

The Holy Order, Part 3:

Adoption

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INTRODUCTION

Mankind began as a family. Adam and Eve were the first mortal parents,¹ intended as the patriarch and matriarch over all who would live in this world. They were also the priest and priestess of a religion given to them by heaven.² That starting point was quickly disrupted, and the first generations of their children rejected their religion, separated from their parents, and followed Satan in rebellion.

A son named Cain was born when Adam and Eve were grandparents, or perhaps great-grandparents and at a time when the family had become disorganized and chaotic. His birth gave Eve hope that she finally had a faithful son. As she put it: “I have gotten a man from the Lord, wherefore he may not reject his words.”³ Her hope was shattered when Cain killed her other son Abel.

From the dawn of mankind, the family of Adam and Eve descended into apostasy and disorder. The scriptures compel us to admit that, apart from Abel, the second generation of mankind was entirely lost until the birth of Seth. From him, a line of faithful descendants was established.

This resulted in two clear conditions for the first generations: There was a larger, predominant population of apostate men and women who:

kept not the commandments of God, and it displeased God, and he ministered not unto them. And their works were abominations and began to spread among all the sons of men. ... And thus the works of darkness began to prevail among all the sons of men.

And God cursed the earth with a severe curse and was angry with the wicked, with all the sons of men whom he had made, for they would not listen unto his voice nor believe on his Only Begotten Son, even him who he declared should come in the

¹ They were the first “mortal” parents. But, as I have explained in *Our Divine Parents*, “Our Heavenly Mother, the companion of Heavenly Father, was in the garden when man was created. But so were others. In addition to the man Adam and the woman Eve, the plural Elohim who were in Eden included two Divine couples who were parents of Adam and Eve. One Divine couple were the parents of Adam. The other were the parents of Eve.” Page 35.

² See T&C 110: LoF 2:12, 18.

³ OC Gen. 3:6 (LDS/JST Moses 4:1). The record is silent about why Eve reached this conclusion, but there was apparently some reason for her hope for Cain.

meridian of time, who was prepared from before the foundation of the world.⁴

Ultimately, within ten generations, mankind had so few who were righteous and so many who were inordinately violent and wicked, that God destroyed His creation with a flood.⁵ A few gathered into a city and with Enoch were translated. Noah's family was guided by the Lord to survive the cataclysm. This gave mankind an opportunity to start over. But the generations following Noah fared no better in preserving the religion God taught to the first parents. Apostasy returned, and the opportunity for the family of mankind to return to a unified order, a singular family, practicing a singular religion, with all members knowing they belonged to a united whole was again quickly forfeited.

Our scriptures confirm that mankind has descended into disorder from the beginning. Instead of a unified family, we are separated, with little or no genealogical connection to one another. Recent DNA science reveals something about the distant past and the far-flung regions from which we descend. Knowing that you have some Irish ancestors does not, however, reconnect you to them. Even if you think of yourself as Irish, your ancestors are not likely to be limited to the Irish. In a recent study of Americans, European Americans are 98% European, 0.19% African, and 0.18% Native American. African Americans are 73% African, 24% European, and 1% Native American. Latino Americans are 65% European, 18% Native American, and 6% African. Of course, this is only a generalization and grouping based on overall reporting of the various ethnic categories. It helps show that our ancestry is diverse and includes a widely spread geographic and cultural heritage reflecting the scattered family of Adam and Eve.

Because mankind is splintered, the original religion of Adam was modified and an innovation was offered as a substitute to reconnect and reunify us. God wants the atonement of Jesus Christ to save as many souls as possible. The substitute way God has used to expand salvation was to provide a covenant. God offers the terms, and mankind accepts His offer. Through covenant-making, God is able to incorporate multiple people, even whole families, into salvation. Covenants have been used to greatly expand salvation for Adam's descendants. After a covenant has been offered and accepted, others are permitted to opt in to the covenantal group by accepting the same covenant terms. God's conditions always require the convert to change their course and be

⁴ OC Gen. 3:12-13.

⁵ "But the earth was corrupt before God and it was filled with violence. And God looked upon it, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh has come before me; for the earth is filled with violence, and behold, I will destroy all flesh from off the earth." OC Gen. 5:11 (LDS/JST 6:11-13).

baptized before their inclusion into the community. This innovation has allowed for the widespread recovery of believers despite the loss of the original plan for mankind's salvation.

The Book of Mormon describes the disorganized condition of mankind as “alone without God in the world.”⁶ Once a person is converted, they are then “numbered among” the faithful followers of the Lord.⁷

The covenant can be broken and lost. By breaking the covenant, mankind loses their saved status, even if they were “born into the covenant.”⁸ The Book of Mormon teaches this: “For behold, I say unto you, as many of the gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord, and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off.”⁹

Despite innovating an accommodation to save souls, it has always been God's promise that Adam's family would return to their original status. Adam prophesied of this before his death. “Now this same Priesthood which was in the beginning shall be in the end of the world also (now this prophecy Adam spoke as he was moved upon by the holy ghost).”¹⁰

In addition to the substitute covenant-making innovation for saving souls, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has always included the plan for individuals to ultimately reconnect with the original family order. Time and the many generations separating us from Adam and Eve are to be repaired through the return of the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. This talk follows three earlier talks about God's plan to restore and recover mankind before the Second Coming of the Lord. The earlier talks have been *Lecture 5: Priesthood*,¹¹ *The Holy Order*,¹² and *The Holy Order, Part 2*.¹³ We have not yet adequately discussed the topic of “adoption” in the earlier talks, although it has been mentioned. It is now the topic addressed in this talk.

⁶ See, e.g., NC Mosiah 11:28 (LDS 27:31); Alma 19:10 (LDS 41:11); Mormon 2:6 (LDS 5:16).

⁷ See, e.g., NC 1 Ne. 3:25 (LDS 14:2); Mosiah 11:15 (LDS 25:12); Alma 15:9 (LDS 27:27); 3 Ne. 1:11 (LDS 2:14);

⁸ See, e.g., NC 2 Ne. 12:11 (LDS 30:2); Moroni 6:3 (LDS 13:10); among many others.

⁹ NC 2 Ne. 12:11 (LDS 12:11).

¹⁰ OC Gen. 3:14 (LDS/Moses 4:26); see also T&C 154:21.

¹¹ See denversnuffer.com Downloads, *40 Years in Mormonism Lectures, Lecture 5: Priesthood*, a talk given on November 2, 2013 in Orem, Utah, found at: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://denversnuffer.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/05-Orem-Transcript-Priesthood.pdf>

¹² See denversnuffer.com Downloads, *The Holy Order*, a talk given on October 29, 2017 in Bountiful, Utah, found at <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://denversnuffer.net/resources/The-Holy-Order.pdf>

¹³ See, denversnuffer.com Downloads, *The Holy Order, Part 2*, a talk given at Clifton Springs, New York on April 7, 2024 at <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://denversnuffer.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/The-Holy-Order-Part-2-1.pdf>

RESTORATION HISTORY

The restoration of an ancient religion started by Joseph Smith was quite unlike what has developed in modern Mormonism. The primary group associated with Mormonism is, of course, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Its historians and apologists admit there have been changes. In a 2013 BYU Studies article, Samuel M. Brown wrote: “During my study of the contexts, connotations, and currents of early LDS adoption theology, I experienced what a famed scholar of late antiquity has called ‘salutary vertigo.’ The more I investigated, the more I realized that the earliest Latter-day Saints saw the world differently than I do.”¹⁴

Because Joseph’s vision differs from what is believed and practiced today, we still need to return to Joseph’s work, and then continue to restore what was once here. More accurately: we need to repent.

Understanding how the practice of “adoption” fits into the restoration is a model example of ‘dwindling in unbelief.’ In the *Glossary of Gospel Terms*, this is the definition of that phrase:

Unbelief is often used in connection with losing truth, forsaking doctrine, and therefore, “dwindling.” The phrase “dwindling in unbelief” is the Book of Mormon’s way to describe moving from a state of belief, with true and complete doctrine, to a state of unbelief, where the truth has been discarded. Miracles end because men dwindle in unbelief.¹⁵

Adoption was introduced as a means to avoid destruction at the Lord’s return in glory. The deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith interrupted efforts to establish it. This talk will trace how it began and how subsequent events led to its decline and eventual abandonment.

Our restored scriptures (in the Testimony of St. John) mention becoming part of God’s family, for example, in the passage: “to become like Him, begotten children in the family of the Most High God.”¹⁶ Paul refers to “adoption” as part of conversion to follow Jesus Christ.¹⁷ Accordingly, the idea of “adoption” is

¹⁴ *Believing Adoption*, BYU Studies Quarterly, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2013).

¹⁵ *Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Dwindle in Unbelief, citing *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, (Mill Creek Press: 2011), p. 52.

¹⁶ T&C 171: TSJ 1:3. See also NC Mosiah 3:2 (LDS 5:7): “ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you.” As stated in CoC: “you’ll be called the sons and daughters of Jesus Christ. Today, He has spiritually begotten you.”

¹⁷ See, e.g., NC Romans 1:34, 38 (KJV 8:17, 9:4); Gal. 1:13 (KJV 4:5-7); Eph. 1:2 (KJV 1:5).

part of Historic Christianity and Mormonism. For Christians, it is a vague notion used to refer to belief in, acceptance of, and conversion to Jesus Christ. For Mormonism, it once had a highly specific meaning, but that original meaning has drifted away until Mormon adoption is now akin to the Christian understanding.

The concept of “adoption” was generally recognized as part of Christianity as a whole when the restoration began. The term was used loosely to mean a person believed in Christ and recognized Him as their Savior. The language of Paul is often cited to support the Christian claim that believers are automatically adopted by faith into God’s family with nothing further required:

For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if it so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together.¹⁸

Because the LDS church went adrift, language in the Book of Mormon has also become used to support a loose understanding of the term “adoption.” For example: “Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women—all nations, kindreds, tongues and people—must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters.”¹⁹ Joseph Smith held a very different view, as this talk will explain.

Because Mormonism failed to preserve the original idea, the meaning and mechanism of “adoption” in the Mormon religion have become a Gordian knot. It should be (but is not) understood as a separate doctrine requiring a separate rite. Over time, it has instead become entwined with plural marriage and baptism for the dead. By entangling plural marriage, baptism for the dead, and adoption, our ability to understand Joseph Smith’s message has been degraded. Obscuring adoption is one of the greatest losses in the dwindling restoration. It must again be understood as a separate, important, and eternally significant religious rite.

As adoption began to take shape in Joseph Smith’s work, Parley P. Pratt offered an early glimpse of what was underway. In his pamphlet *A Voice of Warning*, Pratt described the process soon to be offered by Mormon officials, who were “prepared to unlock the door of the kingdom, and to adopt strangers and foreigners into it as legal citizens, by administering certain laws and ordinances which were invariably the laws of adoption; without which no man

¹⁸ NC Romans 1:34 (KJV 8:15).

¹⁹ NC Mosiah 11:28 (LDS 27:25); see also Mosiah 3:2 (LDS 5:7); Moroni 7:4 (LDS 7:26); 3 Ne. 4:7 (LDS 9:17) (where you find Christ’s words of adoption); among other places.

could ever become a citizen.”²⁰ This early reference to laws and ordinances would later lead to greater clarity, as adoption became a separate rite.

Although adoption would eventually stand on its own with Joseph Smith, the early LDS leaders blended it with plural marriage. This has led in turn to an inaccurate and misguided history of Joseph Smith. When the LDS apostles attributed plural marriage to Joseph Smith, it led to the editing, revision, and publication of altered historical documents. The resulting inaccurate history has been used, accepted, and perpetuated. One example of conflating what deserved to be treated separately appears in Samuel Brown’s article in The Journal of Mormon History. He explained his understanding this way:

The vast scope of adoption theology, generally stretched vertically through the generations of time, in polygamy stretched horizontally through the contemporary world. Though the first steps dated to the 1830s, by the early 1840s Smith had begun to expound a marital/sexual system scholars have termed proto-polygamy and which early Latter-day Saints denominated “plural” or “celestial” marriage. In several important respects, polygamy is the marital amplification and application of adoption theology. “Plural” not only indicated that there would be multiple wives for each man but that such ritual marriages would unite worshippers as part of the celestial plurality of Smith’s heaven family. In the words of a revelation, the righteous “shall be crowned upon your heads with honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house both old and young because of the lineage of my Priesthood saith the Lord it shall be upon you and upon your Children after you from generation to generation By virtue of the Holy promise which I now make unto you.”²¹

From Brown’s viewpoint, everything involving “sealing” was marital. Similarly, Richard L. Bushman failed to separate or acknowledge that adoption could (and should) be parsed separately from plural marriage. Consider below what he wrote, which, instead of being an accurate explanation of Joseph Smith’s practice, is a conflation of two different subjects as if they were one:

The only answer seems to be the explanation Joseph gave when he asked a woman for her consent: that they and their families would benefit spiritually from a close tie to the Prophet. Joseph told a prospective wife that submitting to plural marriage would

²⁰ *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People*, (W. Sanford: New York, 1837), p. 95.

²¹ Brown, Samuel M., *Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation*, Journal of Mormon History, Vol. 37, No. 2, Summer 2011, p. 38, footnotes omitted, spellings as in original..

“ensure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father’s household. & all your kindred.” A father who gave his daughter to the Prophet as a plural wife was assured that the marriage “shall be crowned upon your heads with honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house both old and young.” The relationship would bear fruit in the afterlife. There is no certain evidence that Joseph had sexual relations with any of the wives who were married to other men. They married because Joseph’s kingdom grew with the size of his family, and those bonded to that family would be exalted with him.²²

If sealing could mean “adoption” into Joseph Smith’s family rather than “marriage” to him, how differently might Bushman’s conclusion be understood? Let me rewrite that paragraph with this alternative view in mind:

The only answer seems to be the explanation Joseph gave when he asked a woman for her consent: that they and their families would benefit spiritually from a close tie to the Prophet. Joseph told a prospective [daughter] that submitting to [adoption] would “ensure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father’s household. & all your kindred.” A father who gave his daughter to the Prophet as a [sealed daughter] was assured that the [sealing] “shall be crowned upon your heads with honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house both old and young.” The relationship would bear fruit in the afterlife. ... They [were sealed] because Joseph’s kingdom grew with the size of his family, and those [adopted into] that family would be exalted with him.²³

Given the ongoing debate about whether Joseph Smith actually introduced plural marriage, approaching adoption as a separate, divisible sealing rite makes it part of that debate. I am going to set aside questions about polygamy’s origin. I want to focus on adoption as something completely apart from plural wives or any form of marriage. That is necessary if adoption is ever to be understood.

Here is another historian’s account describing the effect of an adoption sealing on the afterlife:

Among these [early Mormon] rituals were those binding, or sealing, families together. According to Mormon belief, family units must be sealed together by the authority of the priesthood

²² Bushman, Richard Lyman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, (Alfred A. Knopf, New York 2005), p. 439, footnotes omitted.

²³ Interpreting “sealing” as adoption rather than marriage changes a great deal of how history is interpreted. The transfer of building lots in Nauvoo to women who were adopted daughters rather than plural wives would undermine one view of history and support another. That, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

(restored through Joseph Smith) to have validity after death. One ordinance seals parents and children to each other. Because most early Mormons were children of unbaptized members, however, many were “adopted to” prominent men in the church. Isaac Morley, for example, was adopted as a son to Brigham Young, although fifteen years his senior. These family ties carried with them all the moral obligations that inhere in family relationships, strengthening the bonds of loyalty among the leading families.²⁴

If family life continues after death, then both marriage and adoption have implications for the form the family will take. Therefore, adoption is just as important as marriage for the afterlife.²⁵ As Joseph Smith practiced adoption, sealing in adoption was not tied to earthly alliances but was instead to be understood as creating a relationship with “the fathers in heaven.”²⁶ Joseph Smith’s adoption secured promises for the afterlife. This talk will parse adoption as a distinct form of sealing, unrelated to marriage and without any connection to plural wives.

It is possible that when Joseph Smith began “sealing” others to himself that he made no distinction. He may have just “sealed” others to himself without clarifying the resulting status, other than they would be together in the afterlife. That possibility occurs to me because Joseph’s clearest reference to “adoption” as a ritual (from all I have been able to find in the available record) was in October 1843. If Joseph did not make a distinction before then, historians have worked with an inadequate record from which to reconstruct the events.

ADOPTION AND PREPARING FOR CHRIST’S RETURN

²⁴ Daynes, Kathryn M., *More Wives than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System 1840-1910*, (University of Illinois Press, Urbana: 2001), p. 25, footnote omitted.

²⁵ In Brown, Samuel Morris, *In Heaven as it is On Earth*, (Oxford University Press: 2012), he discusses differing Christian views of the afterlife and makes this assertion: “Drawing on antecedents in evangelicalism, the diluted Swedenborgianism that contributed to the domestic heaven, the Neoplatonic Chain of Being, and metaphysical Israelitism, the Mormon heaven family provided a network of eternal belonging for the Latter-day Saints. This heaven family became the organizational implementation of Smith’s soteriological assault on the opposing poles of antebellum Protestantism: Calvinism and Arminianism. In place of election or conversion of the will without backsliding, Smith proposed a sacramental guarantee of salvation that was in its essence communal.” pp. 204-205. Although an interesting attribution, it is unlikely Joseph Smith actually drew on any of these. They were for Joseph Smith, at best, ill-defined background noise he describes as “confusion and strife among the different denominations ... [resulting in a] war of words and tumult of opinions[.]” T&C 1 JSH 2:2-3.

²⁶ Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, compilers, *Words of Joseph Smith*, (Religious Studies Center BYU, 1980), Joseph Smith’s talk 10 March 1844, Wilford Woodruff’s Journal account.

Even with all the vagaries of history, adoption was once understood in Mormonism as the means of preserving mankind from being utterly wasted at the Lord's return. Two events help justify the link between adoption and surviving the burning at the Lord's return. The first sealing adoption in history occurred generations after the first apostasy when Abraham became the 'father of the righteous.' Scripture records that important event in the Book of Abraham:

My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning. Therefore, my hand shall be over you, and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you above measure, and make your name great among all nations. And you shall be a blessing unto your seed after you, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations. And I will bless them through your name; for as many as receive this gospel shall be called after your name and shall be accounted your seed, and shall rise up and bless you, as unto their Father. And I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you. And in you (that is, in your Priesthood) and in your seed, (that is, your Priesthood) — for I give unto you a promise that this right shall continue in you and in your seed after you (that is to say, the literal seed or the seed of the body) — shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal.²⁷

Here, God distinguished between the "literal seed of the body" on the one hand and the "seed" obtained through "Priesthood" given to Abraham. Abraham's new status as the father of many nations²⁸ was not to be merely through his literal descendants. It would extend to include those who, through priestly ordinances, would become his descendants through adoption. This passage from the Book of Abraham is where God authorized the first adoption and confirmed its efficacy for all subsequent generations.²⁹

From that adoption, every generation that "receive[d] this gospel shall be called after [Abraham's] name and shall be accounted [his] seed." In other words, Abraham's adoption set the precedent for every subsequent generation to be

²⁷ T&C 145:BoA 3:1.

²⁸ Abraham was seeing "for the blessings of the Fathers and the right whereunto [he] should be ordained to administer the same. ...and to be a Father of many nations[.]" T&C 145: BoA 1:1.

