⁴⁹ This was his doctrine; there was to be no other doctrine. The Law of Moses included priesthood authority and callings. Christ’s doctrine **never** did. But even the Law of Moses, lived by the ancient people, included instructions that those men were “ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, **to teach his commandments** unto the children of men.”⁵⁰ His commandments are the “fullness of his everlasting Gospel” and are given by his own mouth in 3 Nephi, chapters 12, 13, and 14 of the *Book of Mormon* and in Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Bible. There’s a very good reason why both the Bible and the *Book of Mormon* reflect each other almost word for word in these chapters: BECAUSE THIS IS THE FULLNESS OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST and his *only* doctrine.

AGAIN, not at any time did Christ ever lay his hands on the heads of any of his apostles in any special ritualistic gesture to give them tangible power and authority—reserved only for advanced creators—that in any way originated from some source external to the apostles. The power and authority Christ gave to them was knowledge and intelligence—the real truth! It was this knowledge and intelligence that gave Christ and his Father their glory.⁵¹ It would later be revealed by Joseph that the ONLY true power and authority of the high priesthood was “to have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened.”⁵² The *Book of Mormon* record would teach that, without a full knowledge of the mysteries of God, no man or woman could make claim to any power and authority from God. Conversely, any who are true messengers have a complete knowledge of the mysteries of God in full.⁵³

Christ mentioned the word “priest” twice while he visited the people of the ancient American continent. The first was when he gave a prophecy of what was going to happen in the latter days when the Gentiles receive the “fullness of my gospel” as given in the Bible and the *Book of Mormon*:

And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and **priestcrafts**, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all those things, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them.⁵⁴

No Gentile nation of people upon the earth in the latter days is “lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth” more

than the United States of America. And no American religion is “lifted up in the pride of their hearts” more than the members of the Mormon faiths—the very people who have access to the “fullness of the everlasting Gospel as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants” of America.⁵⁵

The second and last time Christ mentioned the word “priest,” also has a similar implication:

Yea, wo be unto the Gentiles except they repent; for it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Father, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots; And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strongholds; And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy land, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers; Thy graven images I will also cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee, and thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands; And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee; so will I destroy thy cities. And it shall come to pass that all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and **priestcrafts**, and whoredoms, shall be done away.⁵⁶

Jesus, the Christ, was greatly annoyed by any man who felt he had the right to take a position of authority over another. Two of his Jewish disciples, James and John, approached him and asked, “*Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.*” The other ten heard about the arrogant proposition and began to contend with James and John. Jesus calmed them down and explained a few things about one desiring to “exercise authority upon” another:

Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.⁵⁷

At one point during his ministry, Jesus even rebuked his disciples’ arrogance in believing that they, alone, had some kind of *special* power and authority that was not given to all other mortals equally.⁵⁸ Joseph Smith knew that there was no part of the “fullness of the everlasting Gospel, delivered by the Savior” to the world that included, or will ever include, a “priesthood” of any kind. However, he knew that an individual having the “proper” authorization/authority was paramount to having a key to the *order* of the Universe. Free-willed beings cannot be allowed to do anything they wish; if allowed, the Universe would be in a constant state of chaos and disruption. Joseph attempted to teach the people correct principles and allow them to govern themselves. The “correct principles” he attempted to teach them were the “fullness of the everlasting Gospel, delivered by the Savior.” The people rejected these principles as they governed themselves.

The Holy Order of the Universe

There is an order to the Universe. Authority is given to a few chosen individuals who maintain this order—an order that is without “beginning of days, nor

end of life.”⁵⁹ In other words, it has always existed and has never changed. It is the “order of Melchisedec”⁶⁰ referred to briefly in the writings of Paul in the Bible. Jesus was referred to as a “high priest forever”⁶¹ in this order. In the *Book of Mormon* it is repeatedly called the “holy order of God.”⁶² This “order” is not a manifest authorization/authority, but rather, **it consists of the laws and rules of human action—the code of humanity—which is the “doctrine of Christ,” i.e., “the everlasting Gospel as delivered by the Savior.”**

The “priesthood” of men, Masons, Mormons, the U.S. government, and etc. is NOT THIS HOLY ORDER, but rather, the exact opposite. “Priest” is a word used as a title. It is a designation in its purest form for those who are called to instruct others in the “holy order of God.” In other words, those so designated teach the human race the code of humanity that is lived throughout the Universe in all advanced human societies—the code that maintains the strict and eternal order of peace, happiness, and equality.

The phrase “holy order of God” is mentioned many times in the *Book of Mormon*. Whenever mentioned, there is a distinct separation between supposed *priesthood authority—or priestcraft—and this holy order.*

The first mention is by Jacob, Nephi’s younger brother. Jacob explains that he was “called of God, and ordained *after the manner of his holy order.*”⁶³ The “manner” of the order of the Universe is that a person (not necessarily a man) chooses the role before the “foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works. In the first place, [they are] left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such... Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling [is] prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared.”⁶⁴

We were all created equally on a planet where our advanced creators reside. There are numerous solar systems in the Universe consisting of planets with humans in varying states of existence, depending on the free-willed choices of the humans who inhabit them. A few of these planets are specifically designed for the creation process of human beings. Those living on these types of planets have the eternal authorization, i.e., authority, to create new human beings. One planet in each solar system houses those who are responsible for the preparation of an Overseer, a Christ. This Overseer is assigned to each newly created batch of human children. All newly created human beings will one day live in their own solar system somewhere in the Universe. It is the Christ assigned to each of these solar systems who ensures that the *holy* order of the Universe is properly maintained by the human beings who reside on the planets in the particular solar system over which he presides.

Every newly created human being is aware of the order of the Universe—how things exist, why they exist, where they exist—and for whom it all is intended. They are aware of the necessity of a Christ, who is “prepared” to monitor their actions as free-willed human beings. They are aware that someday they will leave the advanced solar system in which they were created to live in their own. They are aware that they must go through a period of mortality in an imperfect world with an imperfect body so that they will be able to appreciate existing as an advanced human being in a perfect world with a perfect body forever. They realize what will be required of a Christ, i.e., what is “in and

through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared." Thus, all newly created human beings "were on the same standing" with each other.⁶⁵

Some, "on account of their exceeding faith and good works,"⁶⁶ after understanding what was to be required of their Christ, volunteered to help him in his work. A Christ's work in all advanced solar systems throughout the Universe is to ensure that all free-willed human beings follow the proper code of humanity to maintain the "holy order of God." *However, while advanced humans go through the mortal stage of their eternal development, a Christ's work is slightly different. Instead of enforcing the code of humanity, a Christ ensures that everyone has the opportunity to choose for themselves to follow the code of humanity or not. To a Christ, it is important for a mortal to be provided with the opportunity to not follow him. Thus, he teaches and unconditionally forgives, but never forces.*

When mortals choose not to follow this code, the problems associated with human nature abound and society plunges into war, chaos, inequality, and injustice. Upon experiencing mortality, humans learn the quintessential importance of having a Christ to enforce the eternal laws of the Universe by limiting free will. Therefore, the purpose of all those chosen by Christ during mortality as one of his **true messengers** is to provide the people with the *choice* by teaching them what the code is. Joseph Smith later presented this truth in one of the Articles of Faith associated with his religion, allowing one to "[worship] Almighty God according to the dictates of [their] own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may."⁶⁷

Alma, one of those who volunteered before the foundation of the world, spoke of people "who humble themselves and do walk **after the holy order of God.**"⁶⁸ He asked the people why they were treating each other so badly, "trampling the Holy One under your feet; yea, can ye be puffed up in the pride of your hearts; yea, will ye still persist in the wearing of costly apparel and setting your hearts upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches? Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another...and will you persist in turning your backs upon the poor, and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them?"⁶⁹

Alma acted within the parameters of the authority in his "priestly" calling to

awaken [the people] to a sense of your duty to God, that ye may walk blameless before him, that ye **may walk after the holy order of God**, after which ye have been received. And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive. And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity, and then ye will always abound in good works."⁷⁰

Alma taught the people the proper code of humanity. He taught them the same words Christ would teach them—a way of life and action that promotes peace, happiness, and equality in human society. Alma performed his role, as do all **true messengers** who are "ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people."⁷¹

Women With the Priesthood

Belonging to this “holy order” is not limited to *white* males only, nor is it only men who can act “after the manner of the holy order of God.” As mentioned above, there were those before the foundation of this world who volunteered to help Christ do his work. Some of these volunteers became mortal males and others became mortal females. Some were born with a darker skin tone than others. Regardless of what type of mortal body they find themselves in, any mortal can help the cause of Christ simply by desiring to do so.

Before the Church was organized, Joseph did not *choose* anyone to help him in the work. He had been promised that those so *inspired* would come to him and volunteer. After Martin Harris lost the 116-page manuscript, Joseph was a little more careful about appointing a scribe from among the “volunteers.” Joseph’s wife Emma assisted him during the winter of 1828, but had too many other everyday pressures that kept her from completing the assignment. She transcribed very little of the record, but enough to keep Joseph’s work going forward.⁷²

Emma did things throughout her life that the Mormons would later come to accept as things done only with “priesthood authority.” Nevertheless, she was the first woman “ordained under [Joseph’s] hand to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church.”⁷³ Emma was “ordained” long before most of the men who would later spurn the idea that a woman could be “ordained [a priestess]...after the order of [the son of God], to teach these things unto the people.”⁷⁴ As mentioned above, Joseph turned the tables on the men and snubbed their idea of a woman not being ordained under the same priesthood as a male when he completed the temple endowment. In it, he revealed everything for which the men would have rejected and killed him.

Although Joseph *suffered* the men to establish whatever priesthood authority they desired, Joseph’s true feelings (i.e., not “revealing [his] true identity”) about the matter never changed. The *real* priesthood had nothing to do with power and authority, but all to do with a sincere desire to serve one’s fellowmen and to treat them according to the universal code of humanity lived by God in advanced human societies. It was an order of people that anyone could join—both black and white, bond and free, male and female, and even the heathen—because all are alike unto God.⁷⁵ The only requirement was a desire to “follow after the order of the son of God.” In the early days of the Church, this was the only concept of authority taught by Joseph.

Called to the Work

Hearing of his son’s dilemma and struggle to translate the plates, Joseph’s father, Joseph Sr., visited his son in the latter part of February 1829⁷⁶ to see if there was anything he could do. Joseph Jr. was looking for someone to take Harris’ place as his scribe. It was an important role, one that Joseph did not want to entrust to the wrong person again.

During Joseph Sr.’s visit, the subject of authority to do God’s work came up in discussion. Joseph Sr. wanted to know what qualified a person to do God’s work. The discussion was between a father and his son, and no one else. Emma made a few notes of the things she felt were interesting as she overheard the discussion. At a later date, when asked by others about these qualifications, Joseph composed a “revelation from God”⁷⁷ from Emma’s notes and what he remembered, outlining the requirements of one being “in the service of God.”

Joseph had told his father that anyone, man or woman, could “*embark in the service of God.*”⁷⁸ He explained that if one had the desire, then that person was “*called to the work.*” The calling to serve God would come from within, not from without. One simply had to be a good person full of “*faith, hope, charity, and love, with an eye single to the Glory of God...[with] virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence*” in order to be qualified for the work.⁷⁹ He never said one had to be “*called of God.*” He said, “*if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work.*”⁸⁰

Emma, a woman, did not need any priesthood authority to be Joseph’s scribe; all she needed was the desire to serve. After Joseph’s death, the church that came from those who were closest to Joseph and understood his original principles and values, which included all of Joseph’s immediate family, eventually allowed women to be ordained to the priesthood and receive the same power and authority as their male counterparts.⁸¹ The LDS religion that came from those who did *not* understand Joseph has never allowed women to have priesthood authority.

Throughout his ministry, Joseph *suffered* men to corrupt the simplicity of a person’s desire to serve one’s neighbor with the proper attitude. The men changed the concept of acting within the parameters of “the fruit of the Spirit” and began to manifest the “works of the flesh.”⁸² He allowed “service to God”—which he knew from what he translated simply meant “service of your fellow beings”⁸³—to be changed into a priesthood authority that was motivated by a man’s ego. He saw the “holy order of God” evolve into two separate priesthoods with offices and distinctions of varying degrees and responsibilities. Men assumed power and control over others, especially women, believing that only men had the authority to receive personal revelation to justify their actions.

Joseph *suffered* ordinances and principles to be introduced that had nothing to do with the “everlasting Gospel as delivered by the Savior,” nor were they even mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*. The LDS/Mormon priesthood authority supported the personalities of those who believed that they had received some kind of divine power and authority. Subsequently, the phrase “holy order of God” became completely lost in the oblivion of Latter-day Saint doctrine and covenants, given to the Church because the people desired it.