²⁹ The precedent set by the adoption of Abraham made it possible for Adam's prophecy to be fulfilled, which was: "Now this same Priesthood which was in the beginning shall be in the world also (now this prophecy Adam spoke as he was moved upon by the holy ghost)." OC Gen. 3:14.

reconnected through adoption to the first fathers. Abraham was the first to be adopted into the broken family line of Adam. Before Abraham, the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God was transmitted from patriarch (father) to heir (son) in an unbroken line. Abraham was the prototype for curing apostasy through adoption after the original Holy Order Priesthood link was broken.³⁰

The second scriptural clarification showing the necessity of adoption is foretold by Malachi and repeated in every volume of scripture: Old Covenants, New Covenants, and Modern Covenants.³¹ That event is described in these words in the Old Covenants:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall seal the heart of the Fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their Fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.³²

When the angel Nephi³³ quoted this passage, he rendered it differently. He also included earlier words from Malachi's prophecy, making the connection between them. Here is how Nephi put it:

he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy [Mal. 1:9–11], though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as reads in our books, he quoted it thus: *For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall burn as stubble; for they*

³⁰ To be clear, "Abraham received the Priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah, and from Noah till Enoch, through the lineage of their fathers, and from Enoch to Abel who was slain by the conspiracy of his brother, who received the Priesthood by the commandment of God, by the hand of his father Adam, who was the first man[.]" T&C 82:10. Although Abraham was called by heaven, it still required an ordinance performed by Melchizedek,

³¹ The scriptures used in this talk are the Restoration/Covenant Christian edition of the scriptures. They include the Old Covenants, consisting of the Old Testament as revised by Joseph Smith. The New Covenants, consisting of the New Testament as revised by Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon corrected and revised to eliminate as many copy errors and transmission failures as possible. The Modern Covenants, consisting of revelations, talks and letters of Joseph Smith with other's emendations and additions removed, and some new revelations to Denver Snuffer. These are the most correct, reliable and trustworthy scriptures in existence. They have been approved by God and accepted by a common consent vote. The Lord described them: "These scriptures are sent forth to be my warning to the world, my comfort to the faithful, my counsel to the meek, my reproof to the proud, my rebuke to the contentious, and my condemnation of the wicked. They are my invitation to all mankind to flee from the corruption, repent and be baptized in my name, and prepare for the coming judgment." T&C 182:19.

³² OC Malachi 1:12 (KJV 4:5).

³³ I accept the earliest accounts provided by Joseph Smith, in which he identified the angel as "Nephi" rather than as "Moroni." See T&C 1: JSH 3:3.

*that cometh shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And again he quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.*³⁴

The words “root” and “branch” are genealogical, or familial. They indicate ancestors and posterity. When the “root” and “branch” are destroyed in that coming day, the surviving “children” will be genealogically connected to the “fathers.” Correctly understood, the prophecy of Malachi is about adoption. This talk will clarify and reaffirm the need for adoption as an actual ordinance or rite that must return to connect some few back to Abraham before the coming great and dreadful day of the Lord’s return.

A great deal of what Joseph Smith taught has been lost, limited, or rejected. It is not an overstatement to say that the loss of adoption may be the most serious of all that was left behind. It is so important that the world will be cursed and utterly wasted at the return of Christ if it is not restored. Joseph was first alerted to this on September 22, 1823, when Nephi repeated the prophecy that the failure to reconnect to the fathers would result in “the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.”³⁵ Christ also quoted this warning to the Nephites and required them to add it to their scripture.³⁶

³⁴ T&C 1 JSH 3:4.

³⁵ “For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall burn as stubble; for they that cometh shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And again he quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.” T&C 1:JSH 3:4 (LDS JS-H 1: 38-39 also D&C 2).

³⁶ His instruction included: “For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Son of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings. And ye shall go forth and grow up as calves in the stall; and ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant whom I commanded, unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” NC 3 Ne. 11:4-5 (LDS 3 Ne. 25:1-6).

Joseph originally explained the prophecy was about connecting the living faithful to the “fathers” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The connection was through Priesthood, not genealogy. Joseph gave us reasons to understand that he had become connected to the fathers through priesthood. While he never mentioned Elijah’s return as anything other than a future event, he did mention numerous fathers as having ministered to him.³⁷ He also clearly involved himself with adoption rites. In turn, Joseph Smith became the “father” of all who were sealed to him.

HYRUM SMITH AS PATRIARCH

When he began adoptions, families were put under Joseph as the father of the righteous in his dispensation. Accordingly, women and men were sealed to Joseph Smith as their father, and they as his daughters and sons. This was priestly, according to the law of God, not biological. This changed slightly when, in January 1841 his older brother, Hyrum, was appointed and ordained to stand at the head of the priesthood because he was Joseph’s older brother:

I now give unto you the offices belonging to my Priesthood, that you may hold the keys thereof, even the Priesthood which is after the Order of Melchizedek, which is after the Order of my Only Begotten Son. First, I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a patriarch unto you, to hold the sealing blessings of my church, even the Holy Spirit of Promise whereby you are sealed up unto the day of redemption, that you may not fall[.]³⁸

As the Holy Order after the Order of the Only Begotten Son was arranged for Joseph’s dispensation, the one who was appointed “first” was Hyrum. He was to be “a patriarch unto [Joseph]” as well as the church. As a result of that appointment, Hyrum would stand at the head and become the one adoption should recognize as the father. That change, which made Hyrum the father, was a clarification now lost to the LDS (and other restoration denominations).

As soon as Hyrum and Joseph died, the doctrine began to erode, ultimately being replaced by the substitute practice of sealing genealogical lines together, with no connection to anyone holding the Holy Order. There also does not seem to have been any effort to recognize that Hyrum was appointed as the “patriarch unto [Joseph]” which made him the relevant priestly father. Brigham Young and

³⁷ T&C 151:15 (D&C 128:19-21); T&C 157:31.

³⁸ T&C 141:41 (D&C 124:123-124).

the twelve continued to point to Joseph alone and to disregard any relevance to Hyrum's 1841 appointment.³⁹

The history of "adoption" in Mormonism cannot be understood apart from Joseph Smith's theology, which requires such a sealing. Both history and theology are necessarily intertwined. Unfortunately, history both testifies to the critical importance of adoption and to how quickly that understanding can and did dwindle. Despite its apparent centrality to salvation and to surviving the Second Coming of Christ, adoption was never established on a firm enough foundation at the outset to allow it to endure. If it is to ever form a part of our theology again, it requires restoration. Although Joseph was given the pattern and held the authority, the people of that day were engaged in abominable mischief.

The January 1841 revelation gave the people, who had been under condemnation since 1832,⁴⁰ one more chance.⁴¹ But they were given this candid appraisal of their condition: "instead of blessings, you, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments upon your own heads, by your follies and by all your abominations which you practice before me, says the Lord."⁴² As a result, the Lord would not allow them to continue without repentance. If they repented and returned, the 1841 revelation promised that Christ would, "come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he has taken away, even the fullness of the Priesthood."⁴³ That, of course, is necessary before the Lord's return as He vindicates and fulfills every prophecy, promise, and covenant He has made. It is not a one-way street. People need to respond with obedience.

MORMON FAILURES

The scriptures from the Old Covenants through the Modern Covenants show the repeated failure of God's chosen people. The Lord has explained the problem, "I, the Lord, am bound when you do what I say, but when you do not

³⁹ That may have been in part because the 1841 appointment made Hyrum's descendants inherit the position ("that my servant Hyrum may bear record of the things which I shall show unto him, that his name may be had in honorable remembrance from generation to generation for ever and ever"). T&C 141:32 (D&C 124:96). Hyrum Smith's son, Joseph F. Smith, therefore represented a potential threat to the role and control Brigham Young and the twelve exerted over the LDS church.

⁴⁰ See T&C 82:20 (D&C).

⁴¹ The Lord was pleased with Joseph Smith, but not the people. See T&C 141:1, 2. They were told to "hearken" to the Lord's voice and to Hyrum's and Joseph's.

⁴² T&C 141:14 (D&C 124:).

⁴³ T&C 141:10 (D&C 124:28).

what I say you have no promise.”⁴⁴ Men fail, then blame God: “I command and men obey not, I revoke and they receive not the blessing, then they say in their hearts, This is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But woe unto such, for their reward lurks beneath, and not from above.”⁴⁵ Worse for mankind is the tendency to claim they are God’s chosen after they, like the Latter-day Saints in 1844, were rejected for their disobedience.⁴⁶ The sad reality is that although God has repeatedly offered to gather and protect His people, they walk away from Him. The Lord spoke to the Nephites after their cataclysmic destruction, explaining His rejected offers:

[H]ow often I’ve tried to gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings! You people of the house of Israel who have fallen, O house of Israel who live at Jerusalem as well as you that have fallen: how often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks, but you refused! You people of the house of Israel whom I’ve spared, how often I will gather you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, if you repent and return to Me with all your heart! But if not, O house of Israel, your dwelling places will become desolate[.]⁴⁷

Mankind has proven difficult for the Lord to guide, putting any attempt to restore the Holy Order and its related rites at risk. Nauvoo was filled with secret acts, including adultery,⁴⁸ counterfeiting,⁴⁹ and murder.⁵⁰ Joseph Smith sounded the alarm in the newspaper:

⁴⁴ T&C 78:2 (D&C 82:10).

⁴⁵ T&C 45:7 (D&C 58:32).

⁴⁶ For a discussion of this see my book *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, (Mill Creek Press: 2011).

⁴⁷ CoC 3 Ne. 4:9, (cf with LDS 3 Ne. 10:5-7).

⁴⁸ Addressing the debate over Joseph Smith’s approval and involvement with plural wives is beyond the scope of this talk. After long study of the available materials I have concluded he did not establish or approve it, but instead opposed it. One quote from his nephew, Joseph F. Smith, the 6th LDS church president, illustrates a point about the historical record: ““When the subject [of plural marriage] first came before my mind, I must say I was astonished at the scarcity of evidence; I might say almost total absence of direct evidence upon the subject, as connected with the Prophet Joseph himself. There was nothing written and but few living who were personally knowing to the fact that Joseph taught the principle.” Joseph F. Smith to Orson Pratt, Jul. 19, 1875, in Joseph F. Smith letterpress copybook, 1875 July 19 - 1879 September 7, p. 3, MS 1325, CHL, [LINK](#). For a recent discussion examining the dubious reliability of available records see, Cheryl L. Bruno and Michelle B. Stone, *Crafting a Sacred Story: Joseph F. Smith and the William Clayton Affidavits*, *Journal of Mormon Polygamy* Vol. 1, No. 1 (2026).

⁴⁹ There were widespread allegations of counterfeiting in Nauvoo which Joseph Smith opposed and proposed a city ordinance to criminalize counterfeiting. (See appendix 2.) After Hyrum and Joseph were killed, the *Times & Seasons* on 15 January 1845 (Vol. 5, No. 1) acknowledged there were those “stealing from quiet citizens of the State and palming upon

Your liberty is in danger! Thieves are in your midst! By day and by night are they prowling through your streets! Your property is in peril, and life, and limb, in jeopardy! Your love of justice, your personal honor, your attachment to your country, and your holy religion, all, all, loudly call upon you to assist in bringing the culprits to condign punishment.⁵¹

Under the circumstances of the time, it was impossible for the Lord to return and restore what was lost⁵² to an undeserving and wicked people.⁵³ Adultery and secret adulterous marriages to ‘spiritual’ or plural wives in Nauvoo were denounced in a letter to the entire church written by Hyrum Smith, the Church’s Patriarch and member of the First Presidency on June 12, 1842, which stated in part:

Behold, this is a wicked generation, full of lyings, and deceit, and craftiness, and the children of the wicked are wiser than the children of light, i.e., they are more crafty, and it seems that it has been the case in all ages of the world. And the man, when he leaves his wife and travels to a foreign nation, while on his way, darkness overpowers his mind, and Satan deceives him and flatters him with the graces of the harlot, and before he is aware, he is disgraced for ever. And greater is the danger for the woman that leaves her husband. And there are several instances where women have left their husbands and come to this place, and in a few weeks or months they have found themselves new husbands and they are living in adultery, and we are obliged to cut them off from the church. There are men also that are guilty of the same

them a spurious and false currency, and charging to the Mormons their own crimes.” And also, “That we will use all lawful means in our power to assist the public to prevent stealing and bogus making, and bring the offenders to justice.” *Id.*, pp. 773, 775. In December 1845 a federal indictment for counterfeiting was returned by a grand jury, naming several LDS leaders among the indicted. These included Theodore Turley, Brigham Young, Willard Richards, John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt and Orson Hyde, among the twelve indicted. For more on this see Appendix 2.

⁵⁰ John D. Lee in his autobiography, *Mormonism Unveiled: Life and Confession of John D. Lee*, (Fierra Blanca Publications, Albuquerque: 1877) on pages 162-166 details several murders in Nauvoo after Joseph and Hyrum were slain. The credibility of Lee’s account is an open question, but the circumstances of his pending execution and the LDS church decision to reinstate him in 1961 bear on whether to accept his account.

⁵¹ *Times and Seasons* Vol. 2 (November 15, 1840): pp. 221–22.

⁵² T&C 141:10 (D&C 124:28).

⁵³ For a sympathetic Mormon view of the contemporary Nauvoo criminal activities and general public reaction see Godfrey, Kenneth W., *Crime and Punishment in Mormon Nauvoo, 1839-1846*, *BYU Studies* Vol. 32, Nos. 1,2 (1992) pp. 195-227.

crime, as we are credibly informed, we are knowing to their having taken wives here, and are credibly informed that they have wives in England.⁵⁴

God offered in exchange for repentance and obedience, that they “shall not be moved out of their place.”⁵⁵ IF they failed to repent, He warned them: “I will not perform the oath which I make unto you, neither fulfill the promises which you expect at my hands ... [because] you, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments upon your own heads[.]”⁵⁶ They were driven out of Nauvoo and fled to a desolate wilderness, suffering hardships, hunger, and poverty along the way.

There were two alternatives: Obey and have the fullness restored, or disobey and be rejected and driven out of Nauvoo. As a result, adoption into the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God hung in the balance between 1841 and June 27, 1844. That was a period of probation. Adoption was clearly something Joseph wanted to develop into a formal religious ordinance, rite, or practice that could be continued. When he performed an adoption as a Gospel rite, he could do so with authority. After January 1841, Hyrum Smith could also perform an adoption ceremony authoritatively. The revelation explaining Hyrum’s authority states:

my servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, ... that from here on out he shall hold the keys of the Patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people, that whoever he blesses shall be blessed and whoever he curses shall be cursed, that whatever he shall bind on the earth shall be bound in Heaven, and that whatever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. ... I now give unto you the offices belonging to my Priesthood, that you may hold the keys thereof, even the Priesthood which is after the Order of Melchizedek, which is after the Order of my Only Begotten Son. First, I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a patriarch unto you, to hold the sealing blessings of my church, even the Holy Spirit of Promise whereby you are sealed up unto the day of redemption[.]⁵⁷

For that brief time, two could effect an adoption. After Joseph and Hyrum were killed, the authority was lost.⁵⁸ To perpetuate an authoritative adoption would have required a standardized, authorized ordinance to be established while the

⁵⁴ T&C 149:4.

⁵⁵ T&C 141:13 (D&C 124:45).

⁵⁶ T&C 141:14 (D&C 124:46-47).

⁵⁷ T&C 141:32, 41 (D&C 124:92-93, 123-124).

⁵⁸ It is important to understand that sealing authority can only come directly from God, and cannot be conveyed from one man to another. See, e.g., NC Helaman 3:19 (LDS 10:7).

authority was present and thereafter to be followed. A standardized and authorized ordinance established by God at the beginning of a dispensation can remain effective after the dispensation heads die. But that is true only if the ordinance is standardized and then perpetuated without change.⁵⁹ That did not happen. LDS scholars have struggled to deal with the rough transition following the killing of the Smith brothers. For an LDS apologist, it is unthinkable to acknowledge there was a tragic and significant loss.

Two LDS scholars have explained the change without acknowledging the loss in these words:

Brigham Young and the other apostles amplified, redirected, and codified ritual adoption in the period immediately after Smith's death, integrating it into temple liturgy and employing it in part as a response to the contrary claims of Smith's biological family. The various stages of early adoption contain the themes, paradoxes, and tensions surrounding Joseph Smith's afterlife vision of a vast, sacerdotal family.

...

Adoption theology is a reminder that the idea world of early Mormons was in some ways strikingly different from that of the early twenty-first century. Understanding this aspect of early Mormonism on its own terms may be useful to our era's engagement of questions of human relationships and identity.⁶⁰

Although active Latter-day Saints trust their church has retained and perpetuated the restoration through Joseph Smith, history leads us to a contrary conclusion. When Joseph and Hyrum died, Brigham Young and his associates were in no position to 'amplify, redirect, and codify' ritual adoption as an authoritative ordinance binding on earth and in heaven. Nor were they pursuing God's work when they made claims to compete with the Smith biological family for leadership of the church. And, to the extent that the first days of the restoration, when Joseph and Hyrum were involved, were "strikingly different" from later twenty-first century Mormonism, that only confirms that something was lost and something else replaced it.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See OC Isaiah 7:1 (KJV 24:5).

⁶⁰ See, *Mormonism's Adoption Theology An Introductory Statement*, *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 2011, Samuel M. Brown and Johnathan A. Stapley, pp. 1, 2.

⁶¹ Changing the ordinance in any fashion interferes with and runs afoul of Adam's role: "set the ordinances to be the same for ever and ever, and set Adam to watch over them, to reveal them from Heaven to man or to send angels to reveal them." T&C 140:6. See also, OC Isa. 7:1 (KJV 24:5): "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."

From the history of the restoration, we know the loose scriptural references to adoptive connections to God found in New Testament passages⁶² were clearly understood differently by Joseph Smith. He took formal steps, ritual requirements, and invoked sealing authority. It was not an effect of mere conversion and baptism. It required an ordinance. Although he administered such rites, the actual wording, method, and particulars involved were not recorded and therefore could not be continued following his death.

Gordon Irving wrote an article in BYU Studies Magazine explaining his understanding of “adoption.” He believed the idea began as something essentially the same as traditional Christianity understood it: “the process of adoption ...could be accomplished through baptism preceded by faith and repentance and accompanied by the holy ghost.”⁶³ The next step in early Mormonism, according to Irving, was adoption of the dead through baptism of the dead.⁶⁴ He recognized that once sealing in marriage began in the 1840s; adoption was, in some undefined way, intended to link believers back to Adam:

God, according to Mormon belief, had joined Adam and Eve for eternity as husband and wife and placed them at the head of the human family since their union was effected by the authority of God their children were natural heirs of the priesthood and were born in the covenant and recognized by God as legitimate members of his family and legal heirs to his kingdom. As each new family came into being it became another link in the chain of families stretching back to Adam who was linked to God thus the family of God became more than metaphor. Exaltation depended on being part of that chain.⁶⁵

Irving then makes this observation about the state of things:

[B]ut while sealing was accepted doctrine by 1844 the Saints in general had little chance to become practically acquainted with the sealing doctrine prior to the death of Joseph Smith. Experience with the practice as well as clarification of doctrine and procedure came only in the post Joseph Smith period of Mormon history.⁶⁶

One moment clarifying Joseph’s divergence from the traditional Christian loose understanding of “adoption” occurred around October 1843, when Joseph Smith mentioned his use of sealing authority. Prior to then, sealings were

⁶² See, e.g., NC Romans 1:34, 38 (KJV 8:15, 9:4); Galatians 1:13 (KJV 4:5); Ephesians 1:2 (KJV 1:5).

⁶³ Irving, Gordon (1974) *The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830-1900*, BYU Studies Quarterly: Vol. 14: Iss. 3, Article 2, p. 292.

⁶⁴ *Id.*, at p. 293.

⁶⁵ *Id.*, at p. 294.