Joseph *suffered* many things to take place because of the mandate he was under to give the people what they wanted. To the chagrin of those who want to believe that the U.S. Constitution was *inspired*, Joseph explained that it was also “*suffered* to be established.”⁸⁴ From reading the *Book of Mormon* record, one quickly ascertains how often “*God suffers*” his people to do things that are contrary to his will. Joseph Smith encountered this kind of *suffering* all of his life. He often reflected upon the words of king Limhi and Alma:

O how marvelous are the works of the Lord, and how long doth he suffer with his people; yea, and how blind and impenetrable are the understandings of the children of men; for they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them! Yea, they are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shepherd, and scattereth, and are driven, and are devoured by the beasts of the forest.⁸⁵

O Lord God, how long wilt thou suffer that such wickedness and infidelity shall be among this people? O Lord, wilt thou give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities. For I am infirm, and such wickedness among this people doth pain my soul. O Lord, my heart is exceedingly sorrowful; wilt

thou comfort my soul in Christ. O Lord, wilt thou grant unto me that I may have strength, that I may suffer with patience these afflictions which shall come upon me, because of the iniquity of this people.⁸⁶

No man knew the true feelings in Joseph's heart. He meant it when he told the people that they would rise up and kill him if he told them the truth.⁸⁷ He spoke with strong conviction when he said, "*You don't know me; you never knew my heart. No man knows my history.*"⁸⁸

The Holy Order of God

The subject of the "holy order of God" first came up in April 1829, after Joseph translated the following passage:

Behold, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, having been called of God, and ordained after the manner of his holy order, and having been consecrated by my brother Nephi, unto whom ye look as a king or a protector, and on whom ye depend for safety, behold ye know that I have spoken unto you exceedingly many things.⁸⁹

Once this passage came through the Urim and Thummim, Oliver asked Joseph what "the manner of his holy order" meant, wondering if it was some kind of priesthood authority. Not knowing exactly why these particular words were used, owing to the fact that he still had most of the plates left to translate, Joseph told Oliver that he was confident that in due time all these things would be made known.

When confronted by Oliver with the question, Joseph did not know the answer. During the translation of the Book of Lehi⁹⁰—the 116-page manuscript lost by Martin Harris in June 1828—Joseph only came across the term "order of Aaron,"⁹¹ which referred to the priesthood that Moses incorporated into his law. If neither Lehi nor Nephi mentioned the "holy order of God" in their writings, Joseph assumed that there wasn't much significance to it, so the translation went on without further inquiry into the matter.

With Oliver as his scribe, the translation went quickly. The men often stayed up working late into the night. At times, they were so physically tired that, as Joseph would say the words as they came through the Urim and Thummim and Oliver would write them down, neither of them fully comprehended what was given.

On April 19, 1829, Joseph and Oliver attended a local Methodist church and stayed after the church meeting well into the evening, conversing with the local minister and other men of that religion. They arrived home around 9 P.M. and began the translation again. They were both already exhausted when they began to work, so neither paid much attention to what they were doing. The translation at this point was methodical and perfunctory from experience. The words would appear to Joseph, he would read them to Oliver, Oliver would write them down and read them back to Joseph. The words would disappear on the Urim and Thummim when what Oliver read back was satisfying to Joseph's mind. Being mechanical in nature, when their minds were tired, reading and writing did not always mean comprehension. That night, they translated what would become Alma, chapters four through seven.

The next morning (April 20), Oliver was up before Joseph reading what he had transcribed the previous night.

“It is authority!” Oliver yelled, waking Joseph up out of a dead sleep. From what they had translated, Oliver discovered that the “holy order of God” was indeed associated with the “priesthood.”

The book of Alma contains most of what is written about the “holy order of God.” Besides the first mention by Jacob, the only other citation is given twice by Mormon in summing up the way missionaries were called,⁹² and once more by Moroni in describing how “they of old were called after the holy order of God.”⁹³

Joseph spent the better part of a day attempting to explain to Oliver that they should not speculate on such matters until after they had completed the translation. Joseph pointed out the “deadness of the law [of Moses]” and that it “ought to be done away”⁹⁴ when Christ’s prophesied visit to the descendants of Nephi occurred in the future. This visit by Christ had been prophesied throughout the record that they had translated up to that point, but they had not gotten to the actual event yet in the translation.⁹⁵

Joseph cautioned Oliver about being patient. Oliver did not listen. With great desire and anxiety, Oliver pestered Joseph about the “holy order of God” that authorized the servants of God to teach the people. Joseph reviewed the dictation of the translation with Oliver, pointing out that the “holy order” was an order by which the people lived, and had nothing to do with priesthood authority.⁹⁶ Joseph again pleaded with Oliver to be patient and forget about worrying about specific doctrines and principles until the translation was complete and they had a better understanding of the overall message of the record.

In frustration, Joseph lost his temper with Oliver and rebuked him, saying, “If you think you have the power to translate the plates, then let it fall on you to do so.” An intense argument ensued between Joseph and Oliver. Samuel Smith, Joseph’s younger brother, who was staying with Joseph at the time to help with the farm duties, got between the two and attempted to solve the dilemma. He was unsuccessful in calming Joseph. Joseph did not appreciate Oliver questioning his authority to do the job he was commissioned to do.

Oliver exploded, “There’s a strong difference between what God has told you to do and what *you* want to do of your own accord!” At this point, Joseph realized what it would take to bring Oliver under control—the same thing that would always bring those who questioned him under control—a revelation *from God*. That night, Joseph gave Oliver what he wanted.⁹⁷ Joseph learned then how easily Oliver was controlled by a “revelation from God.” Every time Oliver would get out of line, Joseph would give him another revelation.⁹⁸

Proper Baptism

Once Oliver felt like the Lord was aware of him and his “specialness” to the work, owing to the revelations from “the Lord” where he was personally mentioned, Oliver became submissive to Joseph and continued the translation without interruption. On May 10, 1829, Joseph and Oliver finally translated and transcribed what would become the bulk of 3 Nephi—the visitation of the Savior to the Nephite and Lamanite people.

Finally, Joseph understood what was meant over five years earlier when “the angel Moroni” had mentioned “the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.”⁹⁹ The most important part of the record was now translated! Upon a review of what the Savior told the people, Oliver noticed that

there was no mention of anything about the priesthood or the holy order of God that had plagued his mind.

Oliver marveled at what Christ said about the Law of Moses and the proper way expected of people to “offer for a sacrifice unto me.”¹⁰⁰ He was perplexed that Christ would only require the people to “offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit.” Oliver wondered how one would be “baptized with fire” and then “with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites...and [know] it not.”¹⁰¹ How could one be properly baptized and *not know* that they had been, i.e., put underwater? The confusion continued as he read about how Nephi was given the “power that ye shall baptize this people when I am again ascended into heaven.” Christ gave Nephi and others this same power simply by “saying unto them”¹⁰² that he was giving them the power and authority.

Christ told the people that he had *fulfilled* the tradition of the Jews that was incorporated into their Law of Moses, which had introduced the laying on of hands to receive authority. In other words, the Law of Moses and the traditions of the Jews that came from that law became dead in Christ. The Law and their traditions no longer held any value or importance.

In actuality, Christ did not *fulfill* anything of any great importance. Jewish beliefs and traditions had evolved over thousands of years before Christ lived upon the earth in his mortality. By the time of Christ, Jewish religion was saturated with myth and legend. However, the words of some of their ancient prophets had survived. Christ *fulfilled* the prophecies of the Jewish prophets when possible, sometimes purposefully. For example, Zechariah wrote of a Messiah and prophesied about his mortal life. Christ knew the prophecies of Zechariah and made it a point to *fulfill* them as the Jews believed them. Jesus set up the specified events to fulfill one of Zechariah’s prophecies:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.¹⁰³

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.¹⁰⁴

Christ attempted to teach the Jews at their level according to their knowledge and understanding. Just as he had commanded Joseph, Jesus *did not* teach the **real truth** in public and often taught in parables that the Jews could not understand. The apostles wondered why he taught them things in private that he did not teach in public, to which Jesus responded:

Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken

away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.¹⁰⁵

Everything about the Jews' religion was rebuked by Christ—including the laying on of hands to give a person power and authority over another—and replaced with simple mandates that incorporated all “the law and the prophets.”¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the early Americans who accepted Mormonism and Joseph as their “Moses,” were seeing, but could not see; and hearing, they did not hear; neither did they understand.

The True Origin of the Laying on of Hands

It was John the Beloved who explained many of the traditions of the Jews to Joseph Smith, just as Jesus had taught John in private. Joseph learned more about the *true* history of the Bible and Christianity than any other man upon earth. This transpired during his many interviews and instructions with Moroni, John, and the Three Nephites. Joseph was taught the **real truth** about how the tradition of the laying on of hands to confer blessings first started among the ancient Hebrews.

The first mention of laying on of hands in the Old Testament is found in the story of Jacob (Israel) blessing Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.¹⁰⁷ Before this time, as was the case with Isaac blessing Jacob,¹⁰⁸ all blessings were spoken and granted simply by acknowledgment of the one speaking the blessing and the one receiving it. Jacob was an old man when he wanted to bless Joseph's two youngest sons. Had he been able to see properly, and had he known to whom he was speaking, Jacob would not have had to lay his hands upon them to deliver the blessing that was customarily given to the oldest child. But because “the eyes of Israel were dim for age, he could not see.”¹⁰⁹

To compensate for his poor eyesight, Israel had Joseph direct the boys towards him. The record is not exact in what happened next, but it gives enough details to understand why the Jews started to put their hands upon the head to confer blessings or authority. Joseph placed the two boys in between their grandfather Israel's knees. Ephraim, the youngest, was on Israel's right, and Manasseh, the elder of the two, was on his left. Once Israel felt the boys, he put his hand first upon Ephraim's head as any grandpa would lovingly do to speak to a beloved grandson, and then began to speak the blessing usually reserved for the eldest. This disturbed Joseph, who thought that his father did not realize he was speaking to the younger of the two. In order to make the tradition correct, Joseph “brought them out from between his knees,”¹¹⁰ and attempted to put the older Manasseh on Israel's right. Israel corrected him and told Joseph that he knew what he was doing.¹¹¹

From this one story associated with Hebrew history and tradition, the laying on of hands to confer priesthood blessings and authority evolved. John the Beloved smiles each time he recounts how Jesus explained the tradition. Jesus told his disciples, with his gentle, but vibrant sense of humor, “Now you see how the blind came to lead the blind.”

John the Beloved

When Joseph first explained all of this to Cowdery, Oliver became incredulous and suspicious of the fact that Joseph had actually met with John the Beloved. To convince him and avoid any further argument, Joseph gave Oliver another “revelation from God” (now D&C, section 7).” In the heading of this “revelation,” it states that it “is a translated version of

the record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself [John the Beloved]."¹¹² It was no such thing! The story was manufactured by the historians when the *History of the Church* was written. They could find little information about the circumstance surrounding the revelation, so they just decided to make up the "history." According to them, the section came through the Urim and Thummim. It did not! The revelation came from Joseph's own head to continue to motivate Oliver. Never did Joseph claim to have translated a parchment written by John. He did not have to. He associated with John on many occasions *in person*; but those personal associations were never revealed to others in order to protect John's identity.

Preparing Oliver's Mind

As Oliver and Joseph reviewed the extraordinary and marvelous account of Christ's interaction with the people, they made other discoveries that led Oliver to question the true purpose of baptism and the "holy order of God." They found that the visiting resurrected Christ never mentioned anything about the Law of Moses again until "some among them who marveled, and wondered what he would concerning the Law of Moses; for they understood not the saying that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new."¹¹³

Then, as an advanced (resurrected) human being, Christ had just delivered to the people the fullness of his everlasting Gospel—the laws and code of humanity that govern human action throughout the Universe—yet some of the people *still wondered* about the Law of Moses! Oliver was emotionally affected by how Christ reacted to the people. Christ had "*knelt upon the ground [and] groaned within himself, and said: Father I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel.*"¹¹⁴

These words of Christ shook Oliver to the core—he realized that he was acting exactly like the people had reacted to Christ—and he humbled himself accordingly. Oliver fell into an emotional state of depression that he had never known before. He remained despondent and reticent for two full days. During this time, Joseph took the time to relax and to help Samuel with some of the necessary chores. However, Joseph soon realized that Oliver had been humbled and smitten with remorse to such a degree that continuing the translation would be impossible. Because of this, Joseph set aside an entire day for Oliver and himself to reflect on what they had just translated and to deal with Oliver's depression.

A few days before, Hyrum had arrived from the state of New York to see how the translation was going and to see if Joseph needed anything. When Hyrum heard about the "revelation of God" given to Oliver, he wanted one of his own. Not wanting to waste the opportunity, Joseph gave another of his "revelations from God" to both Oliver and Hyrum that contained important instructions on what would be required of them to help in the work,¹¹⁵ just as he had done for his father a few months earlier. He told both men that if they had the "will" or desire to "*thrust in [their] sickle and reap, the same is called of God.*" Nothing was ever said at this time about the "laying on of hands" to receive any special authority or any priesthood. Consistent with what he had earlier told his father, if Oliver and Hyrum had the desire, they were called to the work.