⁶⁶ *Id.*, at p. 295.

nonspecific but are regarded by LDS scholars as marriages, although that conclusion is not altogether justified by the record. Because there was nothing in the records to distinguish between “sealing” to effect an adoption to Joseph Smith and “sealing” that was for a marriage, it is impossible at this point to reconstruct a clear line of demarcation. LDS historians are carelessly inexact in their dogmatic assertions about Joseph Smith sealing plural marriages. The record does not require that conclusion. The LDS confusion about adoption has led them to rule out sealing adoptions to explain early events.

By October 1843, the records clearly show that Joseph was performing man-to-man sealings through adoption.⁶⁷ The last eight months of his life, the records, poor as they are, let us conclude that Joseph “sealed or adopted” other individuals to himself. There was no settled, formal ordinance preserved, and the proof of Joseph’s practice is mostly post-mortem, as those who were exposed to the practice only vaguely recalled what he had done. Despite this, it is safe to conclude Joseph Smith intended for there to be an ordinance and for it to have eternal effect. As he remarked: “If you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be Crafty, the first thing you do is you go & seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, & yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory.”⁶⁸ This remark on 10 March 1844—six months after the first time he mentioned “adoption”—is clearly based on the idea of sealing “sons,” “daughters,” and “fathers.” His comment illustrates how he viewed sealing as not only including marriage but also adoption.

However, after Joseph’s death, that first generation did not understand what was to be done, or how to implement adoption. They knew about it, intended to practice it, but had no clear idea of what to do or how. As historians have examined the topic, the historical lacunae have been backfilled with more speculation than fact, and adoption remains conjectural rather than understood. Some question whether it was practiced at all.⁶⁹

Unfortunately, there is some reason to believe adoption was one of the more critical ordinances of the restoration. Jonathan A. Stapley has written *Adoption*

⁶⁷ The first mention in Joseph’s journals states, “one thing to see the kingdom, & another to be in it, must have a change of heart, to see the kingdom of Good [God], & subs[c]ribe the articles of adoption to enter therein.” *JS Papers, Journals, Vol. 3*, 15 October 1843, p. 114.

⁶⁸ *WJS*, p. 331.

⁶⁹ See, Irving, *The Law of Adoption*, supra, at p. 295, citing Juanita Brooks, *John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer, Builder, Scapegoat* 2nd ed. (Glendale 1972), p. 73; *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout*, Juanita Brooks, ed. (Salt Lake City 1964), 178 note 50; TBH Stenhouse, *Rocky Mountain Saints* (New York, 1873), p. 503; Edward Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City 1886). p. 637.

*Sealing Ritual in Mormonism*⁷⁰ to review what is understood about the subject. His account confesses,

It is unclear what Joseph Smith ultimately envisioned when he referred to the station of priest and king in his cosmology as the ‘fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood.’ He died before the completion of the Nauvoo Temple, and consequently it was left to the Quorum of the Twelve to transmit these concepts to the broader church.⁷¹

Subsequent events showed how little the Quorum of the Twelve understood the subject, and ultimately, whatever Joseph Smith intended was abandoned. The Quorum President, shortly after Joseph Smith’s death, stated at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, on February 16, 1847:

The Lord introduced the law of adoption for the benefit of the children of men as a school master to bring them back into the covenant of the Priesthood. This Principle I am aware is not clearly understood by many of the Elders in this Church at the present time as it will Hereafter be: And I confess that I have had only a smattering of those things but when it is necessary I will attain to more knowledge on the subject and consequently will be enabled to teach and practice more and will in the mean time glorify God the bountiful giver.⁷²

Keep in mind; Brigham Young said this in February 1847. All of the Nauvoo Temple rites performed by Latter-day Saints took place between November 1845 and February 1846, concluding more than a year before this talk by Brigham Young. This raises the question of exactly what ceremonial rite or ordinance was performed for adopting temple initiates during those three months. From the *Nauvoo Sealings, Adoptions and Anointings* record,⁷³ we know of the adoptions that were performed in those months. I have provided a complete list in APPENDIX 1: NAMES AND DATES OF NAUVOO ADOPTIONS, which appears at the end of this talk. I’m not going to read them. The list includes those done in the Nauvoo Temple, but one writer explained that even more were done at Winter Quarters.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Summer 2011), pp. 53-117 (University of Illinois Press) hereafter “*JMH-Stapley*”.

⁷¹ *Id.*, at 58, footnotes omitted, spelling as in original.

⁷² *The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 1, 1832-1852, Richard S. Van Wagoner editor, p. 186 (16 February 1847) hereafter “*CDBY*”, citing to *Wilford Woodruff Journal* Vol. 3, p. 134.

⁷³ *Nauvoo Sealings, Adoptions, and Anointings: A Comprehensive Register of Persons Receiving LDS Temple Ordinances, 1841-1846*, Compiled by Lisle G. Brown, (Smith-Pettit Foundation, SLC 2006).

⁷⁴ Bennett, Richard E., *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept*, *supra*.

Because they were done, this raises the question of what, exactly, did adoption rites include when performed by the twelve in 1845-46 after Joseph and Hyrum's deaths? A late account from the memory of George Laub preserves this description:

This order of Adoption will Link the chain of the Priesthood in such a way that cannot be separated by covananting before god, Angels and the Present witnesses we covenant together for him to be a father unto those who are sealed to him to doo unto them as he would in his own children and to counsell them in rituousness and to teach them all the Principles of Salvation and to share unto them of all the Blessings to confert these and all that are calculated to make them happy Both in time and in Eternity. Now we also did covenant on our side to do all the good for his upbuilding and happyness Both in time & Eternity this was done in the hous of the Lord across the alter as was Prepared for this Purpos of ordinances. [All as in original.]⁷⁵

This account summarizes the rite but only paraphrases and does not attempt to quote the language used. The best information I have been able to locate so far on the wording of how the adoption ceremony was conducted in the Nauvoo Temple comes from a record of sealings and adoptions maintained by the Utah Family History Library. From that record, we have the following transcript of a ceremony for the adoption of John Bernhisel:

"This day came to the sacred Altar, in the upper room of the "House of the Lord," founded by Prest. Joseph Smith (martyred) the Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Church, and thereupon gave himself to President Joseph Smith (martyred) to become his son by the Law of Adoption, and to become a legal heir to all the blessings bestowed upon Joseph Smith pertaining to exaltations, even to the eternal Godhead, with a solemn covenant to observe all the rights and ordinances pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, as far as now is or shall hereafter be made know unto him. Done in the presence of Patriarch John Smith, President Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Amasa Lyman, Orson Hyde, and George A. Smith, Franklin D. Richards, Clerk."⁷⁶

Another historian reconstructed the rite used in Nauvoo as follows:

Bernhisel's family continued to expand in Nauvoo. On February 3, 1846, Bernhisel "came to the sacred Alt[a]r in the upper room

⁷⁵ Laub, George *Reminiscences and Journal*, February 5, 1846, 106-7; cited in *JMH-Stapley*, p. 73.

⁷⁶ All as in original, *SEALINGS AND ADOPTIONS, 1846-1857*, Utah Family History Library Special Collections (Serial No. 25163, pt. 4, or 183, 347), entry from pages 145-146.

of the ‘House of the Lord’ . . . and there upon gave himself to Prest. Joseph Smith (martyred) to become his son by the law of adoption and to become a legal heir to all the blessings bestowed upon Joseph Smith pertaining to exaltations even unto the eternal Godhead.” In this rite, the now-dead Prophet became Bernhisel’s sacerdotal father. The final phrase in this ritual adoption ceremony—one that would involve scores of Latter-day Saints through the nineteenth century—made clear that the ultimate destination of these familial connections was “exaltations” that would extend all the way to the “eternal Godhead” through “legal heir[ship].”⁷⁷

Essentially, this form of the ‘ordinance’ attempts to link the candidate to whatever God “bestowed upon Joseph Smith pertaining to exaltations, even to the eternal Godhead.” It also includes a loophole in case that language proves to be insufficient. The loophole includes a precaution against insufficient language in the rite by adding: “as far as now is or shall hereafter be made known”—an attempt to leave the door open for perhaps further light and knowledge at an undetermined future date. Apparently, this would allow for the later ‘backdating’ of an ordinance using priestly fiat to fix any earlier omissions or mistakes.

These are two samples of our best remaining descriptions of the form the ordinance language took after the death of Joseph Smith, based on the available LDS records. Assuming these are accurate, it is little wonder Brigham Young would acknowledge that adoption “is not clearly understood by many of the Elders in this Church at the present time as it will Hereafter be: And I confess that I have had only a smattering of those things[.]” Not only were the words for adoption poorly preserved, we also lack clear language for marriage sealing from Joseph Smith.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ *Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation*, Samuel M. Brown, *Journal of Mormon History* Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 2011, p. 4; citing Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 566.

⁷⁸ A very questionable version of a marriage ceremony is in the *JSP Documents*, Vol.10, p. 313-314. It should have been excluded from the Joseph Smith Papers Project because there is no original, was not delivered to the LDS Church until 1912, and when delivered was a typeset document purporting to mirror the non-existent original. It includes a reference to “those rights which have been given to my servant Joseph by revelation and commandment and by legal authority in times past.” It contains a curious reference to “Jethro” as holding the “Holy Mechisedek” priesthood, which is likely a name chosen to reinforce the idea of succession (i.e., if Moses could pass it to Jethro then Joseph could pass it to Brigham). Apart from an attempt to legitimize authority claims by the LDS following Joseph’s death, the name of Jethro seems otherwise out of context.

It is understandable, given the uncertainty surrounding this adoption language, that Brigham Young, a year after the Nauvoo Temple rites had concluded, said that the leaders did not know how to practice adoption rites. They may have been in doubt about the matter, but had proceeded despite that uncertainty to make a gesture in that direction. It is safe to say their actions affirm that Joseph Smith did indeed intend for adoptions to be part of the restored Gospel.

ATROPHY AND UNBECOMING AMBITION

In February 1847, at Winter Quarters, what was understood about adoption was connected to tying mankind back to Adam. A link had been broken, and needed to be restored. Brigham Young explained his understanding at that time:

I have gathered a number of families around me through the law of adoption and seal of the covenant according to the order of the priesthood and others have done likewise, it being the means of salvation left to bring us back to God. But had the keys of the priesthood been retained and handed down from father to son throughout all generations up to the present time then there could have been no necessity of the law of adoption, for we would all have been included in the covenant without it and would have been legal heirs instead of being heirs according to promise. ...man through apostasy (which is entire disobedience) has lost or suffered the keys and privileges of the priesthood to be taken away from them and they left to wander in darkness and practice all manner of wickedness until thousands became the vessels of wrath and were doomed to destruction[.] ...I will extend the chain of the priesthood back through apostolic dispensation to Father Adam just as soon as I can get a Temple built.⁷⁹

Given this recognition of the importance of adoption, it is curious that Brigham Young would leave it an unresolved matter through the end of his life. He clearly expected to gain more understanding at a later time. However, the hoped-for knowledge Brigham anticipated might be given to him to clear up the confusion did not come, at least insofar as he disclosed. He did report a week later, in February 1847, that he had a dream in which Joseph Smith visited him, but instead of providing guidance, Joseph said, “Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to keep the spirit of the Lord, and it will lead them right.” Although no instruction was given about how to perform the needed rites, Brigham Young said that the concluding words of Joseph in that dream were:

⁷⁹ *CDBY*, 1:179-180.

Be sure to tell the people to keep the Spirit of the Lord; and if they will, they will find themselves just as they were organized by our Father in Heaven before they came into the world.^[80] Our Father in Heaven organized the human family, but they are all disorganized and in great confusion.⁸¹

Because adoption is shrouded in mystery for leaders of the LDS Church and its historians, that institution has been unable to implement Joseph Smith's adoption sealing practice or even provide a proper context. Their account of history does not explain what it was or how it fit into the religion Joseph was at one time restoring. Therefore, they are also unable to provide the required ordinance, and for over a century their only practice in temple adoption is to seal children born outside of a temple marriage to their parents. As for adoption to the family of God, the LDS Church now follows the traditional Christian understanding.⁸²

Stapley correctly notes in his article that the practice of the original adoption rite in Nauvoo endured a 31-year hiatus between the abandonment of the Nauvoo Temple and the 1877 dedication of the St. George Temple.⁸³ When adoptions did resume, the practice differed from what had been done earlier in Nauvoo. What was done in the Nauvoo Temple before the exodus from Illinois began at the end of November 1845, 17 months after Joseph Smith was slain, and was dependent on recollections of Joseph's earlier conduct that could be gathered by the twelve. The more time passed, the less clear the adoption practice became, until ultimately the original attempt was essentially abandoned in 1894.

The LDS church was more candid in the 1800s than it is today. From early candor, to more modest circumspection, to outright concealment of the failure, LDS history shows that as time passes from Joseph Smith to the present, LDS leaders are increasingly willing to publicly reassure followers that they know what

⁸⁰ As a matter of correctly understanding God's plan, I would disagree that there should be, or was any anticipated return to an organization existing before people came to this world. A full discussion of that idea is beyond the scope of this talk.

⁸¹ *CDBY*, 1:188.

⁸² This explanation comes from the LDS website:

The scriptures speak of two types of adoption.

(1) A person who is of non-Israelite lineage becomes a member of the family of Abraham and the house of Israel by having faith in Jesus Christ, repenting, being baptized by immersion, and receiving the Holy Ghost (2 Ne. 31:17–18; D&C 84:73–74; Abr. 2:6, 10–11). (2) All who have received the saving ordinances of the gospel become sons and daughters of Jesus Christ by continued obedience to His commandments (Rom. 8:15–17; Gal. 3:24–29; 4:5–7; Mosiah 5:7–8).

See, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/gs/adoption?lang=eng>

⁸³ *JMH-Stapley* at p. 55.

they are doing. I accept as candid and truthful Brigham Young's 1847 confession that he did not understand it. I question the current LDS claims to have all the keys and knowledge to be able to save families.

Nearly a decade after Joseph's death, when temple ceremonial work resumed in the Endowment House in Salt Lake, Brigham Young declared adoption the crowning ordinance. It was more important than the other temple rites, including washing, anointing, endowment, and marriage sealing:

This Chain must not [be] broken for mankind Cannot be saved any other way. This Priesthood must be linked together so that all the Children may be linked to Father Adam. ...we will seal men to men by the keys of the Holy Priesthood. This is the highest ordinance. It is the last ordinance of the kingdom of God on the earth and above all the endowments that can be given you. It is a final sealing an Eternal Principle and when once made cannot be broken by the Devil.⁸⁴

Seventeen years later, Brigham Young explained that, while other ordinances could be without a temple, adoption was confined to temples alone: "when we come to other sealing ordinances . . . they cannot be done without a Temple. . . . We can seal women to men, but not men to men."⁸⁵ There was clearly some qualitative difference between sealing marriages and sealing adoptions in Young's understanding. It was apparently a different order of magnitude in meaning and effect. Yet marriage sealings continue today in LDS temples, while men-to-men sealings have disappeared.

In his January 1856 talk, Brigham Young taught that the "turning of hearts to the fathers" foretold by Malachi could be fulfilled only through adoption. He also taught that God's promise to Abraham regarding "his seed"⁸⁶ would be fulfilled only through the temple ordinance of adoption. Despite repeated attempts, LDS Church leaders were unable to sort out how to practice adoption.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ CDBY, 2:1033-1034.

⁸⁵ CDBY, 5:1873.

⁸⁶ T&C 145: Abraham 3:1. This is where God's promise is recorded that those who would later receive "this gospel"—meaning the same truths taught to and understood by Abraham—would then receive priesthood that would enable them to become his "seed."

⁸⁷ See, e.g., 1st Presidency secretary L. John Nuttall raised the issue and wanted to be adopted in 1884: "The subject of adoption was presented, Elder L. John Nuttall being desirous to have that ordinance attended to." See *In the President's Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879-1892*, Signature Books (Salt Lake, 2007), p. 147 (May 21, 1884). John Taylor gathered his thoughts and dictated them to Nuttall, which he (Nuttall) referred to many years later: "I conversed with Bro. Lund on the subject of adoption & promised to send him what I wrote as dictated by Prest. John Taylor on that subject." *Id.*, September 22, 1891, p. 471. Those notes have not been published and appear to have been lost.

In January 1857, Wilford Woodruff recorded Heber C. Kimball's uncertainty about attempting adoptions:

I spent the day in the office. ...H.C. Kimball Cam in & read a letter to his Brother Solomon. Then He set down & taught us good doctrin. He said that He did not Believe in this custom of Adoption/\ that had been practiced in this Church. No man should give his Birthright to another but should keep his birthright in the lineage of his Fathers & go to & unite the link through the whole lineage of their fathers untill they come up to a man in the Linage who held the priesthood.⁸⁸

Despite misgivings, adoptions continued. For decades, despite uncertainty about what to do, how to do it, and why it ought to be done, adoptions still continued to be performed.

At a meeting of the reorganized School of the Prophets in Salt Lake on January 20, 1868, attended by the church presidency, including Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Daniel H. Wells, along with Elders John Taylor, Orson Hyde, George A. Smith, Erastus Snow, George Q. Cannon, Phineas Young, and Joseph Young, adoption was discussed. President Wells conjectured: "On Adoption he supposed it had reference to the linking together of the Priesthood ~~now living~~ that it might reach back to the link that had long since been broken, that it might present one unbroken chain."⁸⁹ In response, Orson Hyde said, "The Doctrine of Adoption he knew but little about and should decline touching it until the line is chalked out."⁹⁰

Scholars struggle to make sense of what Joseph was doing. The attempts to reconstruct Joseph's adoption have been insufficient to provide any firm understanding of what took place, how, or why.⁹¹ Thirty years before he would become church president, Wilford Woodruff concluded that adoptions would be a project for the resurrected Joseph Smith to sort out during the millennium. "Man also will have to be sealed to man until the chain is united from Father Adam down to the last Saint. This will be the work of the Millenium and Joseph Smith will be the man to attend to it or dictate it."⁹²

⁸⁸ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal 1833-1898 Typescript*, Edited by Scott G. Kenny (Signature Books: Midvale UT: 1983), Vol. 5, p. 3 (January 3, 1857).

⁸⁹ Anderson, Devery, ed., *Salt Lake School of the Prophets: 1867-1883*, Signature Books (Salt Lake: 2018), pp. 11-12; entry of 20 January 1868, quoted as in original.

⁹⁰ *Id.*, p. 12.

⁹¹ For example, see Brown, Samuel M., "Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 2011, p. 3; Stapley, Jonathan A., "Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism," *Id.*, p. 53.