Joseph told both men many of the same things. But the thing that affected Oliver and Hyrum the most was the mention of "a gift" that each was *special* enough to have received.¹¹⁶ The "gift" was the ability to know the mysteries of God through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. They were promised that they would understand things that no one else would be able to understand. Oliver was told, "*Make not thy gift known unto*

any save it be those who are of thy faith. Trifle not with sacred things."¹¹⁷ Hyrum was told to *"treasure up in your heart until the time which is in my wisdom that you shall go forth."*¹¹⁸

At this point, the minds of both Oliver and Hyrum were prepared to receive and understand some of the "mysteries of God" that no other mortals at that time would ever know in their entirety. They were going to understand "priesthood authority" and the "laying on of hands" better than anyone else who followed Joseph. In fact, no one else would find out what these two were finding at the threshold of learning until Joseph wrote about the experience many years later. And when Joseph wrote of it, he did not disclose the true nature of the event.

True to the "revelation from God" each was about to receive, Oliver and Hyrum never made this "sacred gift" known. They did not tell anyone what took place on the banks of the Susquehanna River a few days later on May 15, 1829.¹¹⁹ When Joseph recounted the experience almost a decade later, the arrival and presence of Hyrum was placed a few days *after* the event by unscrupulous Mormon historians.¹²⁰ They based their assumption on the fact that Joseph did not mention Hyrum's arrival until later. For a wise purpose that only he understood at the time, Joseph did not want anyone to know that Hyrum was there in person and participated in the event.

May 15, 1829—The "Restoration" of the Holy Priesthood

On May 15, 1829, Joseph took Oliver and Hyrum to a secluded and quiet place near the Susquehanna River, near the town of Harmony, Pennsylvania. Although there are some differing accounts of what actually happened that day, the following is exactly what occurred:

Oliver started a fast on Wednesday with the intent not to eat until he received his own understanding on the matter of priesthood and baptism. In this weakened physical state, his emotions were greatly subdued and his love and devotion for Joseph increased, as Joseph was the translator who had given such marvelous words concerning the visit of Christ to America. Oliver later described his feelings about this time as "days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration* of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom!"¹²¹

Joseph carried the transcript of the translation of the gold plates with him, as far as it had been completed up to that date. His intent was to go through it with Oliver and Hyrum and to expound upon it. He had in his mind to teach these two trusted friends things that no one but he understood about the mysteries of God, i.e., the **real truth**.

As the three men relaxed in a soft meadow near the river, Oliver asked, "Brother Joseph, how do the glorious words come to you through the Urim and Thummim? They seem to flow from your lips as if you composed them yourself."

Joseph smiled and told Oliver and Hyrum that he was going to reveal a mystery of God to them that they should never reveal to another living soul. The moment Joseph said this, both Oliver and Hyrum received an emotional shock of energy, a kind of natural adrenaline that filled them with "the spirit of the Lord." What was it that Joseph was going to reveal to them? What was it that only they alone would know and understand? Joseph warned them that the Lord would not allow them to utter that which he was about to make known to them; and if they did, they would be destroyed in the flesh. Of course, in his already physically weakened state, the rush of adrenaline overwhelmed Oliver.

"Oh, Joseph!" Oliver exclaimed. "I owe my life to you and this work. Upon my solemn honor I will keep what you are allowed to reveal to me in my heart forever!"

Joseph asked Oliver what he remembered of Alma's teachings to his sons concerning the resurrection. Oliver recounted how Alma's understanding was not perfect and that Alma taught some things from his own understanding as "my opinion,"¹²² which was not necessarily the entire truth of the matter. Joseph asked Oliver if he remembered Alma mentioning that "there shall be one time, or a second time, or a third time, that men shall come forth from the dead."¹²³ Oliver did not remember much about it, except that it had something to do with the resurrection.

Joseph told him that the mystery of life is that, according to the justice and equality of God, all mortals live multiple incarnations upon this earth before they take part in their final resurrection. He told Oliver and Hyrum that in one of his past lives upon this earth that he, Joseph, was Mormon. He explained that Moroni had given these details to him during their interviews, but had also done something to his physical brain so that he could remember many of the things that he (Joseph) had done in the flesh as the man known as Mormon.

Joseph explained the concept of multiple lives and how the experiences we gain in each of our lives are recorded in our spirit. He explained that dreams are a reflection of our experiences of the past coming out in our present reality, and are often distorted because of our inability to consciously remember anything beyond our current mortal life. As an example, Joseph explained that some men who had lived in a past mortal life as a woman might find themselves confused in regards to their sexual nature. Oliver listened carefully and secretly found some personal solace in this revelation. Oliver was a homosexual in denial; and if he would have completely allowed himself (which he never really did), he could have finally found some reconciliatory peace as he confronted what he thought were "influences of the devil."¹²⁴

Hyrum asked Joseph if he knew some of his and Oliver's past lives. Joseph told them that Hyrum was John the Baptist, the same who had baptized Christ. Oliver was beside himself with curiosity and inquired into one of his past lives. Joseph refused to say anything else about their individual past incarnations. He changed the subject of the conversation by telling Oliver and Hyrum that now was a good time for them to supplicate the Lord on the "manner of the holy order of God" concerning baptism.

Joseph quoted and expounded upon the words of Paul to the Ephesians that stated:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints....¹²⁵

Joseph was preparing the men to have "the eyes of their understanding enlightened," so that they could *see, hear,* and encounter what no other mortal during that time had ever experienced.

The three men knelt and prayed "*in a fervent manner, aside from the abodes of men, condescended to manifest to us His will.*"¹²⁶ Oliver later publicly reported what happened next:

On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the vail [*sic*] was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the gospel of repentance! What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world were racked and distracted—while millions were grouping [*sic*] as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon

uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld—our ears heard. As in the “blaze of day”; yes, more—above the glitter of the May Sun beam [*sic*], which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, “I am thy fellow-servant,” dispelled every fear. We listened—we gazed—we admired! ‘Twas the voice of the angel from glory—’twas a message from the Most High! and as we heard we rejoiced, while his love enkindled upon our souls, and we were rapt [*sic*] in the vision of the Almighty! Where was room for doubt? No where [*sic*]; uncertainty had fled, doubt had sunk, no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever!

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

I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit! Man may deceive his fellow man; deception may follow deception, and the children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till nought [*sic*] but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave; but one touch with the finger of his love, yes, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity, strikes it **all** into insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind! The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel; the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me, past description, and I shall ever look upon this expression of the Savior’s goodness with wonder and thanksgiving while I am permitted to tarry, and in those mansions where perfection dwells and sin never comes, I hope to adore in that DAY which shall never cease!¹²⁷

The Eyes of Understanding

Previous chapters have explained the universal protocol that advanced human beings (angels) use in revealing themselves to mortals. Basically, unless there exists a situation where all mortals will benefit equally, an angel will not appear to anyone. In order to preserve this important equality and non-respecter of persons, there was no *actual* appearance of a resurrected being to Oliver and Hyrum on the banks of the Susquehanna River.

Despite what one may assume from what Oliver wrote above, he saw nothing with his physical eyes, but only through the “eyes of his understanding.” Oliver received a vision and *saw* “the angel from glory” exactly like Sidney Rigdon would later *see* “the Father, the Son and the holy angels” on February 16, 1832, at Hiram, Ohio. Sidney publicly declared while alongside Joseph, that he

beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness; And saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever. And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father.¹²⁸

Neither Oliver nor Sidney saw or heard anything with their physical senses. “**By the power of the Spirit**, [their] eyes were opened and [their] understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God.” As these adrenaline and spiritually driven men were “meditat[ing] upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of [their] understandings and they were opened.”¹²⁹ Oliver reported it correctly when he wrote, “No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered **by the power of the Holy Spirit!**”

Hyrum understood the difference between an actual experience and an event “given by God” to enlighten one’s wisdom and understanding. For this reason, there is no record in the annals of Mormon history where Hyrum makes a claim of actually seeing an angel or hearing the voice of God, or asserts to any other supernatural event to which others would later bear personal witness. He did, however, sign an affidavit concerning the gold plates, but makes no assertion of any special manifestation. (The reason for him giving his affidavit as one of the Eight Witnesses to the *Book of Mormon* was explained in chapter 24.)

Oliver *also* understood the difference. As mentioned earlier in this book, Oliver recognized the importance of Joseph giving the people what they desired as instructed by the Lord and supported by *Book of Mormon* scripture.¹³⁰ He supported Joseph’s role in what God expected of his messenger until Joseph began to do things that Oliver did not personally like or understand.

Oliver assumed that the events of May 15, 1829 would be held “sacred” and undisclosed to the people. So when Joseph approached Oliver in 1837 and asked for him to support presenting the “ordination of the priesthood as coming from an actual visitation from John the Baptist (Hyrum) through the laying on of hands, and then also a “higher priesthood” being received from Peter, James, and John, Oliver would not agree.

“Why couldn’t Joseph just leave it alone and allow the people to have the priesthood without worrying about where it came from, except that it came from ‘an angel of God’?” Oliver would often ask himself. After his excommunication, Oliver never again supported a “stumbling block” given by Joseph. In 1838, Cowdery left Joseph and quit organized religion for good, along with the other two *actual* witnesses and the only mortals at the time, besides Joseph, who had ever seen an advanced being—Martin Harris and David Whitmer.

Priesthood Lineage Through Ordination

Up until his excommunication from the Church, Oliver had accepted how Joseph presented the priesthood authority to baptize and confer the Holy Ghost. On the banks of the Susquehanna River, Joseph expounded upon what had been revealed in the *Book of Mormon* about the “holy order of God” and the power of a “priest” ordained *after this holy order* to baptize. Oliver and Hyrum realized that they did not need anyone to give them the authority to baptize, except “the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus.”¹³¹ They *saw* and *heard* the voice of Christ with their *spiritual* eyes and ears, through the “power of the Holy Spirit.” In other words, they understood what was expected of them.

The Jewish/Christian world inquired as to where Joseph Smith and his followers received the authority to baptize the people in “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”¹³² These religions would not accept the *Book of Mormon* as a reference of authority. The world believed that ordination by the laying on of hands was the only and proper way to transfer power and authority, according to the Bible. Joseph, under mandate to be unto them as Moses was to the rebellious house of Israel (and for the same reason that caused the resurrected Christ to groan within), gave the world what it wanted, because the people desired it. He gave the people a lineal priesthood passed on by the laying on of hands to conform to accepted biblical traditions.

Consequently, Hyrum laid his hands first, upon the head of Joseph, and then, the head of Oliver Cowdery, according to the traditions of the Jews, and thus conferred the Aaronic Priesthood. When Joseph was compelled to make an official history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he did not lie; for “John the Baptist,” reincarnated as his older brother Hyrum Smith, *did* confer the priesthood of Aaron upon them.

The *Real* “Peter, James, and John”

As explained above, Oliver had learned that Joseph was going to present the story of the Aaronic priesthood in a manner that did not relate to the *actual* events of May 1829. He (Joseph) was also going to perpetuate the stumbling block they had devised for the Melchizedek priesthood in claiming that Peter, James, and John gave it to them. All of this was going a bit too far, even for Oliver. After confronting Joseph and telling him that he would have no part in the matter, Oliver reluctantly agreed to the *Peter, James, and John ordination story*. Joseph convinced him that it would protect the *identity* of the men who *actually* had given Joseph the “keys of the priesthood.” Modern historians cannot find the date when Peter, James, and John came and restored the Melchizedek priesthood to Joseph Smith, because they never did.¹³³

Joseph played on his own experience “of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven...to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn,” which he would later teach is the actual “power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood.”¹³⁴ As explained to Oliver, to get him to accept the story of the priesthood as it was presented to the people, Joseph explained that he received much of his understanding from his interactions with the Three Nephites: Timothy, Mathoni, and Mathonihah. As far as Joseph was concerned, when he “communed” with them he was with those of the “general assembly” and the only “church of the Firstborn” upon earth. These three men, without disclosing their true identity to the world, were those to whom Joseph referred when he “revealed” that he and Oliver received the Melchizedek Priesthood—not the actual Peter, James, and John—but from

Timothy (as “Peter”) and the brothers, Mathoni (as “James”) and Mathonihah (as “John”) to get the story straight with Oliver and account for the three personages.

This Joseph did because, according to the *Book of Mormon*, the Three Nephites received the “power and authority...to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church”¹³⁵ when “the heavens opened unto them.”¹³⁶ And just as the Three Nephites were “forbidden...that they should utter; neither was it given unto them power that they could utter the things which they saw and heard,”¹³⁷ Joseph was forbidden to tell the people what he really knew of the kingdom of heaven.

It was not unusual for Joseph to use pseudonyms to protect the identity of certain names. Up until more modern times, many references in the *D&C* were coded names. Joseph was “Gazelam” or “Enoch,” and Oliver was “Olihah.”¹³⁸ If the LDS people truly knew Joseph Smith’s heart, they would have realized that the mention of “Peter, James, and John” in their scriptures, referring to those “whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them,”¹³⁹ was really a code name for “the Three Nephites.” Joseph knew it would be a lot easier for those of the biblical world to accept the story of the priesthood coming from the recognized Bible characters of Peter, James, and John than it would be for them to accept the obscure apostles, Timothy, Mathoni, and Mathonihah, named in the *Book of Mormon*.¹⁴⁰

The Opposition of Oliver Cowdery

True to the covenant of secrecy he had taken upon the banks of the Susquehanna River, Oliver never revealed what took place at that time. But before Joseph Smith could make his public announcements that would proclaim to the world where the LDS priesthood authority originated, Oliver renounced Joseph and called him a fallen prophet. Cowdery would have no part in what he saw then as a pure deception outside the realm of “giving the people the desires of their hearts.”

In Oliver’s opinion, maybe the people wanted a priesthood to lead and guide them, but they certainly did not want to be deceived. His problem was he did not know what Joseph knew. He had not received the “*instruction and intelligence from [Moroni] at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days.*”¹⁴¹

As explained in chapters 18 through 20, Joseph understood his mission perfectly. He was given the “instruction and intelligence” from advanced human beings who had a purpose in mind when they chose him in 1820 to set the stage for a work...

a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, **either on the one hand or on the other**—either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken.¹⁴²

There was a choice given to the people. Unfortunately, instead of “convincing them unto peace and life eternal,” Joseph’s work “delivered them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds.” However, Joseph understood that everything was for the

good of the human race. Everything that happened was necessary in order to allow a fair experience of mortality for the human beings who own this solar system.

Joseph relates,

It saddened my heart to see Oliver suffer because of his lack of understanding. My mandate would not allow me to soothe his concerns with the gentle words of truth and light. Greater intelligence would have given him a clearer knowledge of the eternal nature of things. The hardest part of my calling was to see those who had supported me for so many years turn against me in anger.

Joseph could not divulge the real truth about what he was doing. If he had done so from the beginning, there would have never been a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the necessary function it provided as a stumbling block to certain of our mortal siblings and the world. The *Book of Mormon* would have been placed upon the shelf of history as its enemies and critics would have preferred—as original American mythology. The people would have never accepted that the Bible was corrupted and that God was simply an advanced human being living on a planet in another galaxy. There would have been no other choice or alternative for those with biblically based belief systems except the foolishness of the religions that existed at that time—the vain and foolish philosophies of men mingled with scripture.

Instead, because of what Joseph Smith did, a religion such as the modern LDS Church was given a foundation. This particular church has now evolved into one of the most powerful and richest religions, per capita, of any organization in the entire world—including those both inside and outside of a religious venue. Many of its *priesthood* holders hold powerful positions within the United States government, which is the most powerful government of the most controlling nation in the world. Some of the most successful businessmen in the world are LDS/Mormon.

The LDS religion has developed into and become almost exactly what the ancient Jewish religion developed into and was at the time of Christ.¹⁴³ The human race needed to see what happens when free-willed humans are left to themselves to exercise their unconditional free will upon others during all the different time periods of the world's history. This great Mormon experiment verifies that human nature is the same and that history always repeats itself in the case of unregulated free agency.

Money, success, degrees and glories of the world, and a deep sense of their own righteousness above all other people in the world, would all come to define typical LDS members. They believe that they are God's chosen people and that they, alone, belong to the *only true church* of God upon earth.¹⁴⁴ With the existence of this type of religion and the way its members exercise their free will, the human race will be able to witness what happens when human beings are allowed to believe and promote the likes of Mormonism, which commands such a penchant towards inequality to exist within its institutional and individual psyche.

It was the intended purpose of Joseph's mission to give the people the choice, "either on the one hand or on the other." No matter how many friends he lost, he never deviated from his mission. But no matter how hard he tried, Joseph could not convince Oliver that it was God's continued will that the people be given what they desired so that they would stumble for their own learning. Oliver had understood Joseph's reasoning and stood by him

through the years while the simple “holy order of God” was transformed into two separate priesthoods of many different offices and appendages. Even though he later left Joseph and stopped supporting him, Cowdery stayed true to his covenant of secrecy.

In Oliver’s mind, Joseph had changed over time and was no longer acting “after the manner of the holy order of God.” The other two main witnesses to the gold plates stood with Oliver on the matter. David Whitmer and Martin Harris both left Joseph at the same time. Whitmer’s, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, resonated the true feelings of the Three Witnesses of the *Book of Mormon*: “*This matter of priesthood has been the great hobby and stumbling block of the Latter Day Saints.*” The LDS/Mormon priesthood was certainly not “*mentioned in the New Covenant of the Book of Mormon.*”¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, neither Whitmer, nor Cowdery, nor Harris was called by God to be a **true messenger who did not disclose his true identity**. Joseph was. He did exactly as he was instructed to do by the actual voice of Christ that he heard during the First Visitation, and through the instruction and intelligence he received from Moroni, the Three Nephites, and John the Beloved. “*The New Covenant of the Book of Mormon*” would also justify his actions. Joseph could have “*prophesied to the understanding of men; for the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls.*” But the Latter-day Saints, as well as all the Gentiles and Jews of the world, “*sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble.*”¹⁴⁶

The Opposition of Martin Harris

After Joseph, Hyrum, and Oliver “*received the priesthood by the laying on of hands,*” as correctly explained by the commentary given above, they began to baptize others for a few months prior to anyone mentioning that they needed to legally organize a church. However, there were those who were opposed to the introduction of priesthood authority from the beginning.

Martin Harris had transcribed the first 116 pages of Joseph’s dictation of the *Book of Mormon*. He was well aware of what the 116 pages contained. The Book of Lehi contained a much more detailed journal of what happened to Lehi at the time that “*there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed.*”¹⁴⁷ It told why Lehi felt bad for the people and what caused him to “*pray unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people.*”¹⁴⁸ It gave reference to the preachings of Zenos and Zenock,¹⁴⁹ two of the “*many prophets, prophesying unto the people*” during the days of Lehi.

Martin Harris marveled at the amount of information given concerning the preaching of Zenos and Zenock to the Jewish High Priests, one of whom was Lehi himself. Harris knew what an organized religion and priesthood would do to the people. He knew that these things were condemned in the Book of Lehi and were explained as the very things that caused the downfall of all civilization and which led to the destruction of “*the great city Jerusalem.*”¹⁵⁰

There was no way Martin was going to support Joseph’s introduction of a priesthood and authority that he knew was condemned in the part of the record that he had transcribed. When he heard the claims made by both Hyrum and Oliver concerning the

power to baptize with the priesthood of Aaron, he was mortified! He argued vehemently with Joseph against its introduction and perpetuation, pointing out what he knew the 116 pages contained, about which Oliver and Hyrum knew nothing.

Joseph threatened Martin with condemnation from God in the form of a “revelation” that he claimed to have received after Martin had lost the manuscript.¹⁵¹ Of course, the truth was that the revelation did not exist anywhere but in Joseph’s mind until Martin questioned Joseph about what he was doing in direct violation of what was given in the Book of Lehi. Joseph then made up another “revelation from God” to silence Harris. In this revelation *from God*, the Lord himself referred to Martin as “a wicked man,”¹⁵² and thereby, humbling Martin deeply and silencing him, at least for the time being, under Joseph’s use of his authority to do what he was mandated to do.

Nevertheless, Martin refused to be baptized by this corrupt authority, as he saw it. It was not until after he had seen an actual advanced human being,¹⁵³ and an organized church was finally formed, that Martin finally acquiesced to Joseph’s machinations, as he saw them, to give the people what they wanted just as Moses had done. Oliver Cowdery baptized Martin Harris soon after the Church was officially organized in 1830. Harris’ membership lasted less than eight years, at which point he determined that Joseph Smith was doing things that he (Martin) did not understand and could not accept.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost

Another major issue that Harris had with Joseph’s religion was the introduction of a “high priesthood” into the Church. Besides the authority to baptize given by the laying on of hands, which was never mentioned by Christ in the *Book of Mormon*, Harris also questioned the assumed power to confirm the Holy Ghost upon a person. He knew there was nothing of the sort mentioned in the *Book of Mormon’s* account of the visitation of Christ. No one ever laid their hands on someone else and gave them the gift of the Holy Ghost. The *Book of Mormon* was expressly clear on how the Holy Ghost was received.

The first mention of the “Holy Ghost” in the *Book of Mormon* is in reference to the way “the Messiah should make himself manifest unto the Gentiles” after he was crucified and resurrected.¹⁵⁴ The “power of the Holy Ghost” is explained as “the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men.”¹⁵⁵ Thus began the LDS doctrine of the *gift of the Holy Ghost*.

There are many mentions of the “gifts of God” throughout the *Book of Mormon*. The men of the early LDS church envied these gifts and wanted them—even to the point of lusting after them; and the gift they wanted above all was the “**high** gift from God.”¹⁵⁶ They wanted “great power given them from God”¹⁵⁷ as mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*. It was this “gift” that both Oliver and Hyrum desired after reading about it in the *Book of Mormon* transcript. This motivated Joseph to coordinate the events of the “restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood,” wherein, as mentioned above, Joseph told each of them, through a “revelation from God,” that each had received his own “gift.”¹⁵⁸

Because Oliver and Hyrum received their individual “gift from God,” the men who later found out about these “special gifts” each wanted their own gift too. “And because they desired it, God hath done it, that they may stumble.”¹⁵⁹ Joseph continued to fulfill this mandate supporting the free will of the people. He gave the men just what they wanted.

Joseph attempted many times to teach the men what the “gift of the Holy Ghost” actually meant by using the *Book of Mormon* as a reference guide; but the men had their own

interpretation. He tried to teach them that “all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will [according to what the man desired].”¹⁶⁰ He tried to teach them that the *gift of the Holy Ghost* could not be given by one man to another, but was only given by “the Father” or by Christ himself as a second baptism “with fire and the Holy Ghost.”¹⁶¹ Joseph taught them that any mortal who “diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.”¹⁶²

Joseph tried to teach the men that when Jesus was baptized, the Holy Ghost was *given* to him by the Father. And that if someone wants the same Holy Ghost Jesus received, he must be washed clean (baptized) from everything that he or she has done, has believed, and has imagined, and follow Christ in doing “the things which ye have seen me do.”¹⁶³ He taught them that the “form of a dove” meant a “peaceful feeling” of reassurance, and that a bird is not the Holy Ghost, nor can any bird have the Holy Ghost. He explained many things concerning the Holy Ghost, including that not at any time was it ever transferred by any act or authority from one mortal to the another.

The *Book of Mormon* is full of incidents when the people received the Holy Ghost; and none of them gives an account of a person receiving the gift from another mortal—NOT ONE! The Lamanites received the “baptism with fire and with the Holy Ghost” without even knowing that they had!¹⁶⁴

However, if there were stumbling blocks to be found, envying and lustful men who wanted the “power of God” would eventually find them. And that they did! The men wanted the same power that Christ gave to the Nephite apostles to “give the Holy Ghost.” The men conjured up an interpretation of an event, when, just before the resurrected Christ “ascended into heaven,” he “touched with his hand the disciples whom he had chosen, one by one, even until he had touched them all, and spake unto them as he touched them...[giving] them power to give the Holy Ghost.”¹⁶⁵

Like most scripture students, the men took from the account what they desired for themselves. They forgot to keep reading about what happened *after* Christ left his disciples. First of all, Nephi baptized *himself* by immersing *himself* in the water. Then he baptized “all those whom Jesus had chosen.” “*And it came to pass when they were all baptized and had come up out of the water, the Holy Ghost did fall upon them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*”¹⁶⁶

Not only was it not necessary to have another person baptize you according to the example of Nephi, but also, no one has the power or the authority to give the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is an automatic result of one accepting Christ and his teachings into his or her life. “The disciples whom Jesus had chosen began from that time forth to baptize and to teach as many as did come unto them; *and as many as were baptized in the name of Jesus were filled with the Holy Ghost.*”¹⁶⁷

Changing the Last Words of Moroni

Joseph and Oliver finished translating and transcribing the record with the book of Ether, which explains about the Jaredites, and then a few words of Moroni, which consisted of Moroni chapter 1 and chapters 7 through 10. However, *the final translation and transcription did not include Moroni chapters 2 through 6*. The translation of the unsealed one-third of the gold plates was completed in the middle of June 1829.¹⁶⁸

Chapter 24 of this biography discusses the original manuscript of the *Book of Mormon*. For a few months, the transcript was held by Joseph (sometimes by Oliver) and shared with whoever was interested. That same chapter also explains that those who accepted the *Book of Mormon* as a divine source of scripture had come from different Christian backgrounds prevalent in the area. The people were accustomed to having some form of authority and priesthood and participating in certain church ordinances and rituals.

The completed *Book of Mormon* **did not** give specific instructions on how to set up a church, by what authority, or how the ordinances and rituals of the church should be administered. In spite of what had been disclosed, Oliver, Hyrum, Samuel Smith, the Whitmers, Martin Harris, and a few others still had many questions about priesthood authority, the Holy Ghost, and other things about which the record was not clear. According to these men, it did not give proper directions in regard to how they should operate as an organization or a group of people resolved to living the fullness of the gospel of Christ.