⁹² *Salt Lake School of the Prophets: 1867-1883*, supra, p. 42; December 11, 1869, quoted as in original. The entire quote states: "Man also will have to be sealed to man until the chain is

A half-century after Joseph's death the LDS apostles struggled to determine how it ought to work, who should be sealed to whom, how, and even what effect it would have in the afterlife.⁹³ In a meeting on June 1, 1893, attended by Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, Francis M. Lyman, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, Abraham Cannon, George F. Gibbs, John D. T. McAllister, Nephi W. Clayton, and James Jack,⁹⁴ they "had some talk about the ordinance of adoption in the temple. Joseph F. Smith said Pres. [Brigham] Young had told him to follow in ordinance work for the dead the rules which will ordinarily govern similar work for the living."⁹⁵ The practice was to seal faithful children to their parents, and faithful parents to Joseph Smith.⁹⁶ Woodruff explained, "I was sealed to my father, and then had him sealed to the Prophet Joseph."⁹⁷

united from Father Adam down to the last Saint. This will be the work of the Millenium and Joseph Smith will be the man to attend to it or dictate it. He will not minister in person, but he will receive his resurrected body and will dictate to those who dwell in the flesh and tell what is to be done, for he is the last Prophet who is called to lay the foundation of the great last dispensation of the fullness of times. Some may think what I have said concerning Adam strange, but the period will come when this people will be willing to adopt Joseph Smith as their Prophet, Seer, Revelator and God, but not the Father of their Spirits, ~~for that was our Father Adam.~~"

⁹³ From *The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon*: "[December 18, 1890] at 2. p.m. I attended my Quorum meeting. There were present Presdts. Woodruff, Cannon and Smith, F. D. Richards F.M. Lyman and myself. ...Thereafter we had a long conversation in regard to sealings and adoptions. ...Bro. Joseph F. Smith rather held to the idea that children should be sealed to their parents even when the latter died without a knowledge of the gospel, and thus the connection with our ancestry should be extended as far back as it was possible to each, when the link should be made with the Prophet Joseph who stands at the head of this dispensation and he will form the connecting link with the preceding dispensations. Father [George Q. Cannon] holds that we who live on the earth now and are faithful, will stand at the head of our lineage, and will thus become Saviors as has been promised us. Pres. John Taylor was not sealed to his parents though they died in the Church, as he felt that it was rather lowering himself to be thus sealed when he was an apostle and his father was a high priest; but this is rather a questionable proceeding." (*Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889-1895*, Edward Leo Lyman, editor, (Signature Books: Salt Lake, 2010), p. 165.)

⁹⁴ Lorenzo Snow was an apostle and church president, Franklin Richards, Francis Lyman, John Taylor and Abraham Cannon were apostles. Marriner Merrill was both a apostle and first president of the Logan, Utah temple. George Gibbs was secretary to the First Presidency. John McAllister was president of the St. George temple and later part of the Manti temple presidency. James Jack was a secretary to several church presidents including Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff. Nephi Clayton was a territorial librarian and auditor.

⁹⁵ *Id.*, p. 388.

⁹⁶ "It is also proper for children to be sealed to their parents, and then have those parents sealed to the Prophet Joseph [Smith]." *Id.*, p. 400.

⁹⁷ *Id.*, p. 488.

The concept of adoption affected how people understood the afterlife. This led some people to view adoption as a means to pursue their self-interests. People began to aspire to improve their post-mortality by recruiting and acquiring descendants through adoption. John D. Lee had begun recruiting others to be his adopted descendants before the migration west, and continued recruiting during the migration west. He had adopted a number of others in the Nauvoo Temple rites:

Law of Adaption tended on the 5th of February 1846 I and my wife Mary Jane with many others was Adopted into John D Lee's family. this I took upon myself the Name of Lee in this manner George Laub Lee & my wifes Name Mary Jane Laub Lee this order of Adaption will like the chain of the Preshood in such a way that it cannot be seperated by covenanting before god Angels and the Present witnesses we covenant together for him to be as father unto those who are sealed to him to doo unto them as he would unto his own children and to counsell them in rituousness and to teach them all the Principles of Salvation and to share unto them of all the Blessings to comfort these and all that are calculated to make them happy both im time and in Eternity. Now we also did covenant on our side to do all the good for his upbuilding and happyness Both in time & Eternity this was done in the hous of the Lord across the alter as was Prepared for this Purpos of ordinances⁹⁸

...

Now Amasia Lyman being autherised to adopt & Sea. So on the 5th day of Febry, 1846, I & My Wife with many others ware adopted to J. D. Lee family.⁹⁹

In the attached Appendix 1, there are twenty-three names of individuals sealed in adoptions on 5 February 1846 by Amasa M. Lyman. The list of names includes George and Mary Jane Laub.¹⁰⁰

George Laub was recruited by John D. Lee to become his adopted son, as his journal recounts: "now in this time I agreed to goe in to John D. Lee's family as to the Law of Adoption through his persuasion [sic] according to the celestial law."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ *George Laub Journal*, 5 Feb., 1846; photocopy in Huntington Library, all as in original.

⁹⁹ Eugene England, editor, *George Laub Journal*, reprinted in *BYU Studies* Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 165-166, (Winter, 1978), all as in original.

¹⁰⁰ Her name is listed as "Mary Jane Maginness Laub" and is listed twice. It is not clear if this is a duplicate of the same individual or if there was another person (daughter?) with the same name.

¹⁰¹ *George Laub Journal*, *supra*, p. 164.

John D. Lee was not alone in recruiting others to be adopted. Aspiring men believed it could be turned to their personal advantage in the next life. It got very ugly. As Gordon Irving described it:

[S]ome were more interested in being fathers and exercising authority over others than they were in being sons of God. Kingdom-building, or the gathering together of a large number of people over whom one could rule in eternity, enjoyed a good deal of popularity. Brigham Young complained: “were I to say to the elders you now have the liberty to build up your kingdoms, one half of them would lie, swear, steal and fight like the very devil to get men and women sealed to them. They would even try to pass right by me and go to Jos[eph].”¹⁰²

The Logan Temple president was told to end his practice of recruiting adoptees.¹⁰³ Eventually, President Wilford W. Woodruff announced a final adoption practice on April 8, 1894: “Pres. Woodruff announced the doctrine of the sealing of children to parents as far back as it is possible to trace the genealogy, and then seal the last member to the Prophet Joseph [Smith].”¹⁰⁴

Family relationships were determined by sealing, not by biology. For example, Heber J. Grant was the biological son of Jedediah Grant, but because his mother was sealed to Joseph Smith, he was regarded as Joseph Smith’s son.¹⁰⁵

It is apparent that what Joseph Smith understood about adoption was not clearly communicated to subsequent church leaders. They could not preserve the practice intact. In September 1887, two months after John Taylor died, his son-in-law, John M. Whitaker, wrote in his diary:

[T]his led Brother Gates to write to President Taylor asking him if he knew anything about [adoption]. He never answered the letter. But on another occasion Brother Gates saw him and asked him

¹⁰² Irving, *Law of Adoption*, *supra*, p. 302, citations omitted.

¹⁰³ “Bro. [Samuel] Roskelly of the Logan temple is having a considerable number of persons who are dead sealed and adopted to him. This is right where people request it, but he should not try to induce them to take this course through their surviving relatives, or in their own cases, if alive. Pres. Woodruff will write him to not try to get people to be thus sealed to him, but where they ask if of their own free will it will be proper.” *George Laub Journal*, *supra*, p. 466.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*, p. 496.

¹⁰⁵ “Brother Joseph F. in his remarks to-day bore a wonderful strong testimony ... He testified to the eternity of the marriage covenant. Referred to the fact that he looked upon [Heber J. Grant] as his cousin, my mother having been sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith for eternity.” *The Diaries of Heber J. Grant, 1880-1945 Abridged*, (Privately Published, Salt Lake City, 2010), December 13, 1899, p. 276. At the funeral of Ruben T. Miller, Joseph F. Smith “announced that he looked upon [Heber J. Grant] as being the seed actually of the Prophet Joseph Smith under the new and everlasting covenant, my mother having been sealed to the Prophet for all Eternity, and only married to my father for time.” *Id.*, March 29, 1901, p. 281.

plainly. President Taylor said he knew nothing about it. And also just lately when asked by Brother Snow, President Wilford Woodruff knew nothing about it. [“]It hadn’t been revealed to him.” I know this at this time to say [or show] a prevailing feeling among the Twelve that they don’t understand it. George [undecipherable] Cannon also said he didn’t understand it.¹⁰⁶

As John Taylor’s health declined in the last month of his life, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal on June 8, 1887: “I wrote 4 Letters to Jaques Emma Clara & Roskelly. I did not rest well. To much deep thinking to Sleep.”¹⁰⁷ Roskelly was employed as the recorder in the Logan, Utah temple. That letter included the following mention of adoption:

So in relation to Adoptions, most, if not all, of the Presidency and Twelve, have had men adopted to them, and all these Sealings and Adoptions are for the Salvation of the living and the dead. I have never asked any man to be adopted into my family that I can recollect of; but I have had a number of families of friends adopted into my family, as have other men, without any regard to whether it will, in the future, cost me one dollar or a million. What we have done in this matter has been for the salvation of man. It may possibly be a correct doctrine that a man’s Kingdom will consist of only the fruit of his own loins. Yet Jesus Christ died to save the whole world, and if we, as Apostles and Elders, do nothing for the human family only for the fruit of our own loins, we shall not do much towards magnifying the Holy Priesthood God has given us for saving the souls of men—either the living or the dead. . . . I have adopted this rule in Sealing and Adoptions: to take such as the Lord has given me, and leave the result in His hands. . . . Paul talked a good deal about Adoptions, but we did not understand much about it, until the Lord revealed it to Joseph Smith, and we may not, perhaps, understand it now as fully as we should. Still the Sealings and Adoptions are true principles, or our Prophets have been badly deceived.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ John M. Whitaker, *Diary, Book No. 4*, September 16, 1887, to September 20, 1888, November 16, 1887, MS 0002, Marriott Special Collections; transcription from Pitman shorthand by LaJean Purcell Carruth; as cited by Stapley, Jonathan A., *Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism, Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 2011, p. 3; pp. 101-102.

¹⁰⁷ *Wilford Woodruff’s Journals, Vol. 8: 1 January 1881 to 31 December 1888*, Signature Books (Midvale, Utah: 1985), p. 441.

¹⁰⁸ Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Samuel Roskelley, June 8, 1887, typescript, Samuel Roskelley Collection, Box 2, Book 4, Merrill-Cazier Library; cited in Stapley, Jonathan A., *Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism*, supra, p. 103.

THEY DON'T KNOW AND DON'T UNDERSTAND

Because of uncertainty, adoption became increasingly controversial over time. Since the idea was not well understood by LDS church leaders, they could provide no answers to questions on the subject. Bishop Edward Bunker denounced the idea altogether, resulting in an 1892 church court that the LDS church President Woodruff and one of his counselors attended. The former bishop was charged with teaching false doctrine, and in his defense wrote a letter to the high council stating:

The adoption of one man to another out of the lineage, I do not understand and for that reason I would not enter into it. And adopting the dead to the living is as adopting the father to the son. I don't believe there is a man on earth that thoroughly understands the principle. If there is, I have never heard it taught as I could understand it. I believe it is permited [sic] more to satisfy the minds of the people for the present until the Lord reveals more fully the principle.¹⁰⁹

In his summary of the court, Wilford Woodruff relegated adoption to one of the “mysteries” that church members ought to avoid discussing because they cause difficulties. He wrote: “June 11, 1892 We Met in the Tabernacle at 10 oclock on the trial of Bishop Bunker on Doctrin. We talked to them Plainly of the impropriety of indulging in Misteries to Create difficulties among the Saints. They professed to be Satisfied.”¹¹⁰

Although John Taylor perpetuated the practice,¹¹¹ it gradually diminished and then disappeared, beginning with Wilford Woodruff's presidency. Woodruff changed the policy in April 1894 to seal within biological families as far back as were known, then to seal/adopt the last parents to Joseph Smith. This made adoption less of an issue and the genealogical search for ancestors of greater concern. By 1922, the de-emphasis on adoption allowed it to be ignored altogether. The practice Woodruff announced in 1894 was then deleted from the account published by the Utah Genealogical Society¹¹² and from Clark's *Messages*

¹⁰⁹ Edward Bunker, Letter to the Bunkerville High Council, April 25, 1891, *Edward Bunker Autobiography* (1894), 37, microfilm of holograph, MS 1581, LDS Church History Library.

¹¹⁰ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, supra, 9:203, all as in original.

¹¹¹ See *In the President's Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879-1892*, Signature Books (Salt Lake, 2007), pp. 73 (November 10, 1881), 80 (November 27, 1881), 129 (April 27, 1884), and 158 (August 24, 1884).

¹¹² “*The Law of Adoption*: Discourses Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, Sunday, April 18 [sic], 1894,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 13 (October 1922): 145–152.

of *The First Presidency*.¹¹³ Today adoption has vanished from the LDS church, and it was never practiced by the RLDS or other branches of the restoration. It is nevertheless part of the Gospel, and an ordinance is required.

Nearly a half-century later, the LDS president remained no better positioned to understand or practice it. President Wilford Woodruff was among the first generation of converts, an early apostle, and the fourth church president. Despite his background and personal proximity to the events, he could not provide any clarity on adoption. In his April 1894 General Conference talk, titled *The Law of Adoption*, he made this candid acknowledgment:

But he [Brigham Young] did not receive all the revelations that belong to this work; neither did President Taylor, nor has Wilford Woodruff. There will be no end to this work until it is perfected.

... We have not fully carried out those principles in fulfillment of the revelations of God to us, in sealing the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. I have not felt satisfied, neither did President Taylor, neither has any man since the Prophet Joseph who has attended to the ordinance of adoption in the temples of our God. We have felt that there was more to be revealed upon this subject than we had received.¹¹⁴

In contrast to earlier candor, the LDS church today claims it can and does seal families through the broad authority termed “priesthood keys.” Although the term “keys” was not clearly defined by Joseph Smith, the church describes it as follows:

Priesthood keys held by the Lord’s servants authorize them to direct how priesthood authority and power are used in the work of salvation and exaltation.

Jesus Christ holds all the keys of the priesthood pertaining to His Church. He has conferred upon each of His Apostles all the keys that pertain to the kingdom of God on earth. The President of the

¹¹³ Clark, James R., *Messages of the First Presidency*, Bookcraft (Salt Lake City: 1966) Vol. 3, pp. 251–60. Pages 251–252 are a preface which includes the following: “Joseph Smith nor Brigham Young nor John Taylor who preceded him as President of the Church had received all the revelation that was necessary to completely carry out the sealing ordinances properly: He said in this regard: ‘I have not felt satisfied, neither did President Taylor, neither has any man since the Prophet Joseph who has attended to this ordinance of adoption in the temples of our God. We have felt that there was more to be revealed upon the subject than we have received. ... We have felt as President Taylor said, that we have got to have more revelation concerning sealing under the law of adoption.’” *Id.*, p. 251.

¹¹⁴ *The Law of Adoption*, April 18, 1894 General Conference talk, published by the Utah Genealogical Society and also found in *Messages of the First Presidency*, James Clark compiler (Bookcraft, SLC 1966).

Church is the only person authorized to exercise all those priesthood keys.

Temple presidents, mission presidents, stake presidents, bishops, and quorum presidents also hold priesthood keys that allow them to preside over and direct the work they have been commissioned to do. Because of the keys of the priesthood, we can have access to the ordinances, covenants, blessings, and powers we need in order to return to live with our Heavenly Father and our Savior and become like Them.¹¹⁵

Taken at face value, this seems good enough. But there is nothing in LDS teachings today that practices or even allows us to understand exactly how adoption into the lineage of Abraham could happen.¹¹⁶ That sort of linking back to the patriarchal fathers and Adam is not part of their current faith. The prophecy of Malachi has been interpreted to mean sealing marriages. The only adoption sealings now taking place are for children sealed to parents when born into marriages celebrated outside an LDS temple.

Between the original Nauvoo adoptive sealing to Joseph Smith, and the current LDS practice of tracking genealogical/biological lines, there was an intermediate step when families were tracked back as far as research permitted, and then the line was sealed to Joseph Smith. That intermediate practice is now forgotten and certainly no longer practiced. The growing uncertainty, redefinition, and abandonment of the practice of “adoption” are traced by Jonathan Stapley in his *Journal of Mormon History* article.¹¹⁷ His article demonstrates how quickly the topic became confused. He writes that Lorenzo Snow, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, George Cannon and Eliza R. Snow did not understand adoption.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/priesthood-keys-study-guide?lang=eng>

¹¹⁶ It is thought to happen in some automatic way as a result of baptism, with nothing else required or contemplated. This is quite unlike Joseph Smith’s original intent.

¹¹⁷ *JMH-Stapley*, *supra*.

¹¹⁸ “The period after Taylor’s death in July 1887 appears to have been one of continued confusion regarding the law of adoption. Two months later in September 1887, John M. Whitaker, John Taylor’s son-in-law, wrote: “I went back to the office where I found [Apostle] Brother Lorenzo Snow and [First Council of the Seventy member] Jacob Gates. They conversed a long time. He finally entered into a deep subject on ‘The Law of Adoption.’ Brother Gates said he didn’t believe in it as did also Brother Snow. He[?] referenced back to the time that Brigham Young was in Kirtland[;] he had a person asked him about it and he said ‘I know nothing about it.’ President Taylor on one different occasion had a letter written to him for the following reason: it was [two undecipherable words] of Prophet J Smith or rather Sister Eliza R. Snow Smith (Brother Gates didn’t know which)[;] a bout [sic] 70 persons were adopted into President J Smith’s [family;] Sister Snow Smith said ‘she didn’t understand the

Stapley's article observes, "the idea of linking to Joseph Smith was eventually dismissed or forgotten."¹¹⁹ He cites the deliberate decision in 1922 to remove reference to Woodruff's instruction to seal genealogical lines to Joseph Smith.¹²⁰ Today's Mormons know nothing about the practice, nor the importance of the earlier Joseph Smith doctrine of adoption.

The alarming oddity of this modern innovation becomes most apparent when the original reason for adoption is remembered. It was intended to avoid "the whole earth being utterly wasted" at the Lord's return. (JS-H 1: 39.) That is, the Second Coming of Christ will destroy the wicked on "the great and dreadful day." (*Id.*, v. 38.) "For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that is shall leave them neither root nor branch."¹²¹ (*Id.*, v. 37.) Joseph taught that the connection allowing living men and women to endure the day of burning was intimately connected with a priestly tie between the living children and the coming "fathers" who will return in consuming glory.¹²² Joseph explained that unless the living who greet them are recognized as "children" through adoption as a component of their priesthood, they will burn as stubble. It goes back to Abraham, whose posterity would include any and all who received the same Gospel and priesthood given Abraham. (Abr. 2: 9.) Everyone who received the Gospel after his day would be "accounted [his] seed, and shall rise up and bless [him], as their father." (Abr. 2: 10.) It will be through Abraham's "seed (that is [his] Priesthood)" that the world will be preserved. (Abr. 2: 11.) Only in this manner would the families of the earth be preserved. (*Id.*)

law' but had no objections to them being sealed to her husband. And this led Brother Gates to write to President Taylor asking him if he knew anything about it. He never answered the letter. But on another occasion Brother Gates saw him and asked him plainly. President Taylor said he knew nothing about it. And also just lately when asked by Brother Snow, President Wilford Woodruff knew nothing about it. ["It hadn't been revealed to him." I know this at this time to say [or show] a prevailing feeling among the Twelve that they don't understand it. George [undecipherable] Cannon also said he didn't understand it." *Id.*, at pp. 101-102, citing to *John M. Whitaker Diary, Book No. 4, September 16, 1887 to September 20, 1888*, November 16, 1877, MS 0002, Marriott Special Collection; transcription from Pitman shorthand by LaJean Purcell Carruth.

¹¹⁹ *Id.*, pp. 113-114.

¹²⁰ *Id.*, p. 114, citing the Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine edition of October 1922.

¹²¹ The terms "root" and "branch" are genealogical/family terms. Meaning the posterity of such people will be cut off, destroyed or unable to continue family lines.

¹²² The Lord will come in glory to dispense judgment on the world. It will be His glory, reflected also in those who accompany Him (Jude 1:3/KJV 1:14-15), which is the consuming fire to purge the earth.

Therefore, when knowledge about adoption was lost, so was the chance to avoid destruction on the coming day when those who return will burn them up. On that day, only those whose “hearts are turned to the fathers,” who are regarded as their children, and held in remembrance by the “fathers,” will be able to endure the glory that would otherwise “burn them as stubble, leaving neither root nor branch.”

Brigham Young admitted he did not understand the doctrine. Inexplicably, he taught that these matters would be attended to and sorted out after the Lord’s return in glory and during the Millennium. He knew it needed to be done, didn’t know how to do it, and concluded that when Joseph returned through the resurrection, it would all be sorted out. Brigham Young seemed oblivious to the problem with the timing. If it would be sorted out after Joseph’s resurrection, it would be too late for those who were reduced to ashes by the Lord’s return. Young taught:

After Joseph comes to us in his resurrected body He will more fully instruct us concerning the Baptism for the dead and the sealing ordinances. He will say be baptized for this man and that man and that man be sealed to that man and such a man to such a man, and connect the Priesthood together.

I tell you their will not be much of this done until Joseph comes. He is our spiritual Father. Our hearts are already turned to him and his to us. This [is] the order of the Holy Priesthood and we shall continue to administer in the ordinances of the kingdom of God here on earth.¹²³

The obvious defect in Young’s understanding is the pre-Millennial return of Christ, and the return of the “fathers” to a group that has not prepared for their return in advance. The preparation must precede the return. In other words, if they are unprepared, or not recognized as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through sealing to the “fathers,” they will be burned. The Gospel was restored primarily to prepare a people for the Lord’s return. To say the preparation will happen sometime after the return, during the Millennium, suggests the coming day which will ‘burn them up’ is inconsequential or can be ignored with impunity.

In today’s LDS faith, Joseph’s “adoption” theology has been transformed into something altogether different. It is biological and genealogical, not priestly and dispensational. The church now markets itself as an institution that will “strengthen families.” It does not inform its members, or prospective converts, that the day will come when they will be burned up unless they have connected to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through Hyrum Smith as the head of the Holy

¹²³ CDBY, 2: 1034.

Order, in a necessary priestly ordinance. This teaching is one example that shows how distant today's Mormonism is from Joseph's original vision.

DWINDLING IN UNBELIEF

If adoption is, as Brigham Young thought in 1856, the highest ordinance, above all the endowments that can be given, and if it is needed for the Gospel as taught to Abraham to be restored, then the loss of adoption rites is indeed a sign of apostasy. Brigham Young taught that adoption would bind a person beyond the devil's power to break.¹²⁴ But adoption was abandoned before the end of the 1800s. Adoption needed to be restored as a rite with an accompanying authoritative ordinance and sealing in order for the things Joseph Smith alone understood and taught to be renewed.

There is still more restoration needed than adoption alone. The LDS church has attempted to preserve other ordinances Joseph Smith established. Unfortunately, those ordinances have also been poorly preserved, changed, and compromised.¹²⁵

Joseph did not live to complete the Nauvoo temple, nor did he complete the temple ceremonies.¹²⁶ Thirty-three years after Joseph died, Brigham Young explained that he was the one who completed the ceremony using what he could recall from Joseph's initiation:

[W]hen we got our washings and anointings under the hands of the Prophet Joseph at Nauvoo, we had only one room to work in with the exception of a little side room, or office, where we were washed and anointed, had our garments placed upon us, and received our new name. And after he had performed these ceremonies, he gave the key words, signs, tokens and penalties. Then, after we went into the large room over the store in Nauvoo, Joseph divided up the room the best that he could, hung up the veil, marked it. Gave us our instructions as we passed along from

¹²⁴ CDBY 2:1033-1034.

¹²⁵ In October 9, 1899 Wilford Woodruff, speaking of temple ordinances, said, "There were many things revealed to the Prophet that were not fully understood and that these were changed when there was more light to come." *Diaries of Heber J. Grant*, supra, p. 101. Temple rites from washings and anointings to the endowment, along with temple garments have been dramatically altered from 1989 through 2026. The role of the false minister was eliminated along with penalties.

¹²⁶ "No written text of the 1842 or 1843 ritual exists. The first descriptions in any detail date from 1845[.]" Buerger, David, *The Mysteries of Godliness*, Smith Research, (San Francisco: 1994), p. 73. This refers to the endowment (1842) and second anointing (1843) rituals.

one department to another, giving us signs, tokens, penalties, with the key words pertaining to those signs.

After we had got through Bro. Joseph turned to me (Pres. Young) and said, “Bro. Brigham this is not arranged right but we have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed, and I wish you to take this matter in hand and organize and systematize all these ceremonies with the signs, tokens, penalties and key words.” I did so, and each time I got something more, so that when we went through the temple at Nauvoo I understood and knew how to place them there. We had our ceremonies pretty correct.¹²⁷

Joseph had not fully completed the required ordinances, and Brigham Young never had the ability to accomplish what was needed. To illustrate the catastrophe, I would use the three Facsimiles in the Book of Abraham. Before doing so, let me explain that the Egyptian religion was apostate from the first dynasty. Although it “sought earnestly to imitate” the religion of the first fathers, it was unable to do so because the founder was excluded from the Holy Order.¹²⁸ Therefore, Egypt preserved echoes, and those help us identify some of the characteristics from the beginning. But we cannot reconstruct the original using the remnants that remained in Egypt. The original imitative effort then became progressively less accurate and authentic over the generations.

The first Facsimile illustrates the idea of obedience, sacrifice, rejecting false gods, calling upon God, and deliverance. It is the first stage to be accomplished in mortality and was the focus of the “endowment” Joseph was restoring in the red brick store. The second Facsimile is referred to as a hypocephalus. It was a funerary addition perhaps beginning around 400 BC, and a guide adopted as part of the Book of Breathings era.¹²⁹ It was a layout to help the dead navigate through the afterlife. “It has been designated by various scholars as serving various but related purposes—as a passport, certificate, travel guide, road map,

¹²⁷ CDBY 5:3104.

¹²⁸ The founding Pharaoh was “seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first Patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood. Now Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry.” T&C 145 BoA 2:3 (PoGP Abr. 1:26-27).

¹²⁹ The original religion of Egypt decayed over millennia beginning with the Pyramid Texts, and then progressively Coffin Texts, Book of the Dead, and finally the Book of Breathings. Each epoch lost more of what had been available earlier. The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham reckon from the late Book of Breathings era.

ticket, and so forth.”¹³⁰ Facsimile 2 depicts an underworld in the lower third, along with the heavenly barque showing movement through six divisions, the seventh being the underworld shown in the lower third. Hugh Nibley described it as,

...a crowded representation of the cosmic drama, containing with its circular rim the “designs of deep significance” that indicate the starry heavens in their times and seasons, and showing by cunning, half-abstract figures the circle of the universe and what is in it—or so at least Joseph Smith explained it, though there are no conventional indications of heavenly bodies in the drawing, as there are in other hypocephali. Most conspicuous is the division into two antithetical halves, the one the reverse or mirror image of the other. The top two-thirds are solar in nature, showing the great orbs of light in the upper heavens and their times and degrees, amidst symbols of patriarchal creativity and governance, as is explained by the captions. The lower third of the circle is the reverse or mirror image of the other. There the earth forces, the female powers of creation, are in evidence, as represented “in the lower regions”[.]¹³¹

The central figure of Facsimile 2 is the throne of God, the center place to which ascension was directed. The Facsimile has seven panels, which correspond to the ceremonial ascension that prepares the initiate for that journey in the afterlife. “The seven panels are consistent with the seven heavens of the ascension texts, the seven chambers of the Hekaloth, etc.”¹³² Joseph never completed that portion of the temple instruction or rites, although he did have a “throne theophany” and had the commission to accomplish it.¹³³ Nor was Joseph Smith able to provide the final stage of the temple rites as depicted in Facsimile 3. That facsimile depicts the final destination of the ascension, the Throne Room of God. The scene shows Abraham as having accomplished the journey, and therefore he is able to “reason[] upon the principles of astronomy in

¹³⁰ Nibley, Hugh, Rhodes, Michael, *One Eternal Round*, (Deseret Book: 2010), p. 139.

¹³¹ Nibley, Hugh, *Abraham in Egypt*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, (Deseret Book: 1981).

¹³² *One Eternal Round*, p. 599.

¹³³ T&C 1 JSH 2:5, 3:3: “He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me and that his name was Nephi, that God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.” For a discussion about the commissioning of a prophet generally see, Ostler, Blake, *The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form Critical Analysis*, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 4 (1986) pp. 67-95.

the king's court.”¹³⁴ Although Joseph did not have time to complete the temple rites, he was able to point in the right direction using the Book of Abraham Facsimiles.

Also, although Joseph Smith did not complete of the ritual ascent in a formalized ceremonial process, he clearly understood it was to involve kingship. He took concrete steps toward formal kingship by organizing the Council of Fifty. But he never had the opportunity to complete what he began. It is not an easy thing to restore again all that needs to be returned, and Joseph was exposed to things in heaven that required time and experience to be able to understand and teach.¹³⁵ Establishing “kingship” was never completed or adequately taught.

Joseph planned for the Council of Fifty as the means for establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth. That effort began in March 1844, but Joseph and Hyrum were killed less than three months following its first meeting. All of the records of the Council of Fifty were supposed to have been destroyed,¹³⁶ but apparently William Clayton retained a copy.

It is important to understand the Council of Fifty was distinct from the church. The “Kingdom of God” was to be developed through the Council, and the church was separate from the “Kingdom.”¹³⁷

On April 11, 1844 that Council's meeting included remarks from Joseph Smith:

The design was to form a Theocracy according to the will of Heaven, planted without any intention to interfere with any government of the world. We wish to have nothing to do with them. We have no violence to offer to governments, no rights to infringe. The object is to live so far above their laws that they cannot interfere with us, unless by violence. We will hunt a spot somewhere on the earth where no other government has jurisdiction and cannot interfere with us and there plant our standard.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Facsimile 3, comment below Fig. 6 describing the entire scene.

¹³⁵ As I've explained before: “Joseph knew a great deal more right at the beginning than he **understood**; and Joseph gradually **understood** more than he was able to **teach**. At about the time that Joseph reached not just the height of his comprehension but the height of his capacity to be able to teach, he was taken from us. We lost him.” See my website: <https://denversnuffer.com/2022/07/165-comprehending-part-6/>

¹³⁶ Joseph Smith ordered the clerk “either to burn the records of the kingdom, or put them in some safe hands and send them away or else bury them up.” *The Joseph Smith Papers: Administrative Records*, p. 198.

¹³⁷ As the LDS Historian's office explains: “This ‘literal kingdom of God’ would ‘govern men in civil matters,’ making it distinct from the church.” *Id.*, p. xx

¹³⁸ *Id.*, p.88, footnotes omitted.

Later in that same meeting Joseph Smith explained:

Theocracy as [Joseph] understands it is, for the people to get the voice of God and then acknowledge it, and see it executed. It is necessary for the council to exhaust their wisdom and except they do they will never know but they are as wise as God himself, and ambitious men will, like Lucifer think they are as wise as God and will try to lift themselves up and put their foot on the necks of others. There has always been some man to put himself forward and say I am the great I &c.¹³⁹

After further discussion in the Council, Elder Erastus Snow stood up and made a motion. The minutes state: “He concluded by offering a motion that this honorable assembly receive from this time henceforth and forever, Joseph Smith, as our Prophet, Priest & King, and uphold him in that capacity in which God has anointed him. The motion was seconded and accepted unanimously.”¹⁴⁰

Within the Council of Fifty Joseph Smith was thereafter recognized as the “King” over the incipient Kingdom of God. Had Joseph Smith lived long enough to fully develop the concept of God’s kingdom it seems likely to me that a different approach would have prevailed in time. He was clearly willing to patiently and cautiously begin something, even if it would require rethinking and revising over time.

Pres^t. Joseph Smith arose to give some instructions to the council & especially to the committee. He commenced by showing, that the reason why men always failed to establish important measures was, because in their organization they never could agree to disagree long enough to select the pure gold from the dross by the process of investigation.¹⁴¹

Had he lived long enough I doubt there would have been any earthly “kingship” or earthly “kingdom” made permanent.

I say that with some confidence because of the Lord’s discussion about His status with Pilate:

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus and said unto him, Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Do you say this thing of yourself? Or did others tell it to you of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you unto me. What have you done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be

¹³⁹ *Id.*, p. 92, minutes of April 11, 1844.

¹⁴⁰ *Id.*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁴¹ *Id.*, p. 79, minutes of April 4, 1844.

delivered to the Jews. But now is my kingdom not from here. Pilate therefore said unto him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king; to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world — that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice.¹⁴²

If the Lord did not intend to establish a kingdom in this world during His lifetime, I do not believe His followers ought to now make any attempt to do so. Of course, He will return and assume His role as King of kings and Lord of lords after He returns in the clouds of glory.¹⁴³ But until then we should be more circumspect than Joseph in mid-April 1844. At least I intend to do so.¹⁴⁴

Additionally, we have the absolute proscription of establishing a king upon this land. The Covenant of Christ forbids it:

This land will be a land of liberty for the Gentiles, and there won't be any kings on the land who will oppress the Gentiles. I'll fortify this land against all other nations. God has said: Those who fight against Zion will be destroyed. Those who try to establish a king in place of Me will perish, because I the Lord, the King of Heaven, will be their king; and I'll be a light to those who hear My words forever.¹⁴⁵

The Book of Mormon states it in these words:

And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land who shall raise up unto the gentiles, and I will fortify this land against all other nations. And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God, for he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish. For I the Lord, the King of Heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them for ever that hear my words.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² NC John 10:7 (KJV 18:33-37).

¹⁴³ “And I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him is called faithful and true, and in righteousness he does judge and make war; his eyes were as a flame of fire. And he had on his head many crowns, and a name written that no man knew but himself. And he is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. And his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth proceeds the word of God, and with it he will smite the nations, and he will rule them with the word of his mouth. And he treads the winepress in the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he has on a vesture, and on his thigh a name written: King of kings, and Lord of lords.” NC Rev. 8:1 (KJV 19:11-16).

¹⁴⁴ By saying this I do not intend to criticize Joseph — he was only 38 years old when killed and therefore deprived of the opportunity of careful development of the “kingship” embedded in the Holy Order.

¹⁴⁵ CoC 2 Ne. 7:2 (LDS 10:11-14).

¹⁴⁶ *Id.*

Eventually, had those involved taken time to disagree long enough to find the pure gold, I believe there would have been no “Kingdom of God” attempted. Instead, I think the order that would have been followed would have been familial and resembling the first generations.

About a year and a half after the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Brigham began introducing the endowment to the general church membership. This was done using canvas partitions in the attic of the unfinished Nauvoo Temple. As these endowments proceeded, Brigham continued to make additions, changes, and alterations to the ceremony Joseph had introduced. By the time of the exodus from Nauvoo, over 5,000 members had been endowed. Endowment ordinances did not resume until 1852 in the Council House in Utah, and then in the Endowment House, which was completed in 1855. However, nothing was done to revive adoptions until the St. George Temple was completed in 1877, thirty-one years after the last earlier Nauvoo adoption.

APPOINTMENT AND INITIATION INTO THE HOLY ORDER

There are a few reasonable historical and theological conclusions we can reach from the tattered history of adoption. First, in the earliest generations of mankind, there was a clear genealogical line of faithful patriarchs who transmitted a tradition of faith from father to son, son to grandson, grandson to great-grandson, and so on for eleven generations.¹⁴⁷ Those first faithful fathers began with Adam and continued through the fathers until Shem, who was called Melchizedek or “king and priest”—as explained in the Glossary of Gospel Terms:

Melchizedek is not a name but a title. It is a compound of two words. The first is Malki (מַלְכִּי), meaning “king,” and Zadok (צִדְקָה), meaning “righteous;” Malki Tzedek or Malki Zedek (מַלְכִּי-צִדְקָה) can mean “righteous king” or “king of righteousness.” As a comparison, the Dead Sea Scrolls portray their “Teacher of Righteousness” as Moreh Zedek.¹⁴⁸

If not for apostasy, the pattern established at the beginning would have continued in an unbroken line until the final generation. However, the pattern

¹⁴⁷ We have the names: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem (Melchizedek), however, from other known evidence each of them would have necessarily had a spouse who shared in the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. First, each of these were “fathers” to whom sons were born, which could not have happened without a spouse. It is recorded in Genesis in relation to their deaths, that most of these patriarchs “begot many sons and daughters”—which also directly involved their spouse.

¹⁴⁸ See, *Glossary of Gospel Terms*: “Melchizedek”, (Restoration Scriptures Foundation, 2019, 2024).

was not followed, the line was broken, and something new was required in order to restore the original pattern. That new thing enabling the restoration of the original pattern happened with Abraham. He became the new “Adam” and the ‘father of the righteous’ to rescue a fallen world. The new thing enabling this was adoption. The unfaithful generations between Melchizedek and Abraham were dropped from the order, and Abraham assumed the next position as a father following Melchizedek.

Second, because of the extraordinary plan to rescue mankind from apostasy established through Abraham, it became possible in subsequent generations to mend the breaches in the line of patriarchs by following the precedent set with Abraham. Joseph Smith made this issue clear enough that, whatever else Brigham Young and the twelve did not understand, they were clear on the basic concept that a line connecting any person to be saved back to Adam needed to be established for salvation in the Kingdom of God. That connecting line was to be provided in some way through adoption. As he put it, “I will extend the chain of the priesthood back through apostolic dispensation to Father Adam just as soon as I can get a Temple built.”¹⁴⁹ Through adoption, it is possible for all believers who live after Father Abraham’s day to repair the breach and be reconnected to the family of Father Adam.

Third, it is clear that this required an ordinance or rite to be performed. Abraham was reconnected through the decree of heaven, given to him in a revelation in which God promised him directly that “as many as receive this gospel shall be called after your name and shall be accounted your seed, and shall rise up and bless you, as unto their Father.” But this promise alone did not complete the task. To complete the link, Abraham had to go to Melchizedek and receive the necessary initiation. Because Melchizedek was an authorized officiator and Abraham had to go to him to receive the rites, the initiation or ordination of Abraham came from Melchizedek. The scriptures state: “Abraham received the Priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah, and from Noah till Enoch, through the lineage of their fathers[.]”¹⁵⁰ It would have been contrary to the conduct of the Holy Order

¹⁴⁹ CDBY, 1: 180.

¹⁵⁰ T&C 82:10 (D&C 84:13-17). The identity of Shem as Melchizedek has been disputed by LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie, who wrote: “There is an unsupported tradition to the effect that Melchizedek was the same person as Shem, the son of Noah. That this could hardly have been the case is seen from the revelation which says: ‘Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah.’ (T&C 82:10; D&C 84:14.) In other words, there seem to have been at least two generations between Melchizedek and Shem.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, Bookcraft (SLC: 1958) p.475). However, the scripture wording continues to track the Holy Order retrospectively backward (“from Noah till Enoch” and “from Enoch... [to] Adam”). Therefore, Melchizedek’s priesthood through

for Abraham to receive it from anyone other than a legal officiator. When there was (or is) a living member, it must come through him and not even from heaven. God established the Holy Order at the beginning, and therefore invariably respects the Order He established.

When God established the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God at the beginning with Adam, it was an eternal appointment. That appointment has continued with Adam through the present. As our scriptures explain:

Commencing with Adam, who was the first man, who is spoken of in Daniel as being the Ancient of Days, or in other words, the first and oldest of all, the great grand progenitor, of whom it is said in another place, He is Michael, because he was the first and father of all, not only by progeny, but he was the first to hold the spiritual blessings, to whom was made known the plan of ordinances for the salvation of his posterity unto the end, and to whom Christ was first revealed, and through whom Christ has been revealed from Heaven and will continue to be revealed from now on. Adam holds the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of times; i.e., the dispensation of all the times have been and will be revealed through him, from the beginning to Christ, and from Christ to the end of all the dispensations that are to be revealed.¹⁵¹

There was an unbroken line from Adam to Melchizedek. As long as Melchizedek remained on earth, he was the only one who could perform the required ordinance. Therefore, although the promises given to Abraham by God designated him as the one all mankind would look to as their father, if Abraham had not gone to Melchizedek and been initiated, Abraham could not have fulfilled that role. It is therefore clear that no matter what promises God may make to a man, without the required ordinance performed by a legal officiator, the promises remain unfulfilled.