Joseph could not believe that these men were so shortsighted, or rather *long-sighted* to such a degree that they looked far “beyond the mark.”¹⁶⁹ In August 1829, Joseph inquired, by means of the Urim and Thummim, for direction. As a result, God gave the people what they desired. Joseph received his instructions.

Chapter 24 explains how Joseph told Oliver that they had made a mistake in the complete translation and needed to go back over the last words of Moroni and ensure that he (Joseph) had translated “all the characters on the last *unsealed* plate.” Not questioning Joseph as to *why* the mistake was not noted and disclosed by Moroni before he took the plates back, Oliver returned to his duty and Joseph retranslated Moroni’s words. This time the manuscript included five new chapters—an insertion in the book of Moroni that added the new chapters 2 through 6—setting up the stumbling blocks that the people desired for the organization and ordinances of a church.

All one needs to do is read Moroni chapter one, then go directly to chapter seven, and one will see the proper flow and continuation of the record. Joseph’s later interpolation to satisfy the “desires of the people” and set a standard for church administration and ordinances is very easy to locate and recognize among Moroni’s other words.

The people wanted ordinances. They wanted power to ordain and to administer in empirical manifestations of their religious faith as they were used to seeing and observing in their former *corrupted* Christian churches. They wanted their own church. Joseph, under mandate, gave them what they wanted so that they would stumble.

The *Book of Mormon*—A Great Stumbling Block

Before Oliver and Joseph had completed the translation, at the time they were isolated from the world on the banks of the Susquehanna River in May of 1829, Joseph attempted to explain everything he was allowed to expound upon to Oliver and Hyrum. He taught them about the symbolism presented in the *Book of Mormon*. He pointed out that Mormon [Joseph] was not allowed to write the “greater things,” not “even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did **truly** teach unto the people.”

And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did **truly** teach unto the people; But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people. And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he

taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken. And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them. And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation. Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people. Therefore I, Mormon, do write the things which have been commanded me of the Lord. And now I, Mormon, make an end of my sayings, and proceed to write the things which have been commanded me.¹⁷⁰

“Truly” is the key word Mormons miss when considering what Mormon discloses about his writings. As mentioned in chapter 24 concerning the composition of the *Book of Mormon*, the entire record withholds what “truly” happened in order to “try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things *then* shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.” Mormon was under the same mandate as Joseph—they were both to give the people what they desired, but only “according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him (Christ’s words).” Joseph and Mormon were “laid under a **strict command** that they [should] not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men.”¹⁷¹

The *Book of Mormon* was “the portion of his word” meant for the people of latter-day America—a powerful nation of the Gentiles—who were convinced that the Bible was the only word of God. To counter the errors of the Bible and give the people a chance to learn the true nature of God and the code of humanity by which all human beings are expected to live, advanced human beings prepared the *Book of Mormon*. As explained in early chapters, it was prepared and presented the way that the people desired it to be, so that it would be believable to them. Its stories and teachings parallel the Bible in many ways. The way the *Book of Mormon* is presented protects free will and allows a person the opportunity to learn the “greater things.”

The *Book of Mormon* itself is a great stumbling block to people, because they desire it to be. **All any mortal has to do is accept the words of Christ, the fullness of the everlasting gospel, which he delivered to the world in person. If one will just do this, then the “great things” will not be withheld from them.** The *Book of Mormon* concludes with the following words attributed to Christ:

Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief. Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you—yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.¹⁷²

The American people received the *Book of Mormon*, but were only able to accept it because of their belief in the Bible. However, the **real truth**—what Jesus *truly* taught the people—was withheld from the record. Those who received the *Book of Mormon* and embraced it looked way “beyond the mark and desired things they could not understand.” The men of the early Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints wanted a “high priesthood” so that they would have the “power of God to give the Holy Ghost” to the people. Instead of understanding the *symbolism* (lesser things) of all of this, they perceived it *literally*.

Power to Give the Holy Ghost

Many began to question Joseph about what the *Book of Mormon* transcript said about Jesus giving his disciples “power to give the Holy Ghost.” Joseph read the transcript about the visitation of Christ to them and pointed out that the “multitude heard **not** the words which [Jesus] spake [to his disciples]; therefore they *did not* bear record.”¹⁷³ Joseph explained that the disciples were told not to disclose what he “truly” said to them, but that they should give the people according to their [the peoples’] desires and faith, just as the *Book of Mormon* instructs of the servants of Christ. That is why the record states, “but the disciples bare record that he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost.”

The disciples told the people what they were commanded to, not necessarily the “real truth.” Joseph, continuing his explanation to Oliver and Hyrum, then showed where Mormon gives the clue about what *really* happened when “Jesus touched [each] one with his finger”¹⁷⁴; “And I will show unto you hereafter that this record is true.”¹⁷⁵ (See previous section entitled “The Priesthood in Relation to Christ” explaining this.)

Mormon later gives the actual account of what happened before Christ “ascended into heaven.” Jesus spoke “unto his disciples, one by one, saying unto them: What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?”¹⁷⁶ All of his disciples wanted to live “unto the age of man” and then end their ministry and “speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom.”¹⁷⁷ The selfish nature of these nine, according to their own free will, prohibited them from knowing the mysteries of God in full. But three of them wanted to serve in whatever capacity necessary “to behold all the doings of the Father unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled according to the will of the Father, when [Christ] shall come in [his] glory with the powers of heaven.”¹⁷⁸ These would come to be known throughout time as the “Three Nephites”; notwithstanding the fact that two of them are of Lamanite descent.

Joseph also disclosed to Oliver and Hyrum that the Three Nephites, as well as John the Beloved, were alive and well living in the United States locally to assist him in his work. He revealed for the first time to anyone alive in that era that he periodically received much instruction and intelligence from these men. He also revealed that he had been given the “same power and authority” that these three men received from Christ. These three were the only disciples who were not “touched...with his finger” before he departed. Therefore, *they did not receive* what the unprincipled interpreters of scripture later viewed as “the laying on of hands.” These were the only three of the twelve who “were caught up into heaven, and saw and heard unspeakable things. And it was forbidden them that they should utter; neither was it given unto them power that they could utter the things which they saw and heard.”¹⁷⁹ Only these three received the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven... to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn,” which, as mentioned above, Joseph later taught is the actual “power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood.”¹⁸⁰

With what these three “Nephite” disciples “saw and heard,” and with the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven they had, “they did go forth upon the face of the land, and did minister unto all the people, uniting as many to the church as would believe in their preaching; baptizing them, and as many as were baptized did receive the Holy Ghost.”¹⁸¹

Explaining the **real truth** to Oliver and Hyrum, convinced these men at the time to accept the “stumbling block” that Joseph would eventually allow the men of the Church to place before themselves regarding the Melchizedek (higher) Priesthood. As mentioned above, Joseph explained the code name that he would use for the “Three Nephites”: Peter, James, and John. Not until 1837, just before he was excommunicated, did Oliver ever question Joseph and the purpose of his mission as the “American Latter-day Moses.” Until that time, Oliver had supported Joseph as Aaron supported Moses.

Hyrum had a different view altogether. Although he promised his undying loyalty to his brother—that he would never divulge to a living soul the things Joseph confided in him—he did not want any part of the presentation of the stumbling blocks. For this reason, as explained, Hyrum was never mentioned as one who received the “glorious visions” given to other early LDS leaders. Hyrum never claimed to have these “visions,” because he knew they were invented and acted upon in the minds of those who received them, motivated by the mandate given to his younger brother to give the people what they wanted, even that which they desired. And because he understood the reasoning, Hyrum never allowed himself to be caught up in the stumbling blocks placed by his brother—which were placed only because the people desired something they did not understand. Rather, he supported Joseph and what Joseph had been asked to do by the advanced human beings overseeing the work, even until the day he died by his brother’s side.

The Latter-day Twelve Apostles

Although Joseph had tried futilely to explain it, Oliver Cowdery never quite grasped the principle of “priesthood authority” and the true meaning behind “the power of the Holy Ghost.” Early on, he started to bother Joseph about organizing an actual, authoritative priesthood tribunal to oversee its power and authority. David Whitmer, who knew even less than Oliver, agreed with Cowdery. To quiet their pestering, Joseph “received a revelation from God.”¹⁸² Oliver and David believed that the proper way was to appoint twelve men as Christ had done in Jerusalem and in the land of Bountiful.

Joseph kept this “High Priesthood” from becoming a reality in the Mormon faith as long as he could. In his “revelation” to Cowdery and Whitmer, Joseph had mentioned the choosing of twelve designated men to work within “the holy order of God” as emissaries to preach repentance and baptize. However, it was not until February, 1835, that Joseph finally submitted to the will of the people and gave them their own set of Twelve Apostles, fully ordained as “High Priests”—and he wanted nothing to do with choosing them. Unbeknownst to everyone except Hyrum, Joseph was distraught and greatly disturbed that he had to *suffer* this to be.

As was the case with everything about the democratic church, Joseph allowed the men to finalize their own understanding of what constituted the “high priesthood.” Because Cowdery and Harris believed that they could do as the Lord had instructed, and choose the right men to comprise the quorum, Joseph allowed them. He did not want his own hand in something that he knew was contrary to the true “holy order of

God." Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris were assigned to pick the first Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹⁸³ Joseph *suffered* them to have what they wanted by their own hand.

When he could see that his arguments were futile, Joseph agreed to support the choosing of twelve men as apostles. There was some discussion and argument about how the choosing process would take place. "After making many remarks on the subject of choosing the Twelve, [Joseph] wanted an expression from the brethren, *if they would be satisfied* to have the Spirit of the Lord dictate in the choice of the Elders to be Apostles; whereupon the Elders present *expressed their anxious desire to have it so.*"¹⁸⁴

Joseph adjourned the meeting so that he could go receive the "will of the Lord" through another "revelation." He took Hyrum with him and, once alone, the two lamented greatly on what was about to take place. Neither man wanted to make a decision that each knew was contrary to the true "holy order of God." Hyrum strengthened Joseph and offered his support in whatever Joseph thought was best. Hyrum knew that the men of the Church would not settle down (quell their "anxious desire") until they had their Twelve Apostles and were given the "power to give the Holy Ghost."

Hyrum reminded Joseph of an earlier "revelation" in which "the Lord" designated Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer to "search out the Twelve, who shall have the desires of which I have spoken."¹⁸⁵ Joseph had forgotten what he said nearly six years previously in June of 1829. He found his way out of personally having anything to do with choosing and ordaining the Twelve. "Let them designate the men and ordain them as they so choose," he said. The Three Witnesses to the gold plates would make the decision and ordain the men.¹⁸⁶ Joseph had nothing to do with it at the time, except in fulfilling the mandate given him to *suffer* them the desires of their hearts.

None of the Three Witnesses was ever part of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles. When Cowdery, Whitmer, and Harris handpicked the men, they assumed that they would be allowed a significant role in mandating what the quorum would do with their new "high priesthood" authority. They soon found out that this was definitely not the case. After just a few years of the Twelve exercising their new power and authority, the Three Witnesses turned against the very men they chose as Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and denounced them all as evil men.

The modern LDS history has the events of February 14, 1835 recorded according to their own warped spin, which coincides with what Mormons would have *preferred* to have taken place. However, there are enough clues in their own history to leave one questioning what really happened, and also to provide some sound evidence of what *truly* did.

The people wanted their Twelve Apostles. Joseph attempted to explain to the people that this group of men was not needed to live the gospel, pointing out that the Church had flourished "in spirit" for almost 5 years without a selected group of men set apart in the "higher priesthood," and that designating twelve men to more authority was not necessarily needed. The men took out their *Book of Mormon* and showed that the Twelve must be given "the power to give the Holy Ghost." They expressed their concerns that, without the "high priesthood," the people could not properly receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Oliver Cowdery gave a "general charge" to the newly ordained Twelve. He emphasized (ironically using the same words Christ used to describe the people before he *suffered them* to organize a church among themselves¹⁸⁷) that "the people of this Church were weak in faith compared with the ancients." Oliver explained *why* "revelations from God"

were needed, because “the minds of men are so constructed that they will not believe, without a testimony of seeing or hearing.”¹⁸⁸

After Joseph had witnessed one of the greatest travesties given to the ego of men, he questioned the brethren, “What importance is there attached to the calling of these Twelve Apostles that is different from the other callings or officers of the Church?”¹⁸⁹ Joseph did not tell them, he asked them! It was then that *they*, not the “prophet, seer, and revelator” who had given them the *Book of Mormon*, defined what they, as the Twelve apostles, were called to do. Joseph acquiesced to everything that they desired of him; and thus, the LDS Melchizedek Priesthood replaced the “holy order of the Son of God.”¹⁹⁰

Because They Desired It, God Hath Done It

The priesthood leaders were well aware of Joseph’s lack of interest in making the Twelve an official quorum and creating another circle of power to be envied and worshipped by the members of the Church. During the meetings of February 14, 1835, Joseph seldom gave his personal opinion on any matter unless pressed. He sat back and watched the men conjure up all kinds of proposals for their *new* priesthood body.