One clarification is needed: Abraham received a promise from the Lord. Melchizedek was not required to act on Abraham's word. As the head of the Holy Order, Melchizedek would also have needed to be told by the Lord to administer the rites to Abraham. An initiation required revelation from God, and the Timeline of the Fathers and the Holy Order¹⁵² shows that initiations were not based on birth order, but on when God revealed the candidate to the head and authorized the induction. For example, Enoch was made a member of the Holy

the lineage of the fathers until Noah is describing descending from prior fathers down to Melchizedek, not from multiple generations of fathers between Noah and his son Shem (who was Melchizedek).

¹⁵¹ T&C 140:3.

¹⁵² See Appendix to the T&C p. 528.

Order before his grandfather Mahalalel was added. Abraham added Isaac to the Order, although he had made hundreds of converts.¹⁵³ Isaac added only one (Jacob), and Jacob in turn added only Joseph, to whom he also provided the records and garment going back to Adam.¹⁵⁴ It is not permitted for anyone to decide that God has chosen them for the Holy Order and then impose their ambition upon the head of the Holy Order.

THE STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE HOLY ORDER

Those who inherit the obligations, promises, and initiation through the necessary ordinance are described in T&C 69 (D&C 76) as those:

- who overcome by faith and are sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.
- who are the church of the Firstborn.
- they into whose hands the Father has given all things.
- who are priests and kings, who, having received of his fullness and of his glory, are priests of the Most High after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the Order of the Only Begotten Son. Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God. Wherefore, all things are

¹⁵³ OC Gen. 7:2 (KJV 12:5) refers to “souls that they had gotten in Haran[.]” It is estimated that Abraham converted approximately 300 from idolatry to follow God. None of them were added to the Holy Order, nor did they need to be. See also T&C 145: BoA 4:1: “I departed out of Haran. ¹⁵And I took Sarai, whom I took to wife when I was in Ur, in Chaldea, and Lot, my brother’s son, and all our substance that we had gathered, and the souls that we had won in Haran, and came forth in the way to the land of Canaan[.]” (emphasis added.)

¹⁵⁴ “The idea of a garment of many colors is an invention. If you look in your Bible every time it mentions many colors the word colors (even in the commentary) is in italics [the word in italics is actually many] because it is put in there by modern editors. It’s found in no ancient source. It’s not a garment of many colors at all. A garment of certain marks is the term that’s used here. We’ll see what it is in a second. ‘This garment had belonged to Abraham, and it already had a long history.’ It’s history was lengthy because it went back to the Garden of Eden, you see. That’s the garment; it’s the only one. Just as we treat the story of Cain and Abel, we trivialize this. We say, ‘Joseph was the youngest kid, so his father favored him and gave him a pretty garment of many colors.’ There is no mention in any ancient source of a garment of many colors. That’s an invention of modern editors trying to explain it. But here it was the garment he gave him. It was the garment of the priesthood. No wonder they were jealous of him, they being the elder brothers and he the younger in the patriarchal line coming down from Abraham. This garment had belonged to Abraham and had come down to Joseph instead of to the other brethren.” (Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, (Covenant Communications: 2012) p. 51-52).

theirs, whether life or death, or things present or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. And they shall overcome all things. Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let them glory in God who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.

- they shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ for ever and ever.
- they whom he shall bring with him when he shall come in the clouds of Heaven to reign on the earth over his people.
- who shall have part in the first resurrection.
- who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just.
- who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly place, the holiest of all.
- who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn.
- they whose names are written in Heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.
- who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.¹⁵⁵

This list of qualifications requires the recipient to have a much deeper understanding than the publicly discussed principles and ordinances of the Gospel. It follows that they, like the Lord's mother Mary, will keep these things from the public.¹⁵⁶ It is written: "Mary kept all those things and pondered them in her heart."¹⁵⁷ Many great truths can become a double-edged sword, cutting the one wielding it. Those who qualify are those whom God and Christ have judged. The Son of God has accepted them, forgiven their sins, and, as a result, they have become clean before God. Of course, that can only happen when the Lord has faith in and trust in them.¹⁵⁸ The person must be tried and proven beforehand. Part of proving themselves is establishing their trustworthiness to keep God's confidences rather than disclosing them. As Joseph Smith put it:

¹⁵⁵ T&C 69:10-21 (D&C 76:51-69).

¹⁵⁶ Jesus Christ's teachings are not all lawful to be made public. See, e.g., 3 Ne. 12:3 (LDS 26:18). See also, 1 Ne. 3:31 (LDS 14:28), Ether 6:4 (LDS 13:13), among many others.

¹⁵⁷ NC Luke 2:3 (KJV 2:19).

¹⁵⁸ This was the reason Nephi, son of Helaman, was told: "Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels that ye shall have power over this people and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people. Behold, I give unto you power that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. And thus shall ye have power among this people." NC Helaman 3:19 (LDS 10:6-7.)

After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, which is the first comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other comforter, which the Lord has promised the Saints.¹⁵⁹

While this has and does happen, it is not a common experience because mankind is so easily distracted, and so often tempted by pride, vanity, and foolishness, that they miss the mark. This is why adoption as a rite is so often lost through apostasy. Mankind generally wants far more than they are willing to endure. We want Christmas morning: the opportunity to unwrap gifts we have not paid to acquire.

DIFFICULTIES AND BURDENS

This adoption discussion began by referring to the prophecy of Malachi. Throughout the history of practicing some form of adoption, the reason consistently used to justify its need was the sealing or turning of hearts of children to fathers. It is also apparent from the study of adoption that it is directly and intimately connected with the scriptures telling us that the hearts of the children must be sealed to the fathers. And that is to be reciprocated by the fathers likewise having their hearts sealed to the children.

The first father was Adam. His role as the father of the faithful was later fulfilled or restored by Abraham. It should not be overlooked that the difficulties and disappointments experienced by Adam were repeated in the difficulties and disappointments suffered by Abraham.

The overwhelming majority of Adam's children rejected his religion, and followed Satan. The scriptures explain: "And Satan came among them, saying, I am also a Son of God. And he commanded them, saying, Believe not. And they believed not, and loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish."¹⁶⁰ Adam and Eve were grandparents¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ *TPJS*, p. 150.

¹⁶⁰ OC Gen. 3:5.

¹⁶¹ "And Adam knew his wife, and she bore unto him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth. And from that time forth, the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land, and to till the land, and to tend flocks; and they also begot sons and daughters." OC Genesis 3:1.

before they received their first candidate who would follow the parents' religion. When Cain was born, his mother reacted with joy: "And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord, wherefore he may not reject his words."¹⁶² In time, however, Cain proved to be an equally disappointing child: "But behold, also Cain listened not, saying, Who is the Lord that I should know him?"¹⁶³

After generations of rebellious children, Eve was at last rewarded with a faithful son. We read: "And she again conceived, and bore his brother Abel. And Abel listened unto the voice of the Lord."¹⁶⁴ But the joy of having two faithful children was cut short by the first murder. "And Cain went into the field and Cain talked with Abel his brother. And it came to pass that while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him. And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying, I am free; surely the flocks of my brother fall into my hands."¹⁶⁵ This left Adam and Eve again without a faithful heir. Their house had become desolate, and the first father had no consolation, experiencing only the bitterness of rejection.

We do not know how long the first parents waited before finally receiving a believing heir. But some length of time later, we are told:

And Adam listened unto the voice of God and called upon his sons to repent. And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and he called his name Seth. And Adam glorified the name of God, for he said, God has appointed me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew.¹⁶⁶

These tragic events shaped our first parents. Adam and Eve were acquainted with grief, tempered by failure and disappointment, and suffered heartache over their children. For them, parenthood implicitly involved repeated disappointment, long-suffering, humility, and patience. They were tried in the furnace of affliction and made to mourn for their offspring.

Father Abraham and mother Sarah restored the broken link to the first fathers. They replaced Adam and Eve as parents. Abraham explained what he understood beforehand that it would entail:

I sought for the blessings of the Fathers and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same. Having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and

¹⁶² OC Gen. 3:6 (KJV 4:1).

¹⁶³ *Id.*

¹⁶⁴ *Id.*

¹⁶⁵ OC Gen. 3:9.

¹⁶⁶ OC Gen. 3:14.

to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a Father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a high priest, holding the right belonging to the Fathers. It was conferred upon me from the Fathers: it came down from the Fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning (or before the foundations of the earth) to the present time, even the right of the firstborn (or the first man—who is Adam— or first Father) through the Fathers unto me.¹⁶⁷

While Abraham did obtain his desire, it came at a parental price not unlike that paid by Adam and Eve in the beginning. Adam was a grandfather before a likely heir was born, whereas the elderly Abraham had no heir despite God's promise. Abraham and Sarah were old, having waited nearly a lifetime before a son was born. But that first son, Ishmael, like Cain, was driven away. Adam's son Cain said: "I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth."¹⁶⁸ In a parallel event, Ishmael and his mother were sent away: "he sent her away. And she departed and wandered in the wilderness ... And he grew, and dwelled in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelled in the wilderness[.]"¹⁶⁹

Adam lost his faithful son, Abel, when his brother murdered him. Abraham would also lose a son, Isaac, as a burnt sacrifice commanded by God as an offering to Him. Our scriptures, in their present form, tell us in Genesis that Isaac's sacrificial death was averted when a ram caught in the thicket replaced Isaac on the altar.¹⁷⁰ There is an older story that remains in the account in the Book of Mormon and in the New Testament book of Hebrews. The older account from the Book of Mormon tells it this way: "it is sanctified unto us for righteousness, even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which was a similitude of God and his only begotten Son."¹⁷¹

In the New Testament we get this account from the Book of Hebrews:
By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall your seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up—even from the dead— from where he also received him in a figure.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ T&C 145: BoA 1:1.

¹⁶⁸ OC Gen. 3:10

¹⁶⁹ OC Gen. 8:3 (KJV 21:14, 20-21).

¹⁷⁰ OC Gen. 8:6 (KJV 22:9-13).

¹⁷¹ NC Jacob 3:2 (LDS 4:5)

¹⁷² NC Hebrews 1:43 (KJV 11:17-19).

If we accept the older account at face value, Abraham lost his heir when he killed his remaining faithful son. But unlike Adam's loss, Abraham's was all the more terrible because Abraham had been tied to an altar by the priest of Pharaoh who lifted a knife to kill him as a human sacrifice: "And as they lifted up their hands upon me that they might offer me up and take away my life, behold, I lifted up my voice unto the Lord, my God."¹⁷³ Abraham's life was spared by the intervention of an angel of the Lord. It is almost incomprehensible to consider the horror, trauma, and conflict Abraham experienced in the account told in the older version. In it, Abraham was asked by God to re-enact the earlier human sacrifice practiced by idolatrous priests that God had both condemned and interrupted to spare Abraham. Now the same God was asking for the opposite.

Adam was an innocent bystander who lost his son through fratricide. Abraham, however, was placed in the very position of God the Father, offering His Only Begotten Son. The founding and restoring patriarchs of the Holy Order line both shed tears, experienced terrible grief, and suffered horrible disappointment over their immediate children while they lived.

It makes us wonder whether Abraham had any idea of the cost he would pay to become, "one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a Father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions and to keep the commandments of God[.]"¹⁷⁴ Both Adam and Abraham were tried by tragic, heart-wrenching experiences with their immediate offspring before they were trusted with the stewardship of the family of the faithful as their inheritance. Had Abraham known beforehand what God would require of him, would he have proceeded? When the hearts of the children are sealed or adopted to both Adam and Eve, and Abraham and Sarah, will they understand the price paid by these earlier parents? Although the scriptures tell us that hearts are to turn, there is something poignant and humbling about adoption to such ancestors as these. Then, too, the idea imposes an obligation to act more soberly, solemnly, and carefully if given such a heritage. As the Psalm states: "You have given me the heritage of those that fear your name."¹⁷⁵ That heritage is a gift that began with patriarchs and matriarchs who suffered over their posterity, including us. They paid a price while they were mortal for the posterity they would be called to watch over through the end of time. Their role is rarely understood and therefore hardly appreciated. When the children turn their hearts to them, it should include grateful remembrance of their earlier earthly sacrifices.

¹⁷³ T&C 145: BoA 1:5.

¹⁷⁴ *Id.*, 1:1.

¹⁷⁵ OC Psl. 61:1 (KJV 61:5).

The idea of Abraham participating in a human sacrifice of his son, Isaac, after his earlier experience may seem curious, but there is a backstory that helps explain it. At the beginning, Adam prophesied about all his posterity: “And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation, and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the holy ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation.”¹⁷⁶ This would have included the promise of a savior who would be the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Enoch added to this book, as it states: “These things were all written in the Book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time.”¹⁷⁷

Enoch learned from this prophecy of Adam’s and inquired about that future event:

When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of The Righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified and have eternal life? And the Lord said, It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance. And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh, and his soul rejoiced, saying, The Righteous is lifted up and the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world. And through faith I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me.¹⁷⁸

Prophecies from Adam and Enoch foretold of a future sacrificial Redeemer who would repair the Fall and restore life from the grave. Other Patriarchal Fathers also contributed to the record. We read: “And a book of remembrance was kept, in which was recorded in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration.”¹⁷⁹

These records that foretold of a man dying to redeem mankind came into Abraham’s possession. Abraham wrote: “But I shall endeavor hereafter to delineate the chronology running back from myself to the beginning of the creation, for the records have come into my hands, which I hold unto this present time.”¹⁸⁰ He added: “[T]he records of the Fathers, even the Patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord, my God, preserved in my own hands.”¹⁸¹

All mankind initially learned about the existence and role of God in the creation of this world from Adam.¹⁸² Therefore, all of mankind would have likewise learned of the coming sacrifice of a man whose death would free us

¹⁷⁶ T&C 154:20 (D&C 107:56).

¹⁷⁷ Id., (D&C 107:57).

¹⁷⁸ Gen. 4:19.

¹⁷⁹ Gen. 3:14, see also Gen. 4:5.

¹⁸⁰ Abr. 2:3.

¹⁸¹ Abr. 2:4.

¹⁸² T&C 110: LoF 2:31-33.

from the grave and undo the Fall of Adam. Apostasy from the faith taught by Adam led to many ancient religions practicing human sacrifices. This was the state of the Chaldean false religion that attempted to slay Abraham on an altar.¹⁸³

Isaac was a promised son whose birth fulfilled prophecy and the promise from God: “And God said, Sarah, your wife, shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him also, for an everlasting covenant with his seed after him.”¹⁸⁴ Therefore, Isaac was a gift from God, provided to vindicate a promise, and his birth was miraculous given the age of Abraham and Sarah at the time of his birth.

This background reveals a conflict: On the one hand, human sacrifice was repugnant to Abraham and evidence of a false religion. On the other hand, God gave Abraham a promised son and commanded his sacrifice. Did that suggest Isaac was to be the promised lamb slain from the foundation of the world? Did Abraham believe this would vindicate Adam’s and Enoch’s prophecies? Underlying this troubling command to sacrifice Isaac was the uncertain question of how God intended to fulfill His commitment to redeem mankind. If it were to be Isaac, then despite his death, Abraham knew from the record of the Fathers that Isaac was to rise again. Our scriptures do not let us decide the question, but do contain two versions of Isaac’s sacrifice: in one he is spared by the ram caught in the thicket,¹⁸⁵ in the other he was slain and brought back to life.¹⁸⁶ This would not have been a “resurrection” comparable to Jesus Christ. It would be raised from the dead, like the son of the widow of Zarephath brought back to life by Elijah,¹⁸⁷ or Lazarus called back from the grave.¹⁸⁸ Both of them died. Christ broke the bonds of death.

CONFLATING AND CONFUSING

This brings us back to the discussion of separating sealing into two types: When the sealing ordinance of adoption is separated from marriage, the term “sealing” should not be used without clarifying whether a marriage is involved or whether it instead connects parties in a parental-child relationship. When a lawsuit raised the question of whether the LDS or RLDS church was the legitimate successor to Joseph Smith’s original church, the LDS leadership needed to prove that their practice of polygamy began with Joseph Smith. LDS apostle Joseph F. Smith was assigned the responsibility of gathering affidavits to

¹⁸³ T&C 145: BoA 1:4 (LDS 1:12).

¹⁸⁴ OC Gen. 7:31 (KJV Gen. 17:19).

¹⁸⁵ OC Gen. 8:6 (KJV 22:13).

¹⁸⁶ NC Heb 1:43 (KJV 11:17-19); see also NC Jacob 3:2 (LDS 4:5).

¹⁸⁷ OC 1 Kings 4: 6-7 (KJV 17:17-24).

¹⁸⁸ NC John 7:6 (KJV 11:38-44).

prove Joseph Smith started the practice. Whether it was artful and deliberate or simply confusion and sloppiness, the affidavits do not resolve Joseph Smith's involvement with plural wives. They may, instead, be evidence of adoption. Here are two examples of how the affidavits were worded:

This one was signed over two-and-a-half decades after Joseph Smith's death:

Be it remembered that on this twenty-sixth day of June A.D. 1869 personally appeared before me James Jack, a notary-Public in and for said county, Joseph Bates Noble, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath saith, that, on the fifth day of April A.D. 1841, At the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, **he married or sealed** Louisa Beaman, to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday [sic] Saints, ...¹⁸⁹

This second one is another one signed more than two-and-a-half decades after Joseph Smith's death, and like the one before, it was prepared by Joseph F. Smith and used to support the claim that Joseph Smith began the practice:

Be it remembered that on this first day of May A.D. eighteen sixty nine before me Elias Smith Probate Judge for Said County personally appeared, Zina Diantha Huntington ^Young^ who was by me Sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath Saith, that on the twenty-Seventh day of October A.D. 1841, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, **She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith**, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,...¹⁹⁰

Both of these, like almost all of the other affidavits gathered in the late 1800s, decades after Joseph Smith's death, use the ambiguous phrase "married or sealed" as if the two had identical meaning. This does not mean what most people assume it means. Sealing through adoption would serve to tie the one adopted to Joseph Smith so as to belong to his family in the afterlife. That relationship was intended to secure the adoptee a position with Joseph in the Celestial Kingdom of God. "When a seal is put upon the father and mother it secures their posterity so that they cannot be lost but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father."¹⁹¹ This is directly related to what Helen Mar Kimball would later recall Joseph Smith explaining: "If you will take this step, it will ensure your eternal salvation and exaltation and that of your father's

¹⁸⁹ Taken from *Affidavits on Celestial Marriage, 1869-1870*, Folder 5, LDS Church Archives, page 3, emphasis added.

¹⁹⁰ *Id.*, p. 5, emphasis added.

¹⁹¹ See, *WJS* (August 13, 1843), pp. 241-242.

household and all of your kindred.”¹⁹² That statement would be a correct description of an adoption sealing to Joseph Smith, based on his qualification to stand as a father to those adopted as his children/heirs. One passing remark by Joseph Smith is pregnant with meaning: “There are many teachers, but perhaps not many fathers.”¹⁹³ If Helen Mar Kimball’s memory from 1881 (nearly four decades following the event) concerned “adoption” sealing rather than “marriage” sealing, the promise would make more sense and would very well fit Joseph Smith’s salvific theology better. Keep in mind Joseph may not have clarified he intended adoption when first performing sealings.

Of all the rites and teachings restored through Joseph Smith, adoption is potentially the most dangerous if corrupted. At the dawn of history, the secret oaths introduced by Cain so corrupted mankind that the earth was cursed and mankind was ultimately destroyed in a flood. The secret oaths were based on a corruption of the adoption sealing rites, which were meant to bind individuals together. One produces a family clan. The other produces a criminal cabal. Satan does not invent, but corrupts. Heaven is creative; hell is not. Hell’s purpose is to damage and destroy.

Adam was to be a “husbandman” to serve and develop everything on earth. He was to guide, not compel. He was to persuade, not force. But his status as the father/grandfather/great-grandfather, etc., made him the repository of central and original authority. He had respect. His word mattered. Accordingly, inheriting the same position as father Adam would likewise place the descendant in a similar position of guiding, persuading, and exercising authority. It was because Cain aspired to replace Adam and become venerated and respected that he killed his rival, Able. Cain was nothing like Adam, and his ambition was self-serving, without regard to the damage he could and would inflict on others. Cain corrupted and abused the idea of gaining regard from others. He was never able to occupy the role of the husbandman, because he intended to exert compulsion and control over others. He would subjugate, dwarf, and injure his subordinates,

¹⁹² Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, *Autobiography*, 30 March 1881, MS 744, CHL. Typescript and copy of holograph reproduced in Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman’s View: Helen Mar Whitney’s Reminiscences of Early Church History* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997), 482–87.

¹⁹³ T&C 139:12. That immediately followed after his reflection about children not understanding deeper matters involving godliness. The fuller comment states: “We have reason to believe that many things were introduced among the saints before God had signified the times, and notwithstanding the principles and plans may have been good, yet aspiring men, or in other words men who had not the substance of godliness about them, perhaps undertook to handle edged tools. Children, you know, are fond of tools, while they are not yet able to use them. Time and experience, however, is the only safe remedy against such evils. There are many teachers, but perhaps not many fathers.”

making them unfit for God's kingdom. Adoption was intended to unite mankind through belonging into a loving family. Cain's (and Lucifer's) secret oaths bound together through fear and punishment.

THE ROLE REQUIRES HUMILITY AND SERVICE

Joseph Smith restored life to the Christian Gospel. He returned long lost principles, teachings, rites, and ordinances. Although poorly preserved by the LDS Church, that institution has nevertheless been able to create a multi-billion-dollar enterprise and attract millions of followers using only the original energy invested by Joseph Smith. If they had preserved yet more of Joseph's original work, their dominion and control would have been (and still be) even greater. It is always unwise to trust something potentially dangerous to anyone who would abuse that trust. "Children, you know, are fond of tools, while they are not yet able to use them."¹⁹⁴ It is clear to me that the Lord never intended for the LDS church to inherit the rites of adoption. Had that happened, the control, compulsion, and gratification of pride apparent in that organization's history would have expanded further. The authority to accomplish this necessary work must never fall into the hands of the proud and ambitious. It should belong only to the meek, obedient, and humble. Anyone boasting of having that authority is unfit to possess it. It should be entrusted only to a servant, never to a ruler. In this perilous world, it should be used quietly, humbly, and reverently, not loudly and publicly.¹⁹⁵ Whenever the Holy Order is restored, it must never become the means to get gain and become popular.¹⁹⁶

If there were a single word to describe this part of the Lord's plan for saving the souls of mankind it would be "dangerous." It invites the ambitious and aspiring to pursue their interests in the eternal afterlife. Foolish and evil men consider this subject as a means to acquire power and influence. Almost without exception, the language used to describe adoption by Brigham Young and other members of the Twelve after Joseph and Hyrum were killed involved self-interest and power. They were establishing their own "kingdom" over which they would rule and reign. They wanted to be able to dictate to subordinates in their vision of the afterlife. It was ugly, self-serving, greedy, and very unlike Christ. Their language was the opposite of Christ's:

¹⁹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁹⁵ Today those boasting of being "prophets, seers, and revelators" are the least prophetic, foresee nothing, and reveal only their pride.

¹⁹⁶ "Priestcrafts are when preachers set themselves up as a light to the world, so they can make money and receive praise from the world, but they have no desire for Zion to advance." (CoC 2 Ne. 11:17; LDS 2 Ne. 26:29)

Neither be called masters, for one is your Master, even he whom your Heavenly Father sent, who is Christ; for he has sent him among you that you might have life. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant, and whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased of him, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted of him.¹⁹⁷

It is almost always the case that as soon as men understand God's plan, they immediately begin to reinterpret it in pursuit of self-interest. We are not worthy of any blessing, benefit, or gift given to us by God. That is why it is always a "gift"—we are receiving unmerited blessings from the Lord. As it is written: "And in nothing does man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments."¹⁹⁸ It is indeed God's hand that blesses us. We are all unprofitable servants.

When I was told to teach about adoption I recoiled at the thought of the vanity, ambition, and aspiring spirit unleashed in the LDS community in Nauvoo. The things of God cannot be maintained except in obedience to heaven. Nothing can or should be expected to be under our selfish control when the souls of mankind and the eternities are involved. I worried that this talk would probably unleash that same foul spirit that infected Nauvoo. Our salvation comes only through fear and trembling before God.¹⁹⁹

From all that the scriptures tell us, it is safe to conclude that the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God had few members even during the era of the Patriarchs. But salvation through faith was secured for all the faithful, even if they were not directly included in the Holy Order. The Lord explains it this way: "He who receives you, receives me. And he who receives me, receives him who sent me. He that receives a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward. And he that receives a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward."²⁰⁰ Also, in the Testimony of St. John, Jesus Christ explained: "In the name of Father Ahman I declare to you, He that accepts my word spoken by whomever I send with my word receives me, and he that receives me receives him that sent me, even my Father."²⁰¹

Or, to restate the matter and clarify the benefit of having the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God among us: When there are any believing,

¹⁹⁷ NC Matt. 10:26 (KJV 23:10-12).

¹⁹⁸ T&C 46:5.

¹⁹⁹ See, e.g., NC Phil. 1:8 (KJV 2:12); Mormon 4:10 (LDS 9:27).

²⁰⁰ NC Matt. 5:8 (KJV 10:40-41).

²⁰¹ T&C 171 TSJ 10:4.

faithful men and women on the earth, so long as they are willing to accept the teachings provided through the Holy Order, they are recognized by God as beneficiaries and reckoned in the same way as if they were part of that Order. The scriptures identify such faithful people as a “residue of the righteous,” as in this passage:

Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-Ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing. And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the Prince, the Archangel.²⁰²

The term “residue” is also used in the Book of Mormon, referring to believing and benefited followers of the Lord:

[N]either have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, shewing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfill and to do the work of the covenants of the Father which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him; and by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the holy ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men.”²⁰³

This explanation is restated in the Covenant of Christ using the word “remainder” to identify them:

[N]either have angels stopped ministering to mankind. They are obedient to Him, to minister according to His commands, revealing themselves to those of strong faith and of a firm mind in every form of godliness. The responsibility of their ministry is to call people to repentance, and to fulfill and do the work of the

²⁰² T&C 154:19 (D&C 107:53-54).

²⁰³ NC Moroni 7:6 (LDS 7:32) The term “residue” is also used in a favorable light to describe church elders (T&C 39:9/D&C 52:39), ordinances to be revealed (T&C 40:2/D&C 53:6), early missionaries (T&C 47:3/D&C 60:8), general church membership (T&C 101:12/D&C 101:58), among other places.

Father's covenants that He's made to mankind, to prepare the way among people by declaring Christ's word to the Lord's chosen vessels, so they can bear testimony of Him. And by doing this, the Lord God prepares the way for the remainder of mankind to have faith in Christ, so the Holy Ghost can have a place in their hearts according to the power of the Holy Ghost. This is how the Father vindicates the covenants He's made to mankind."²⁰⁴

The necessary step to avoid being "utterly wasted" at the Lord's return does not require every person to be initiated into the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. What is needed to preserve people from destruction at the Lord's return is for the Holy Order to return and for some holder, even a single couple, to preach repentance. That needs to be done before "the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth"²⁰⁵ happens. And then for some people to hear the message of repentance taught through the Holy Order and to repent. For all those who receive that message and respond, they will be spared at the Lord's return.

At the great and dreadful day of the Lord's return, there will be two categories of people: those who have responded to the invitation to repent, described by Malachi as those who "seal the heart of the Fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their Fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." And for those who do not respond and repent, "the day comes that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble. And the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."²⁰⁶

When we build a House of God, a Holy Temple, and the Lord receives and visits it, rites of adoption will be performed there. That will be one of its many restored rites. But because it will return, guarding the Temple against corruption and compromise will be essential. As what was here at the beginning returns before the end, we must learn from the example of Cain and Abel. We must guard against another terrible repetition of ungodly apostasy. That first ruinous apostasy led to generations of such depravity and violence that the Lord destroyed mankind in a flood.²⁰⁷ Not only will that same Holy Order which was in the beginning return before the end, but the world will also descend into wickedness akin to the days of Noah.²⁰⁸ If guarding the Holy Order cannot

²⁰⁴ *Id.*

²⁰⁵ T&C 54:4 (D&C 1:17).

²⁰⁶ See OC Malachi 1:12, 10 (KJV 4:6, 1).

²⁰⁷ OC Gen. 4:18.

²⁰⁸ NC Matt. 11:11 (KJV 24:38).

prevent the coming judgment, it can at least make it possible for some to be spared from utter destruction.²⁰⁹ If we are wise, we will give heed to what God is doing today, and what is offered to us, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling before God.²¹⁰

Bear in mind also this clarification: Joseph Smith explained that,

All priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it. That portion which brought Moses to speak with God face to face was taken away, but that which brought the ministry of angels remained. All the prophets had the Melchizedek priesthood and were ordained by God himself.²¹¹

I've explained that since "all priesthood is Melchizedek" and the original name for the Melchizedek Priesthood was the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God, it follows that all priesthood is part of the Holy Order.²¹² But there are different portions or degrees of it. When Keith Henderson was set apart to hold authority to provide Patriarchal Blessings just prior to the last conference, he was set apart and given authority necessary to accomplish that specific task. Do not read more into that than what has been explained here and at the prior conference.

I've discussed the two great fathers who formed the root from which the Holy Order family grew into a family tree. But the "fathers in heaven" are not only those two but also a host of other fathers who have both preserved and spread the family line. Restoring the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God is not merely an authorization to accomplish work for the Lord. It also involves reconnecting prior dispensations through ordinances and initiations. The first patriarch who held the right was Adam, who still retains that position in the Holy Order. Before his death, he established a pattern that would be followed in later dispensations. He delivered, in one setting, the entire burden of prophecy that would be followed by all subsequent prophets:

²⁰⁹ OC Mal. 1:12.

²¹⁰ See NC Phil. 1:8 (KJV 2:12), Mormon 4:10 (LDS 9:27).

²¹¹ *TPJS*, p. 180-181. See also T&C 140:2: "There are two priesthoods spoken of in the scriptures, namely the Melchizedek and the Aaronic, or Levitical. Although there are two priesthoods, yet the Melchizedek Priesthood comprehends the Aaronic, or Levitical priesthood and is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to the Priesthood, the keys of the Kingdom of God in all ages of the world to the latest posterity on the earth, and is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important truth is revealed from Heaven."

²¹² See, pp. 21-22 of *Priesthood, Lecture 5* Orem, Utah (Nov. 2, 2013) available as a download from my website: denversnuffer.com/blog/papers/ It also comprises Chapter 5 in the book *Preserving the Restoration*, (Mill Creek Press: Utah 2015).

Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-Ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing. And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the Prince, the Archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him, I have set you to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of you, and you are a prince over them for ever.

And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation, and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the holy ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation.²¹³

Seven prophet-patriarchs were present when this happened. They possessed foreknowledge provided by Adam's great outpouring of revelation as he was full of the holy ghost. Later, the holy ghost would inspire others to reiterate portions of that original message. The same light animated those subsequent prophets, delivering the same intelligence as father Adam. In a literal sense, these others were also turning the hearts of the children back to the earlier fathers.

When a new dispensation begins, the process of reconnecting includes the restoration of the earlier body of information. Rights, honors, truths, and intelligence from earlier dispensations have been handed down from one dispensation to the next. As I've taught before, Moses²¹⁴ and John the Baptist²¹⁵ appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration because Moses began and John ended the prior dispensation. But like Adam's earlier prophecy about all that would befall his posterity through the last generation, the initiation on the Mount of Transfiguration included a similar view of the future for the earth.²¹⁶ Joseph Smith likewise was a dispensation head who was visited by the prophet who was at the beginning (Nephi)²¹⁷ and the end (Moroni)²¹⁸ of the prior dispensation. This is a continual pattern and an established requirement for every dispensation

²¹³ T&C 154:19-20 (D&C 107:53-56).

²¹⁴ NC Matt. 9:4 (KJV 17:1-4).

²¹⁵ NC Matt. 9:5 (KJV 17:11-13).

²¹⁶ See T&C 50:5 (D&C 63:21), also T&C 31:4 (D&C 45:15-17) in which the Lord explicitly refers to this revelation as Him "speak[ing] unto you and prophecy[ing] as unto men of old"—meaning giving to them what had been first given to Adam.

²¹⁷ T&C 1: JSH 3:3.

²¹⁸ T&C 151:15 (D&C 128:20).

of the Gospel. They are welded together to accomplish the required continuity.²¹⁹ This requires Adam to supervise the process, as he acquired the keys to accomplish this work when he first foretold everything that would befall his posterity until the final generation:

Therefore, he set the ordinances to be the same for ever and ever, and set Adam to watch over them, to reveal them from Heaven to man or to send angels to reveal them. ...Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation? These angels are under the direction of Michael, or Adam, who acts under the direction of Christ.²²⁰

There must be a reliable, consistent continuation for the Holy Order to accomplish the mission of saving the souls of men. This is why, for Joseph Smith, it was necessary for prior dispensation holders to visit and provide the required information to ensure the continuity of dispensations. Joseph wrote this about it:

What do we hear? ...The voice of Michael the archangel, the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of diverse angels from Michael, or Adam, down to the present time, all declaring each one:

Their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their Priesthood.

Going line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come and confirming our hope.²²¹

Whenever a dispensation of the Gospel includes a return of the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God, there is an accompanying link between the holder and the fathers in heaven. That link requires the holder to be adopted into the line of those who went before. This, in turn, equips the holder to bring others with him, just as Joseph Smith described it to those he sealed to himself:

[It would] ensure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father's household. & all your kindred." A father who gave his daughter to the Prophet as a [sealed daughter] was assured that the [sealing] "shall be crowned upon your heads with

²¹⁹ T&C 140:5: "Now, the purpose in himself, in the winding up scene of the last dispensation, is that all things pertaining to that dispensation should be conducted precisely in accordance with the preceding dispensations. And again, God purposed in himself that there should not be an Eternal fullness until every dispensation should be fulfilled and gathered together in one, and that all things whatever that should be gathered together in one, in those dispensations, unto the same fullness and Eternal glory, should be in Christ Jesus."

²²⁰ Id., ¶6, citation to Hebrews 1:2 (KJV 1:14) omitted.

²²¹ T&C 151:15-17 (D&C 128:21).

honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house both old and young.²²²

In Joseph Smith's practice, he went through a formal adoption ceremony for each individual he intended to adopt. However, if you examine the explanation he provided, it allowed others to be brought along with the adopted son or daughter. All of their household "both old and young" would be crowned with honor, immortality and eternal life.

I have previously explained that it is one thing to receive a revelation, another to take it in and comprehend it, and an altogether greater challenge to teach it.²²³ Joseph was working out the system, rite, ordinance, and method to establish adoption on a firm footing so it could continue indefinitely. He was killed before it was established. It could not be perpetuated once Joseph, Hyrum, and the associated authority they held were extinguished.

Mankind cannot adopt ordinances nor establish covenants. Mankind either receives them from God or they are unavailable. "God will not acknowledge that which he has not called, ordained, and chosen."²²⁴ As the Lord establishes a new dispensation, and Adam commissions and qualifies the agent to do the work, the Holy Order returns, along with the rights, duties, and privileges to ordain a formal ordinance to accomplish God's purpose. But "the ordinances must be kept in the very way God has appointed, otherwise their Priesthood will prove a cursing instead of a blessing."²²⁵ Isaiah explained that changing the ordinance will break the covenant: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore has the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and

²²² Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, supra, p. 439, citing Whitney, *Autobiography*, 2; Revelation, July 27, 1842, *Revelations Collection*; Bradley and Woodward, *Nauvoo Marriages*, 96.

²²³ See podcast 35, Temple, Part 3 (<https://denversnuffer.com/2018/09/35-temple-part-3/>): "There are at least three stages in the process of restoring knowledge. The first stage is to receive it, but that's just receiving it. Receiving it is not the same thing as the second stage, which is to comprehend it. It is possible that a man receive something without understanding what it was that he had received. Time and careful and solemn and ponderous thoughts are required to untangle what has been received in order to comprehend what it is that you have been given. But it is altogether something of a different order of magnitude, completely separate from that, to teach it. You can receive it, you can comprehend it, but you may not be able to teach it. When it finally does get taught, undoubtedly it will be taught in the manner that Joseph Smith was beginning to work on in Nauvoo that he never finished, at the time that he was taken. That is, by ceremony, by covenant. And this, too, by something given by God, and it to be established in a house that is acceptable to him."

²²⁴ T&C 140:7.

²²⁵ *Id.*, ¶12.

few men left.”²²⁶ This obligation to preserve, protect, and defend what comes from God has been one of the constant themes of prophecy:

From the book of Deuteronomy: “You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”²²⁷

From the book of Revelation:

For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.²²⁸

The Lord stated His doctrine and then warned:

And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establisheth it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil and is not built upon my rock, but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell standeth open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them.²²⁹

There are others, but this is sufficient to make the point: The Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God can and does restore covenants and ordinances. But when they are set, they are not to be trifled with, changed, nor can they be improved by the meddling of men. We lost the authority God conferred on Joseph and Hyrum when they were killed. We lost any chance of perpetuating temple ordinances, including adoption, when they died without the ordinance having been set in final form. We know the temple rites had not been put into a final form because Brigham Young admitted it. In a talk he gave in 1877 Young stated:

Joseph divided up the room the best that he could, hung up the veil, marked it Gave us our instructions as we passed along from one department to another giving us signs, tokens, penalties, with the key words pertaining to those signs.

And after we had got through Bro. Joseph turned to me (Pres. Young) and said “Bro. Brigham this is not arranged right but we

²²⁶ OC Isa. 7:1 (KJV 24:5-6).

²²⁷ OC Deu. 2:1 (KJV 4:2).

²²⁸ NC Rev. 9:4 (KJV 22:18-19).