After the men left the meeting in which the Twelve were ordained, the confusion began as to what exactly the two priesthoods, the Aaronic and Melchizedek, constituted. There were a lot of arguments, much contention, and many hurt feelings over the matter of the priesthood. The Twelve got together on March 28, 1835, attempting to work out their differences. They realized that they did not have a clue what they were doing. They had attempted to come up with an answer concerning their priesthood authority without giving due diligence to Joseph’s calling; after all, Joseph was the one with whom Christ conversed, wasn’t he? It was to Oliver and Joseph that the priesthood was restored, wasn’t it? Yet these men attempted to create their own definition of what the priesthood was all about without even consulting Joseph. Their attempt only led to their further division and disagreement.

Finally, they acknowledged that they had

grieved or wounded the feelings of the Presidency...we therefore feel to ask of him whom we have acknowledged to be our Prophet and Seer, that he inquire of God for us, and obtain a revelation, (if consistent) that we may look upon it when we are separated, that our hearts may be comforted. Our worthiness has not inspired us to make this request, but our unworthiness. We have unitedly asked God our heavenly Father to grant unto us through His Seer, a revelation of His mind and will concerning our duty the coming season, even a great revelation, that will enlarge our hearts, comfort us in adversity, and brighten our hopes amidst the powers of darkness.¹⁹¹

Again, Joseph *suffered* them to have what they wanted. In counsel with Oliver and Hyrum, Joseph reviewed many of the former “revelations” he had given concerning the priesthood, put together an official statement on the subject, and gave it as the “revelation on priesthood.” It took some time, but it was ready for the 1835 publication of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. It was included as section III, and entitled, “On Priesthood.”¹⁹²

Eventually, everything was “proposed” and “voted upon” by the members of the Church, though typically just those designated as leaders were present. The majority of votes always ruled. The constraints of peer pressure and wanting to be accepted usually

motivated unanimous decisions on most matters—especially if Joseph made the proposition. Allowing the members to govern themselves was a vital part of the instructions given to Joseph to comply with the mandate to *suffer* the people to have what they desired.

Joseph became very adroit at giving the people what they wanted. Any time there was a discussion among the leaders of the Church about any topic that they could not figure out on their own, they would go to Joseph for an answer. Each time they inquired, he gave them what they desired. Joseph Smith's writings on various topics concerning the priesthood and other sundry topics could fill volumes.¹⁹³ He became a master at presenting things in a religious tone that seemed to follow consistently with the Bible, but he hardly ever mentioned the *Book of Mormon* in his explanations.

In most instances, Joseph protected the purity of the *Book of Mormon*, which he called, "the most correct book of any on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."¹⁹⁴ In the explanations and "revelations" that Joseph was forced to give the people throughout his tenure, he would not contradict himself by quoting the *Book of Mormon*. He gave them what they wanted, not what would "get [them] nearer to God."

The new converts of the Church knew the Bible. They knew its language, its prose, and accepted it as the *first and greatest revelation from God*. Joseph patterned all of his revelations and explanations as closely as he could to biblical rhetoric.

One of Joseph's revelatory masterpieces was placed in the appendix of the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*. It was given on November 3, 1831 and outlined specifically "many things which the Elders desired to know relative to preaching the Gospel to the inhabitants of the earth, and concerning the gathering."¹⁹⁵ The reason why it was placed in the appendix was because it made **NO MENTION OF THE PRIESTHOOD**. It was hard to believe that the "everlasting gospel...shall be preached unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"¹⁹⁶ **without** priesthood authority. But thus it was in 1831. However, the people desired something different by 1835.¹⁹⁷

The elders of the Church could not *see* the **true** Christ if he were standing right in front of them! Joseph knew this and in one of his many revelations, he said this specifically:

I saw the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who are now upon the earth, who hold the keys of this last ministry, in foreign lands, standing together in a circle, much fatigued, with their clothes tattered and feet swollen, with their eyes cast downward, and Jesus standing in their midst, and they did not behold Him. The Savior looked upon them and wept.¹⁹⁸

The later LDS Church under Brigham Young used Joseph's writings that benefited them and supported their desires. They only added the parts of Joseph's revelations to their "doctrine" that would not make them look bad. The current edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 137, is taken from Joseph's original "vision,"¹⁹⁹ but excludes the above part where the Twelve Apostles had "their eyes cast downward" where they could "not behold [the Savior]."

The Savior had good reason to weep and "groan within himself because of the wickedness of the people."²⁰⁰ The greatest of their *desired* stumbling blocks was priesthoods and the power and authority associated with these priesthoods that the early leaders of the Church had invented in their hearts. "God" had given them the revelations to support their desires.

An Historical-Critical Examination

Try as they may, no honest LDS/Mormon scholar can find a definite account of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in any of the historical annals of the Mormon faith. First and foremost, the Melchizedek Priesthood does not exist outside of the Mormon faith. It was invented by men who desired it and it was *suffered* to come into existence by the man whom these men looked to as their mouthpiece of God—Joseph Smith.

Joseph made various allusions to the restoration of this “high priesthood” throughout his ministry. He became an expert at fulfilling his role in assisting God in taking away His plainness from the people and delivering unto them many things that they could not understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God commanded Joseph to do it so that they would stumble.

Brigham Young and his chosen leaders did all they could to present some kind of story that collaborated the claim of priesthood restoration. Neither the early *Book of Commandments* (1833), nor the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*—both predecessors to the current LDS *Doctrine and Covenants*—contained what Brigham Young and subsequent leaders included in their own version of church *Doctrine and Covenants*. *D&C*, section 2, is not in either book. Section 13 is not there. Sections 17, 32, 51, 57, and 65–138 were never in the original *Book of Commandments*. Sections 77, 85, 87, 103, 105, and 108–138 were not put in the official church “scripture” until Brigham Young’s tenure. It should be noted that sections 108 through 138 (with the exception of sections 133 and 134) were given *after* the 1835 edition of the *D&C* and could not have been included in prior editions. Nevertheless, anything that Brigham included in *his Doctrine and Covenants* after 1876, especially including these post-1835 revelations, is suspect of having been changed, edited, and distorted to give credibility to “things that they sought for that they could not understand.”²⁰¹

Mormon apologists have attempted to use a sermon given on the date of September 6, 1842 as proof that Joseph alluded to the restoration of the priesthood.²⁰² Again, Joseph became a master at his calling. The LDS Church of Joseph Smith’s time put together bits and pieces of early revelations; and Joseph himself changed and added to some of his own revelations to better give the people what they desired. All one needs to do to see the extent of this is to compare the original *Book of Commandments* with the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and then both of these with the modern-day *Doctrine and Covenants*, as mentioned above.²⁰³

After being away from the main body of the church for almost a decade, and a few years after Joseph Smith’s death, Oliver Cowdery allegedly (his words are suspect based on the source of the information) said

I was present with Joseph when an holy angel from God came down from heaven and conferred on us, or restored, the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, and said to us, at the same time, that it should remain upon the earth while the earth stands. I was also present with Joseph when the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred by the holy angel from on high. This Priesthood, we then conferred on each other by the will and commandment of God.²⁰⁴

Oliver was lost in a religious no-man’s land without the continuing “revelation from God” he received from Joseph. He became a man without guile after his departure

from the LDS Church. He denounced any form of “revelation,” and never again swore to uphold something that would cause others to stumble. However, he could not deny seeing an angel with the gold plates; and he never did deny it. Although LDS history has him forgetting the fact that he saw “John the Baptist” or “Peter, James, and John” (because he never really did), he never forgot his testimony of the gold plates. Oliver attempted to ingratiate himself to various factions of Mormonism until he died in 1850, at the young age of 43. He never did find anyone that compared to the **true messenger** he had known, who never revealed his true identity to the world.

Mormon critics have pointed out specific details and brought to the forefront of many honest peoples’ minds the question of what happened with Joseph and the “priesthoods” that he supported. Their research has led to a mass of confusion for the Latter-day Saints:

The important details that are missing from the “full history” of 1834 are likewise missing from the Book of Commandments in 1833. The student would expect to find all the particulars of the Restoration in this first treasured set of 65 revelations, the dates of which encompassed the bestowals of the two Priesthoods, but they are conspicuously absent. ...The notable revelations on Priesthood in the Doctrine and Covenants before referred to, Sections 2 and 13, are missing, and Chapter 28 gives no hint of the Restoration which, if actual, had been known for four years. More than four hundred words were added to this revelation of August, 1829 in Section 27 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the additions made to include the names of heavenly visitors and two separate ordinations. The Book of Commandments gives the duties of Elders, Priests, Teachers, and Deacons and refers to Joseph’s apostolic calling but there is no mention of Melchizedek [*sic*] Priesthood, High Priesthood, Seventies, High Priests, nor High Councilors. These words were later inserted into the revelation on Church organization and government of April, 1830, making it appear that they were known at that date, but they do not appear in the original, Chapter 24 of the Book of Commandments until three years later. Similar interpolations were made in the revelations known as Sections 42 and 68.²⁰⁵

Continued Evolution

Volumes could be written about what Joseph *suffered* in order to give the men the priesthood authority they desired. There is a plethora of historical records and accounts that make it hard to come to a conclusive pattern of how the LDS/Mormon priesthood evolved over time. The purpose of this appendix in Joseph Smith’s **official** and **authorized** biography is to present *how* it all originated. Once one understands the truth of how LDS/Mormon priesthood authority originated, it becomes easier to comprehend how it evolved into what it has become in modern times.

Mormon men believe that Jesus Christ ordained his apostles by the laying of hands. They believe that Jesus Christ ordained Peter, James, and John, who then appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, placed their hands upon these two men and gave them the same authority they received from Christ. They believe that this same authority was given to Brigham Young. But if they review their own history, they will find that Joseph Smith had

nothing to do with calling Brigham Young to an apostleship, nor did he ordain him to the office of a high priest. Joseph's hands never touched Brigham Young's head. Brigham Young had no right, power, or authority to ordain others to a priesthood that did not even exist. Young's own version of the priesthoods has been a far greater stumbling block to the people than those Joseph *suffered* to be established. The biggest difference, however, is that Joseph knew the priesthood was a stumbling block—Young didn't have a clue!

According to the *Book of Mormon* record, Jesus, the Christ chose the twelve who were to minister in the Western Hemisphere, in a matter of minutes. As mentioned above, it was not until February 14, 1835, over 5 years after the legal organization of church, that Joseph finally acquiesced to the members of the Church and gave them their first twelve apostles to lead them. Joseph knew that there was no worthy man among them who could be called an "apostle of Jesus Christ." He knew that only the "voice of Christ" could extend such a calling. But the people wanted their apostles; and they got what they wanted so that they could continue to stumble. The people, in the pride of their hearts, wanted to proclaim to the world that their church was just like the church Jesus organized in his day. Christ never organized a church. And when the people wanted one, he "groaned within himself" because he was "troubled because of the wickedness of the people."²⁰⁶

The Church of Christ

Eventually, because the people desired it, Jesus *suffered* his disciples in America to provide a church for the people—not because he commanded it, but because they desired it! Christ had finished telling the people all that he was commanded of the Father to tell them, and then told the people that he had to go deliver the same message to his "other sheep."²⁰⁷ The people did not get it and sought for more things that they did not understand. It was not until **after Christ groaned within²⁰⁸ and called the people wicked that he then remained there and gave some instructions on establishing a church.** Before this time, Christ never mentioned the word "church." And had the people let him go do what he wanted to do, and had not caused him to "groan within" because of them, there would have been no organized church at that time.

Nevertheless, his church was not a religion, but rather a group of people "who shall believe and be baptized in my name...who do repent...hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts." These people "were called the church of Christ."²⁰⁹

There is a clue given by Mormon that confirms there was no actual "church" or religion, and that the term was used to denote a group of people who followed Christ, rather than an organization consistent with modern religions. Mormon first writes that the people were "called the church of Christ";²¹⁰ then later, he writes that "*there [were] disputations among the people concerning*" what they should call their church.²¹¹ Hence, from this, we can see that no "church" as we know them today was organized when Christ was on the earth.

Early in the record, Nephi sees a vision of the modern-day world and comments that "there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth."²¹² Christ used the term "church" the same way it was used by Nephi. A "church," according to the way the term was used by Christ, is *a collective consensus between*

people that determines their course of action. A person is either following the counsel given by Christ, the Lamb of God, or the person is not—thus belonging to the “church of the devil.”

Again, it is important for the *Book of Mormon* student to read the record as it is given. Christ told the people, “my time is at hand,” meaning that he had to leave because he had given them everything they needed—even all his father had commanded him to teach mortals. But he perceived that the people were “weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time.”²¹³

The people could not accept that all that was required of them was that they **treat each other as they would want to be treated**. They could not understand that this was the **Royal Law**, *the fullness of the everlasting Gospel*, that all the “law and the prophets” were based on **this one principle**. It was only after Christ perceived the weakness of the people and groaned within himself because of their wickedness that he began to introduce the concept of a church and ordinances such as the sacrament.

Had Christ left the American people when he wanted to, there would have been no mention of the things he said in 3 Nephi chapters 17 and 18; and he certainly would not have had to return to settle their “disputations.” It is also hard for Bible students to accept the fact that Jesus’ crucifixion was **not part** of the things he was mandated to do upon the earth by his Father. John’s record specifically says that **before** his crucifixion, Jesus said, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”²¹⁴ It’s hard to imagine what part of “*I have finished the work*” people do not understand. They “look beyond this mark” because they search for things they do not understand.

The ancient Nephites were just as “wicked” as the latter-day Mormons. Although Christ had told his disciples previously that they should restrict their actions to baptism alone, the people “looked beyond the mark”:

And there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been. For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.²¹⁵

The Lord said unto them [groaning within]: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing?”²¹⁶

The people were changing the doctrine of Christ and not

build[ing] upon [Christ’s] rock... **and whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for [Christ’s] doctrine**, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon [Christ’s] rock; but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them.²¹⁷

The people—both the Nephites and the Mormons—got their churches as they wanted. Their churches were built upon a sandy foundation. They introduced things that

had nothing to do with the simple words of “Christ’s doctrine.” Within a few generations of each church’s establishment, “the floods came and the winds beat upon them,”—both the Nephites and the early Latter-day Saints—and the people again became wicked.

There began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world. And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them. And they began to be divided into classes; and they began to build up churches unto themselves to get gain, and began to deny the true church of Christ.²¹⁸

If they would not have “looked beyond the mark,” and instead “*built upon [Christ’s] rock*” (his words), then they would have prevailed in finding and creating happiness for themselves; and their world would have become a completely different state of existence.

A Message to Modern-day Priesthood Holders

The modern LDS/Mormon people have no clue how to “walk after the holy order of God, wherewith they have been brought into this church.”²¹⁹ They fulfill the prophecies of their own scriptures to their condemnation. Moroni, the son of Mormon, whose name they take upon themselves in vain, had a lot to say about them. He had a strong message for those who would receive the record and claim to be members of the “holy Church of God,” even those who would “transfigure the holy word of God.” Moroni tells the people that he “speak[s] unto you as if ye were present, and ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.” He then describes the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints precisely as it is today:

And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts.

For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.

O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?

Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?

Yea, why do ye build up your secret abominations to get gain, and cause that widows should mourn before the Lord, and also orphans to mourn before the Lord, and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground, for vengeance upon your heads?²²⁰

Joseph has a message for the LDS/Mormon people who believe they are being led by the priesthood of God. This comes straight from his own mouth, now as a resurrected man, consistent with the same words he wrote twice: once as Mormon, when he was abridging the words of Alma from the records contained upon the large plates of Nephi, and later as the chosen true messenger, Joseph Smith, Jr. :

And now my beloved brethren, I say unto you, can you withstand these words (referring to what is given above as the words of Moroni) which were written to you by my own hand; can you lay aside these things, and trample the Holy One under your feet; can ye continue to be puffed up in the pride of your hearts; and will you still persist in the wearing of costly apparel and setting your hearts upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches?

Will you persist in supposing that you are better one than another; will you persist in the persecution of your brethren, who humble themselves and do walk after the holy order of God, who have been taken out of your church, having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and who bring forth works which are meet for repentance?

Will you persist in turning your backs upon the poor, and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them while your priesthood leaders deceive you with temples and ordinances that you do not understand?

And finally, all you that will persist in your wickedness, I say unto you that these are they who shall be hewn down and cast into the fire except they speedily repent.

And now I say unto all of you who are desirous to follow the voice of the good shepherd, come out from among the wicked, and become separate from the polluted church that continues to use my name in vain, and touch not their unclean things; and behold, their names shall be blotted out of the book of Life, that the names of the wicked shall not be numbered among the names of the righteous, that the word of God may be fulfilled, which says: The names of the wicked shall not be mingled with the names of my people;

For the names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life, and unto them shall the Lord grant an inheritance at his right hand. And now, my brethren, what have you to say against this? I say unto you, if you speak against it, it matters not, for the word of God must be fulfilled.

For what shepherd is there among you having many sheep doth not watch over them, that the wolves enter not and devour his flock? And behold, if a wolf enter his flock doth he not drive him out? Yea, and at the last, if he can, he will destroy him.

And now I say unto you that the good shepherd doth call after you; and if you will hearken unto his voice he will bring you into his fold, and you are his sheep; and he commands you that you suffer no ravenous wolf to enter among you, that ye may not be destroyed. Yet your priesthood leaders are the wolves which you have allowed among you. Suffer them no more!

Behold, our Christ groans within himself, even as I groan, because of the wickedness of the people of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their priesthood leaders.²²¹

Summary

It is impossible for a mortal man to exercise the power of an advanced human being. Mortals do not have the intelligence or the body to do so. Except for individual natural defects, all human mortal bodies are of equal capacity. It has to be this way so that we can honestly conclude that mortality is a fair demonstration of how we use our free will. Anyone who would pretend to such an authority or power over another violates the very core of our human nature—free will and equality.

Men will be men as they have always been men. Their egos are part of their mortal nature.

The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.²²²

No child would ever *wear an apron* that represents an emblem of “power and priesthoods.” Only a natural man would. Only “an enemy to God” would. The natural man was finally revealed through the symbolism of the temple endowment Joseph prepared for the people as their final stumbling block. The natural man is “Lucifer,” who wears his apron proudly.

Differing Mormon sects sprang up after Joseph’s death; a few even began while he was still alive. But how did they come to differ so much on the principle of priesthood authority, a seemingly vital part of Mormon theology? The confusion began because of the uncertainty of its origin, its actual meaning, and who was and is entitled to it.

Mormon dogma and legends have developed over many years of uncertainty about the beginnings of their own faith. The doctrine, covenants, principles, and beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the rest of the varying Mormon sects continue to develop as men who believe they have the ability to act in the name of God through priesthood power and authority receive “continued revelation.” It is very difficult to track how the development of Mormon theology started because there are so many things that have changed over the years.

But somehow, somewhere, Mormons heard something from Joseph Smith that caused them to take his words and make their own form of doctrine. From priesthood authority to people living on the moon, Mormons have created their own sense of reality, based not on what Joseph actually said and did, but on what they *desired* him to do. Their “desires” became their reality regardless of the **real truth**.

For one of many examples of this, although Joseph never said anything of the sort, Oliver B. Huntington published the following in 1892:

Nearly all the great discoveries of men in the last half century have, in one way or another, either directly or indirectly, contributed to prove Joseph Smith to be a Prophet. As far back as 1837, I know that [Joseph] said the moon was inhabited by men and women the same as this earth, and that they lived to a greater age than we

*do—that they live generally to near the age of 1000 years. In my Patriarchal blessing, given by the father of Joseph the Prophet, in Kirtland, 1837, I was told that I should preach the gospel before I was 21 years of age; that I should preach the gospel to the inhabitants upon the islands of the sea, and to the inhabitants of the moon, even the planet you can now behold with your eyes.*²²³

One of the principal “prophets, seers, and revelators” of the LDS Church, Brigham Young, earlier provided ample support for Huntington’s ridiculous notion of inhabitants on the moon:

*Who can tell us of the inhabitants of this little planet that shines of an evening, called the moon?...when you inquire about the inhabitants of that sphere you find that the most learned are as ignorant in regard to them as the ignorant of their fellows. So it is in regard to the inhabitants of the sun. Do you think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? No question of it; it was not made in vain.*²²⁴

Mormons accepted this kind of doctrine because they recognized the veracity of the *Holy Priesthood of God*, which gave their leaders the power to establish it. What they fail to realize, because of their great pride in their religion—belonging to the only true church of God upon earth—is that LDS/Mormon priesthood is one of these invented and evolved doctrines. There is no more power and authority in their priesthoods than there is men on the moon. “Adam” should well be confused about “power and priesthoods.”²²⁵

One of their favorite dogmas, which later became an essential Church doctrine, was the story of the war in heaven between Lucifer and Jehovah. Basically, Lucifer wanted to take away free agency and force people to be righteous. As stated at the beginning of this exposition on the Holy Priesthood, the **true** nature of the universal power and authority given to all human beings *equally* is the free agency to act and to be acted upon. “Lucifer’s power and authority” is to take this free agency away, which is exactly what religious leaders do when they claim to have a power and authority to tell free-willed human beings what they can and cannot do. Joseph was undoubtedly correct with the symbolism he incorporated into his temple endowment.

It is easy for people to claim that Joseph Smith said and did such-and-such when he is not around to confirm, or deny, or explain his actions. But if Mormons/LDS believe that a resurrected Moroni and Christ visited Joseph and gave him instructions and authority to perform a mission, then it should not be too difficult for them to accept the fact that Joseph himself is a resurrected being. And thus it is that under his personal direction, Joseph has finally *revealed his true identity* in order to counter the many doctrines and precepts of men that have deceived so many people for so long.

Amen to the priesthood authority of the LDS/Mormon men, and all others who claim authority and power over anyone but themselves. The same man who suffered it to be given to them in the first place has unveiled their *Holy Priesthood!*

NOTES

¹ See chapter 37.

² BOM, Alma 12:10.

³ The presentation of the LDS endowment is similar to a play acted out by men and women (mostly men) representing certain symbolic religious characters. The more modern temple patrons watch a projected movie instead of a play.

⁴ Introduction, n. 56.

⁵ Christopher, *Sacred, not Secret—The [Authorized and] Official Guide In Understanding the LDS Temple Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Worldwide United, 2008). Referred to as SNS.

⁶ See chapter 37.

⁷ *The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Containing Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, with Some Additions by his Successors in the Presidency of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, 1981) 38:32. Referred to as D&C. (This was the “endowment from on high” that the people were promised throughout the history of the LDS Church.)

⁸ Compare BOM, Jacob 4:14.

⁹ Compare BOM, Jacob 4:14.

¹⁰ SNS, 51.

¹¹ The modern LDS Church changed the original endowment in 1990 and omitted Adam’s confused question and Lucifer’s response.

¹² SNS, 12–14, 16.

¹³ Matthew 25:31–46. (Consider the placement of people on the *right* and *left* hand of Christ.)

¹⁴ BOM, Alma 12:31. Wherefore, he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal, and becoming as Gods, knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good.

¹⁵ “Section III On Priesthood” of the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. Joseph Smith, Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of the Latter Day Saints: Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God* (Kirtland: Williams & Co., 1835) 82.

¹⁶ Whitmer, 64, emphasis added.

¹⁷ Whitmer, 49.

¹⁸ BOM, Moroni 8:18.

¹⁹ *The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* 13 (15 Nov. 1851): 339. “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”

²⁰ Whitmer, 64.

²¹ *The Pearl of Great Price: A Selection from the Revelations, Translations, and Narrations of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: LDS Church, 1976) Joseph Smith—History 1:34. Referred to as PGP and JSH.

²² SNS, 50–51.

²³ SNS, 59.

²⁴ George Cochrane Hazelton, *The National Capitol* (New York: J. F. Taylor & Co., 1907) 22.

²⁵ DHC, 4:550–1.

²⁶ S. H. Goodwin, *Mormonism and Masonry: Origins, Connections and Coincidences Between Mason and Mormon Temple/Templar Rituals* (1920; Whitefish: Kessinger, 1992).

²⁷ Steven L. Shields, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration: A History of the Latter Day Saint Movement* (Los Angeles: Restoration Research, 1982) 29.

²⁸ During November 1839, Joseph Smith met with U.S. President Martin Van Buren to discuss the Saints’ grievances. (See DHC, 4: XXVI, 80, 89 and chapters 2 and 3; Also see DHC, 5:393, DHC, 6:65, 90, 157, 188.)

²⁹ BOM, Alma 10:27.

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- ³⁰ SNS, 51.
³¹ D&C, 121:35.
³² See DHC, 3:175, "Governor Boggs' Exterminating Order."
³³ D&C, 121:33–40.
³⁴ James 2:8.
³⁵ Paine, *The Age of Reason*, 1.
³⁶ BOM, 2 Nephi 3:7–9.
³⁷ Exodus 40:12–16.
³⁸ Exodus 40:15; Numbers 25:13.
³⁹ Exodus 18:13–14.
⁴⁰ Exodus 18:15–16.
⁴¹ Exodus 18:17–18.
⁴² Exodus 18:19–23.
⁴³ Exodus 18:25–26.
⁴⁴ Exodus 20:19.
⁴⁵ BOM, Jacob 4:14.
⁴⁶ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:12.
⁴⁷ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:2.
⁴⁸ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:36.
⁴⁹ Matthew 28:19–20; BOM 3 Nephi 19:8.
⁵⁰ BOM, Alma 13:6.
⁵¹ D&C, 93:36.
⁵² D&C, 107:19.
⁵³ BOM, Alma 12:9–11.
⁵⁴ BOM, 3 Nephi 16:10.
⁵⁵ JSH 1:34.
⁵⁶ BOM, 3 Nephi 21:14–19.
⁵⁷ Mark 10:37–44.
⁵⁸ Luke 9:49–50.
⁵⁹ Hebrews 7:3; BOM, Alma 13:7, 9; D&C, 76:16, 84:17; PGP, Moses 1:3, 6:7.
⁶⁰ Hebrews 5:10; 6:20.
⁶¹ Hebrews 5:10; 6:20.
⁶² BOM, Alma 4:20; 5:44, 54; 7:22; 8:4; 13:6, 18; 43:2; 49:30 and Ether 12:10.
⁶³ BOM, 2 Nephi 6:2.
⁶⁴ BOM, Alma 13:3, 5.
⁶⁵ BOM, Alma 13:5.
⁶⁶ BOM, Alma 13:3.
⁶⁷ PGP, Articles of Faith 1:11. See also DHC, 4:541.
⁶⁸ BOM, Alma 5:54.
⁶⁹ BOM, Alma 5:53–5.
⁷⁰ BOM, Alma 7:22–4.
⁷¹ BOM, Alma 13:1.
⁷² "Emma Smith Bidamon," *Moroni's Latter-day Saint Page*, 7 Jul. 2010 <http://www.moroni10.com/witnesses/Emma_Smith.html>.
⁷³ *Book of Commandments* 26:6–7 (compare D&C, 25:7–8). "And thou [Emma Smith] shalt be ordained under his hand to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit: For he shall lay his hand upon thee, and thou shalt receive the Holy Ghost, and *thy time shall be given to writing, and to learning much."
⁷⁴ Compare BOM, Alma 13:1.
⁷⁵ BOM, 2 Nephi 26:33.

⁷⁶ DHC, 1:28.

⁷⁷ D&C, section 4.

⁷⁸ D&C, 4:2.

⁷⁹ D&C, 4:5–6.

⁸⁰ D&C, 4:3.

⁸¹ “Wallace B. Smith (1978–1996),” *Community of Christ Official Homepage*, 1999, 7 July 2010 <<http://www.cofchrist.org/history/WBS.asp>>. (In 1984...Wallace B. called for opening priesthood ministries to women as well as men. This was a change from the 150-year tradition, and there was both strong agreement and strong disagreement from members. Many chose to leave, but many more found new opportunities for service and new life in their congregations.)

“Frequently Asked Questions,” *Community of Christ Official Homepage*, 1999, 7 July 2010 <<http://www.cofchrist.org/OurFaith/faq.asp>>. (Who is eligible for priesthood membership? All persons, male and female, are eligible for priesthood ordination. We believe God calls those chosen to serve in the ministry. Most of our ministers earn their living outside of church employment and serve in various offices according to their gifts and callings.)

Also see list of those holding positions of authority within the Community of Christ Church: “Councils, Quorums, and Orders,” *Community of Christ Official Homepage*, 1999, 7 July 2010 <http://www.cofchrist.org/directory/councils_quorums_and_orders.asp>.

⁸² Galatians 5: 16–24.

⁸³ BOM, Mosiah 2:17.

⁸⁴ D&C, 101:77.

⁸⁵ BOM, Mosiah 8:20–21.

⁸⁶ BOM, Alma 31:30–31.

⁸⁷ See n. 4 above.

⁸⁸ DHC, 6:317.

⁸⁹ BOM, 2 Nephi 6:2.

⁹⁰ The Book of Lehi, Appendix 2 in *The Sealed Portion—The Final Testament of Jesus Christ*, trans. Christopher (Worldwide United, 2005) 591–633. Referred to as *TSP*.

⁹¹ *TSP*, The Book of Lehi, 1:7, 21; 3:34.

⁹² BOM, Alma 43:2; Alma 49:30.

⁹³ BOM, Ether 12:10.

⁹⁴ BOM, 2 Nephi 25:27.

⁹⁵ BOM, 2 Nephi 25:24–30; 26:1.

⁹⁶ BOM, Alma 5:54; Alma 7:22.

⁹⁷ DHC, 1:32–35.

⁹⁸ After the first revelation Joseph gave to Oliver, recorded modernly as D&C, section 6, Joseph would give him two more during the same month (April 1829: see D&C, sections 8, and 9).

⁹⁹ JSH 1:34.

¹⁰⁰ BOM, 3 Nephi 9:20.

¹⁰¹ BOM, 3 Nephi 9:20.

¹⁰² BOM, 3 Nephi 11:21.

¹⁰³ Zechariah 9:9 (9–11).

¹⁰⁴ Matthew 21:1–5.

¹⁰⁵ Matthew 13:11–13.

¹⁰⁶ Matthew 22:37–40.

¹⁰⁷ Genesis 48:8–20.

¹⁰⁸ Genesis 27:18–30.

¹⁰⁹ Genesis 48:10.

¹¹⁰ Genesis 48:12.

¹¹¹ Genesis 48:10–19.

¹¹² *DHC*, 1:36.

¹¹³ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 15:2.

¹¹⁴ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 17:14.

¹¹⁵ *D&C*, sections 6 and 11.

¹¹⁶ *D&C*, 6:10 and *D&C*, 11:10, respectively.

¹¹⁷ *D&C*, 6:12.

¹¹⁸ *D&C*, 11:26.

¹¹⁹ *DHC*, 1:39–42. *See also* *JSH* 1:68–73.

¹²⁰ *DHC*, 1:44–5.

¹²¹ *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Oct. 1834) 14.

¹²² *BOM*, Alma 40:20.

¹²³ *BOM*, Alma 40:5.

¹²⁴ *See* Appendix 2, "Mormon Polygamy—The Truth Revealed!"

¹²⁵ Ephesians 1:17–18 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

¹²⁶ *JSH*, n. (*) (Oliver Cowdery's footnote).

¹²⁷ *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Oct. 1834) 13–16. Exact spelling and punctuation from original retained.

¹²⁸ *D&C*, 76:20–23; *DHC*, 1:245–52.

¹²⁹ *D&C*, 76:12 & 19.

¹³⁰ *BOM*, Jacob 4:14.

¹³¹ *See* n. 127 above.

¹³² *BOM*, 3 Nephi 11:25.

¹³³ *DHC*, 1:40, n. (*): "...there is no definite account of the event [of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood] in the history of the Prophet Joseph, or, for matter of that, in any of our annals." *See also* Eric Davis, "Melchizedek Restoration Is Entirely Missing," *The Mormon Curtain*, 26 Oct 2009, 10 Jan. 2012 <http://www.mormoncurtain.com/topic_melchizedek_aaronic_priesthood.html#pub_-1554535960>.

¹³⁴ *D&C*, 107:18–19.

¹³⁵ *D&C*, 107:18.

¹³⁶ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 28:13.

¹³⁷ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 28:14.

¹³⁸ One needs only to compare the verses of the current *D&C* with the 1835 edition. For instance, compare current *D&C*, 78: heading, 1, 9 with 1835 *D&C*, LXXV:1–2. Also compare *D&C*, 82:11; 104:26, 43, 45–6 to the 1835 *D&C*.

For further study, see "Scanned Images of the Entire 1833 Book of Commandments and 1835 Doctrine and Covenants," *IRR.org*, *Mormons in Transition*, 2010, Institute for Religious Research, 7 Jul. 2010 <<http://www.irr.org/mit/boc/>>.

¹³⁹ *D&C*, 27:12.

¹⁴⁰ *See BOM*, 3 Nephi 19:4.

¹⁴¹ *JSH* 1:54.

¹⁴² *BOM*, 1 Nephi 14:7.

¹⁴³ "The Importance of the LDS Religion—Parallels Between the LDS and the Ancient Jews," *Marvelous Work and a Wonder*[®], *Marvelous Work and a Wonder Purpose Trust*, 7 July 2010 <http://www.marvelousworkandawonder.org/q_a/contents/3lds/q01/1lds010.htm>.

¹⁴⁴ Boyd K. Packer, "The Only True Church," *Ensign* Nov. 1985: 80. "It is our firm conviction that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is, as the revelations state, 'the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth.'" *See also D&C*, 1:30.

¹⁴⁵ Whitmer, 64.

- ¹⁴⁶ BOM, Jacob 4:14–15.
¹⁴⁷ BOM, 1 Nephi 1:4.
¹⁴⁸ BOM, 1 Nephi 1:5.
¹⁴⁹ BOM, 1 Nephi 19:10 is the first reference of many to Zenos and Zenock.
¹⁵⁰ BOM, 1 Nephi 1:4.
¹⁵¹ D&C, section 10.
¹⁵² D&C, 10:1.
¹⁵³ The visitation of Moroni to the Three Witnesses occurred on June 16, 1829. (*See* chapters 23 and 24.)
¹⁵⁴ BOM, 1 Nephi 10:11.
¹⁵⁵ BOM, 1 Nephi 10:17.
¹⁵⁶ BOM, Mosiah 8:14.
¹⁵⁷ BOM, Mosiah 8:16.
¹⁵⁸ D&C, sections 6 and 11.
¹⁵⁹ BOM, Jacob 4:14.
¹⁶⁰ BOM, Moroni 10:17–18.
¹⁶¹ BOM, 3 Nephi 21:1.
¹⁶² BOM, 1 Nephi 10:19.
¹⁶³ BOM, 2 Nephi 31:12.
¹⁶⁴ BOM, 3 Nephi 9:20.
¹⁶⁵ BOM, 3 Nephi 18:35–9.
¹⁶⁶ BOM, 3 Nephi 19:11–13.
¹⁶⁷ BOM, 3 Nephi 26:17.
¹⁶⁸ DHC, 1: 71–75, 84.
¹⁶⁹ BOM, Jacob 4:14.
¹⁷⁰ BOM, 3 Nephi 26:6–12.
¹⁷¹ BOM, Alma 12:9–11.
¹⁷² BOM, Ether 4:14–15.
¹⁷³ BOM, 3 Nephi 18:37.
¹⁷⁴ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:12.
¹⁷⁵ BOM, 3 Nephi 18:37.
¹⁷⁶ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:1.
¹⁷⁷ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:2.
¹⁷⁸ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:7.
¹⁷⁹ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:13–14.
¹⁸⁰ D&C, 107:18–19.
¹⁸¹ BOM, 3 Nephi 28:18.
¹⁸² D&C, section 18.
¹⁸³ DHC, 2:186.
¹⁸⁴ DHC, 2:185.
¹⁸⁵ D&C, 18:37.
¹⁸⁶ DHC, 2:186.
¹⁸⁷ BOM, 3 Nephi 17:2.
¹⁸⁸ DHC, 2:194–5. *See also* *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, Fred C. Collier & William S. Harwell, eds. (Salt Lake City: Collier's, 1996) 80.
¹⁸⁹ DHC, 2:200.
¹⁹⁰ *See* Appendix 1, subheading titled, "The Holy Order of God." *See also* TSP, 6:46; 9:36; 61:83–4; 82:35–7.
¹⁹¹ DHC, 2:209.

¹⁹² See also *DHC*, 1:210–17; *D&C*, section 107. This can also be viewed at “1835 Doctrine and Covenants, Page 82,” *IRR.org*; *Mormons in Transition*, 2010, Institute for Religious Research, 10 Jan. 2012 <<http://www.irr.org/mit/d&c/1835dc-p82.html>>.

¹⁹³ “About The Volumes,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, June 2007, Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7 July 2010 <<http://josephsmithpapers.org/AboutTheVolumes.htm>>. (“When completed, The Joseph Smith Papers will consist of both printed and online material that includes all known and available documents meeting our criteria as Joseph Smith documents. Approximately twenty volumes—in such series as Journals, Revelations and Translations, Documents, and History—will be printed by around 2020.”)

¹⁹⁴ *DHC*, 4:461.

¹⁹⁵ See also *DHC*, 1:229.

¹⁹⁶ Appendix to 1835 *D&C*; Also see *DHC*, 1:232 (verses 36–7).

¹⁹⁷ See *D&C*, section 133; *DHC*, 1:229–34.

¹⁹⁸ *DHC*, 2:381.

¹⁹⁹ *DHC*, 2:379–381.

²⁰⁰ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 17:14.

²⁰¹ *BOM*, Jacob 4:14.

²⁰² *DHC*, 5:148–153.

²⁰³ An aid for comparison is given in n. 138 above.

²⁰⁴ *DHC*, 1:40 footnote.

²⁰⁵ La Mar Petersen, *Problems in Mormon Text* (Salt Lake City: Utah Evangel Press, 1957) 7–8.

²⁰⁶ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 17:14.

²⁰⁷ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 16:1–3.

²⁰⁸ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 17:14.

²⁰⁹ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 18:5, 16; 21:22; 26:21.

²¹⁰ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 26:21.

²¹¹ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 27:3.

²¹² *BOM*, 1 Nephi 14:10.

²¹³ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 17:1–2.

²¹⁴ John 17:4.

²¹⁵ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 11:28.

²¹⁶ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 27:4.

²¹⁷ *BOM*, 3 Nephi 11:39–40.

²¹⁸ *BOM*, 4 Nephi 1:24–6.

²¹⁹ *BOM*, Alma 5:54.

²²⁰ *BOM*, Mormon 8:36–41.

²²¹ Compare *BOM*, Alma 5:53–60.

²²² *BOM*, Mosiah 3:19.

²²³ *The Young Woman’s Journal* (Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Associations of Zion, 1892)3:263–4.

²²⁴ *JD*, 13:271.

²²⁵ *SNS*, 50–1.