²²⁹ NC 3 Ne. 5:9 (LDS 11:40); as restated in Covenant of Christ: “And those who declare more or less than this and establish it as My doctrine advocate evil and are not built upon My rock, but are built on a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive them when the floods come and the wind pounds them.”

have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed, and I wish you to take this matter in hand and organize and systematize all these ceremonies with the signs, tokens, penalties, and key words.” I did so, and each time I got something more, so that when we went through the temple at Nauvoo I understood and knew how to place them there. We had our ceremonies pretty correct.²³⁰

Brigham Young was not a dispensation head, did not possess the Holy Order, lacked the authority to establish a binding ordinance. Therefore, this explanation clarifies that the LDS church, like the ancient pharaohs, were merely “seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by” Joseph Smith.²³¹

CONCLUSION

Joseph Smith was all that he claimed to be, and much more. Only fools have and do hold him in derision. He presented the world with an opportunity that was squandered. Yet without the foundation he laid to commence the restoration, it would be impossible for us to complete it now. The closer you examine Joseph’s work, the clearer God’s hand becomes. The fathers who received the Holy Order, from Adam to Moroni, taught him so he could accomplish his assignment. But finishing that will be left to us, if we prove faithful, or to a future generation if we do not. As it returns, there are ten things to keep in mind:

1. Before it can be firmly established, we will need a temple.
2. Once established in a formal ordinance, it must not be changed.
3. Although it is likely to be conferred by the adoption of only a few, that will be enough to save not only them but also all their kin.
4. Beyond the members and their kin, when it is here, anyone who receives a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward. And all who receive a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man’s reward.
5. Therefore, there is no difference in God’s eyes between a member of the Holy Order and the residue of the righteous. All will be preserved at the Lord’s return.
6. The purpose of re-establishing the Holy Order is to prevent the total destruction of mankind at the Lord’s return in glory.

²³⁰ CDBY 5:3104.

²³¹ T&C 145: BoA 2:3 (LDS 1:26).

7. Aspiring to advantages over your fellow man is not only unbecoming and offensive to God; it is the reason mankind has lost the Holy Order in prior generations.
8. We must begin to fear God and soberly acknowledge the peril we face at the Lord's return if we reject these things, as the former saints did during the time of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.
9. Just as God has taken down in an orderly manner the establishment of the restoration begun through Joseph, He has also begun in an orderly manner to recommence the restoration by sending messengers, authority, revelation, and light to guide His continuing work.
10. Like everything that benefits and sustains mankind, the Holy Order belongs to God and is entrusted to us only to further God's purposes, not to gratify any person's vanity, ambition or desires.

This third talk concludes the requirement to address the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. Anything further will necessarily be confined to the temple, when we are commanded and permitted to build it. We have no right to begin building a temple until commanded to do so. And the fact that we have not yet been commanded, even though the Lord has told us we will be required to do so,²³² is perhaps an indication that we are not yet worthy and prepared to have it with us. If that is so, we are still not taking God seriously enough.

May we learn to be humble and penitent, and set aside our pride, ambition, and self-will. In the name of Jesus Christ: Amen.

²³² T&C 141:12: A temple is for the "endowment of all her municipalities, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name." T&C 158:15: "I will visit my house, which the remnant of my people shall build, and I will dwell therein, to be among you, and no one will need to say, Know ye the Lord, for you all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

APPENDIX 1: NAMES AND DATES OF NAUVOO ADOPTIONS:

Anson Matthews was adopted through²³³ Brigham Young 28 January 1846
 Sophia Minerva Foster was adopted through Heber C. Kimball 22 January 1846
 Enos Curtis and Ruth Franklin were endowed on 1 January 1846, sealed in marriage on 6 February 1846, and then adopted through an unspecified person on 7 February 1846
 Thadeus Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 William Lathrop Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Benjamin Franklin Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Lois Huntington Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Louisa Elizabeth Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Sally Maria Cutler Anderson was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Clarissa Crissy Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Emily Trusk Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Almon Worthy Sherman was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Buckley Burham Anderson was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Lemirah Scott Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Margaret Melvina Buck Cutler was adopted through Brigham Young 31 January 1846
 Aaron Freeman Farr was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Harriet Farr Badger was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Olive Hovey Farr was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Persis Atherton Farr was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Ephraim Badger was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Ebenezer Marshal Kimball was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Melany Sweet Blankley Kimball was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Lucius Merchants was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Hotensia Patrick Merchangs was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Sarah Bower was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Laura Marinda Hyde was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 Emily Matilda Hyde was adopted on 6 February 1846 with no record of through whom
 William Henry Kimball was adopted on 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Heber Parley Kimball was adopted on 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 David Patten Kimball was adopted on 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Charles Spaulding Kimball was adopted on 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Brigham Williard Kimball was adopted on 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Helen Mar Kimball was adopted on 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Mary Marine Davenport Kimball was adopted on 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 William Ellis Murray was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 James Davenport was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Almira Phelps Davenport was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 William Pitt was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young

²³³ The record identifies who performed the adoption but does not clarify to whom the adoption sealing connection was made. Therefore this appendix identifies the individual “through” whom the ordinance was done, but does not identify who would be the adoptive parent(s).

Cornelia Melvina Divine Pitt was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Harrison Burgess was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Sophia Minerva Foster Burgess was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 James Smithies was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Charles Wesley Hubbard was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Mary Ann Bosworth was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Joseph Grafton Hovey was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Martha Ann Webster Hovey was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 William A. King was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Hosea Cushing was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 David Candland was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Mary Ann Barton Candland was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Sarah Susannah Divine was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 George White Pitkin was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Amanda Egglestone Pitkin was adopted on 25 January 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Jesse Kinney Nichols was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Caroline Pinkham Nichols was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Edward Martin was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Alice Clayton was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Jesse Pierce Harmon was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Anna Barnes Harmon was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 John Erick Forsgren was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Mary Ann Hunt Forsgren was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Hans Christian Hanson was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Peter Olson Hanson was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Howard Egan was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Tamson Parshley Egan was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Abraham Palmer was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Patience Delila Pierce Palmer was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Alvah Lewis Tippetts was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Caroline Beard Tippetts was adopted on 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Ellen Vilate Kimball was adopted on 11 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Sally Ann Jewell was adopted on 22 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball
 Mahala Carter was adopted on 6 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Matilda Robinson was adopted on 27 January 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Caroline Whitney was adopted on 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Dorcas Adelia Moore was adopted on 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Loenza Aliena Pond was adopted on 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Hannah Pitt was adopted on 29 January 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Margaret Pisel was adopted on 29 January 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Sarah Ann Stickney was adopted 7 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball
 Betsey Covert was adopted on 4 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Polly Peck was adopted on 2 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Phebe Crosby was adopted on 2 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Sally Colburn was adopted on 19 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Lydia Goldthwaite was adopted on 19 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Almira Merrill was adopted on 23 January 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Elizabeth DuBois was adopted on 6 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Isabella Wilson was adopted on 6 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Harriet Price was adopted on 29 January 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Mary Turner was adopted on 20 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Martha McKinney Frost Akes was adopted for time on 20 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Jane Peacock was adopted on 21 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball
 Hannah Peacock was adopted on 21 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball
 Mary Jane Maginness was adopted on 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman
 Rhoda Sanford was adopted on 31 January 1846 through Brigham Young

Mary Ann Hartlett was adopted on 31 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball
 Clarissa Bostwich was adopted on 17 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 George Laub was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Mary Jane Maginness Laub was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Horace Burr Owens was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Sally Ann Lane Owens was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 James Pace was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Lucinda Strickland Gibson Pace was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 William Franklin Pace was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Margaret Nichols Pace was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Levi North was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Arminta Howard North was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Benjamin Meginnis was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Sarah Johnston Meginnis was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Levi Loveland was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Hanna Pease Loveland was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Chester Loveland was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Fanny Call Loveland was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Richard Woosley was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Hannah Foxall Woosley was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 James Hopkins Woosley was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Lovina Patterson Woolsey was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Joseph Hiram Woolsey was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Oliver Gaulter Workman was adopted 5 February 1846 through Amasa M. Lyman.
 Francis Marion Lyman was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Matilda Lyman Lyman was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Ruth Adelia Lyman Lyman was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 David Frederick was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 John Sheeter Gleason was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Desdemona Chase Gleason was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Joshua Lewis Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Mary Catherine Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Elizabeth Virginia Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Elizabeth Ann Anderson Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Lewis Elijah Anderson was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Henry Green Boyle was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Lewis Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Harrison Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Charles Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Ruth Ann Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Mary Jane Miller was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 William Leyland was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Eliza Leyland was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Sophia Leyland was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Sarah Leyland was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Isaac Morley Jr. was adopted 3 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Philena Morley Isaac Morley Jr. was adopted 3 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Lucy Diantha Morley Allen Isaac Morley Jr. was adopted 3 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Edith Ann Morley Isaac Morley Jr. was adopted 3 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Cordelia Celestia Morley Isaac Morley Jr. was adopted 3 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Joseph Steward Allen Isaac Morley Jr. was adopted 3 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Chauncey Whiting Isaac Morley Jr. was adopted 3 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Amos Cox Isaac Morley Jr. was adopted 3 February 1846 through Brigham Young
 Orson Pratt Jr. was adopted 17 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball
 Celestia Larissa Pratt was adopted 17 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball

Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Rhoda Ann Jenetta Richards Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Ella Parrington Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Stephen Longstroth Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Ann Gill Longstroth Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Thomas Bullock Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Henrietta Rushton Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Lucy Caroline Clayton Bullock Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Wilmer Benjamin Benson Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Ann Elizabeth Fox Benson Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 George Darling Watt Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Mary Gregson Watt Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Peter Muir Fife Heber John Richards was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young
 Agnes Charlotte Smith was adopted 30 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Josephine Donna Smith was adopted 30 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 George Albert Smith was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Bathsheba Smith was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 John Smith²³⁴ was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Joseph Fielding Smith was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Jerusha Smith was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Sarah Smith was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Martha Ann Smith was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Joseph Fielding was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Hannah Greenwood Fielding was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Robert Bashel Thompson was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mercy Fielding Thompson was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Howard Coray was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Martha Jane Knowlton was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 James Lawson was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Charles Smith was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Sarah Price Smith was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Loren Walker was adopted 28 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Lovina Smith Walker was adopted 28 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Charles Wesley Wandell was adopted 28 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 George Albert Smith was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 John Lyman Smith was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Caroline Clara Smith Callister was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Thomas Callister was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Augusta Bowen Cleveland Smith was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Helen Mar Clark Callister was adopted 25 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 John Bernhisel was adopted on 3 February 1846 but there is no record of who performed the adoption.
 Claudius Victor Spencer was adopted 31 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Gilbert Henry Van Schoonoven was adopted 31 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mary Leone Spencer was adopted 31 January 1846 through Brigham Young.

²³⁴ He, Joseph Fielding, Jerusha, Sarah and Martha were children of Hyrum Smith.

Orson Howard Spencer was adopted 27 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 George Boardman Spencer was adopted 27 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Ellen Curtis Spencer was adopted 27 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Aurella Reed Spencer was adopted 27 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Catherine Curtis Spencer was adopted 27 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 George John Taylor was adopted 17 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Joseph Taylor was adopted 17 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Mary Ann Taylor was adopted 17 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Richard Ballantyne was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 John Benbow was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Jane Holmes Benbow was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Agnes Taylor Benbow was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Joseph Horne was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mary Isabella Hale Horne was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Stephen Hales Sr. was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Charles Lambert was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mary Alice Cannon was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 William Symonds was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Helenora Graham Symonds was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 William Rowley was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mary Ann Maddox Rowley was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Thomas Domville was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mary Peters Domville was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Thomas Hall was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Ann Hughes Hall was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Samuel Bringham was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Eleanor Beitler Breisler Bringham was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Aiah Codts Brower was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Margaret Eliza Hussey Brower was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 William Blackhurst was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Margaret Stephenson Blackhurst was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Samuel Langdon Paine was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mary Belknap Paine was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 George Quayle Cannon was adopted 4 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 William Jenkins was adopted 26 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Eliza Phelps Jenkins was adopted 26 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Horace Kimball Whitney was adopted 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Orson Kimball Whitney was adopted 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 John Kimball Whitney was adopted 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Joshua Kimball Whitney was adopted 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Don Carlos Whitney was adopted 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Sarah Ann Whitney was adopted 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Ann Maria Whitney was adopted 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mary Jane Whitney was adopted 12 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Joseph Corrodon Kingsbury was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Dorcas Adelia Moore Kingsbury was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Lorenza Aleina Pond Kingsbury was adopted 26 January 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Spencer Watson Wiltbank was adopted 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Thomas Moore was adopted 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Mahala Dorcas Higby Moore was adopted 1 February 1846 through Brigham Young.
 Joseph Angel Young was adopted 11 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Brigham Young, Jr. was adopted 11 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 John Willard Young was adopted 11 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Elizabeth Young Ellsworth was adopted 11 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Vilate Young was adopted 11 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Roxy Erma Alice Young was adopted 11 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Eunice Caroline Young was adopted 11 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.

Edmund Ellsworth was adopted 11 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Albert Perry Rockwood was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Nancy Haven Rockwood was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 John Doyle Lee²³⁵ was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Aggatha Ann Woolsey was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 George Davidson Grant was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Elizabeth Wilson Grant was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Joshua Sawyer Holman was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Rebecca Whitcomb Greenleaf Holman was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. [Kimball].
 Truman Osborne Angell was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Polly Johnson Angell was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 William Weeks was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Caroline Matilda Angel Weeks was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Clementine Langdon was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Leslie Lyme was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Elizabeth Wirvener Lyme was adopted 25 January 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Elisha Averett was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Cherizade Grimes Averett was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 John Harvey was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Eliza Averette Harvey was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Jesse Charles Braley was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Jeremiah Willey was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Samantha Call Willey was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Alexander Williams was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Isabella Gills Williams was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 William Warner Major was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Sarah Coles Major was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Stephen Hezekiah Goddard was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Zeruah Roby Norwood Goddard was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Moses Martin Sanders was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Amanda Armstrong Fossett Sanders was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 George Roberts Grant was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Mary Dorsey Grant was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Samuel Lindsay Sprague was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Mary Warner Woodward Sprague was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Chandler Holbrook was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Eunice Dunning Holbrook was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Samuel Gully was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Ovenda Fuller Gully was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Harmon Daggett Bayles was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Juliette Harmon Bayles was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Simeon Adams Dunn was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Margaret Snyder Dunn was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Israel Barlow was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Elizabeth Haven Barlow was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Samuel Webster Brown was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Lydia Maria Lathrop Brown was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
 Philo Dibble was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.

²³⁵ He would be the only person convicted and executed for the Mountain Meadows Massacre. He died by firing squad at Mountain Meadows on March 23, 1877. He received his second anointing in Nauvoo, making his calling and election sure according to LDS beliefs. Although excommunicated for murder he was reinstated to LDS membership posthumously April 20, 1961. Heber C. Kimball performed the adoption but the father-son relationship was with Brigham Young as the father.

Hannah Ann DuBois Dibble was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Joseph Busby was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Ann Cady Eldridge Busby was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Curtis Edwin Bolton was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Rebecca Bunker Bolton was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
John Lytle was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Christiana Whitney Lytle was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
James Boyd Woodward was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Mary A. de la Montague Woodward was adopted 1 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
James Graham was adopted 2 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Mary Butler Graham was adopted 2 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Isaac Morley was adopted 2 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Lucy Gunn Morley was adopted 2 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Robert Pierce was adopted 2 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.
Hannah Angel Pierce was adopted 2 February 1846 through Heber C. Kimball.

These adoptions before the migration west from Nauvoo established in the minds of these individuals an eternal relationship with members of the LDS twelve as parents. This would prove to be an invaluable tie helping with the inevitable difficulties of settling into a wilderness and building a church and state linked kingdom.

Counterfeiting in Nauvoo:

One writer has written a book about the counterfeiting that occurred in Nauvoo during and after Joseph Smith's lifetime. See Kathleen Kimball Melonakos, *Secret Combinations: Evidence of Early Mormon Counterfeiting 1800-1847*, (Lyrical Productions: San Diego, 2016). Her investigation is marred by the insistence on trusting sources who were clearly enemies of Joseph Smith and who blamed him for every misdeed committed by either faithful or apostate Mormons.

The list of indicted counterfeiters from Nauvoo in December 1845 included these twelve men:

Theodore Turley	Augustus Barton
M. Gilbert Eaton	Peter Haws
Brigham Young	Willard Richards
John Taylor	Parley P. Pratt
Orson Hyde	Joseph H. Jackson
Carlos Grove	Edward Barney

The records of the Grand Jury's deliberations were sent to Chicago, where they were destroyed in a fire. A copy of the indictment is in the LDS Church History Library and in the Brigham Young University Special Collections. The document is copied below:

[illegible]

The credibility of the indictment is greatly undermined by the additional underlying sources that provided evidence to the Grand Jury. As one writer explained about the indictments:

As in almost every case of counterfeiting, the means by which perpetrators were caught was by accomplices turning state's evidence. Joseph H. Jackson, William and Wilson Law, Charles Foster, Edward Bonney, and Abiathar B. Williams – all high ranking Mormon officers and intimates of Joseph Smith – all testified in official government proceedings that the Nauvoo leadership, that is Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, and their close associates were experienced counterfeiters that had long been dealing in counterfeit money.²³⁶

This writer entertains no suspicion that, once again, the guilty are blaming their own misdeeds on another to both escape accountability and target their enemy with 'one stone.' In 1838, Sampson Avard escaped blame for the Missouri violence he had fomented by pointing to Joseph Smith as the one responsible. The likelihood is that anything involving William and Wilson Law and Charles Foster included fabricating blame for Joseph Smith or anyone affiliated with him. They had previously been publishers of *The Nauvoo Expositor*, which contained scurrilous and false accusations against Joseph Smith. It would take far more than this limited appendix to give this a fair examination; however, since the indictment mentioned in the talk, this clarification is added to help correct the issue. This is longer than a footnote and therefore put into this appendix.

There is no question that counterfeiting occurred in Nauvoo. There is no question that Joseph Smith was alive when it was underway. There is also no question that Joseph Smith exposed and condemned it publicly and helped pass a law with criminal penalties for anyone caught making counterfeit money. The Nauvoo City Ordinance passed on March 4, 1834, stated the following:

An Ordinance, regulating the Currency.

Sec. 1. Be it Ordained by the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, that from and after passage of this Bill, Gold and Silver Coin only [will] be received as lawful tender in payment of the City Taxes, and of debts, and also of fines imposed under the Ordinances of the City.

Sec. 2. That City Scrip shall not hereafter be emitted as moneyed Currency; provided however that nothing in this Bill shall be so construed as to prevent the redemption of the previous emissions.

²³⁶ See, Melonakow, *Secret Combinations*, p. 342.

Sec. 3. That any Person passing counterfeit Gold, or Silver, or copper Coin, or counterfeit or spurious paper currency, or aiding and abetting therein, or holding the same with intent to pass it; knowing it to be such; shall be liable to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, or to imprisonment or hard labour in the City, for a term not exceeding fourteen years, or all these penalties at the discretion of the Court.

Sec. 4. That any person passing a paper currency, or aiding and abetting therein, or holding the same with intent to pass it within the bounds of this City Corporation, shall be liable to a fine of one dollar for every dollar thus offered or passed, to be recovered as in Action of debt, one half of said fine to be paid to the complainant, the other half to said Corporation.

Passed March 4th 1843. Joseph Smith, Mayor. James Sloan, Recorder.²³⁷

The City Council was reluctant to pass the ordinance, but Joseph Smith argued that he had “read the Constitution and find my doubts removed. The Constitution is not a law, but empowers the people to make laws.”²³⁸ The City Council minutes include testimony under oath from Washington Peck on June 8, 1844, identifying Joseph Jackson, an associate of William and Wilson Law, as one of the parties responsible for counterfeiting. His sworn testimony included the following:

Jackson said that he [the] witness was a damned fool [because] he could get a living a [good] deal easier than work [doing what] he was then doing /\ by making Bogus²³⁹ [currency] - /\ [and that] some men high in the church were engaged in the business - /\ {The} witness asked if it was Joseph [Smith] – No said Jackson. I dare not tell it to Joseph [,] he said [,] ~~but not Joseph~~ /\ [The\ Witness understood [from Jackson that] the Laws were engaged in it. /\ Jackson said he /\ would be the death of [the\ witness if [Peck] ever went to Joseph or any one to tell of what he had said.²⁴⁰

In that same meeting, Joseph Smith made this dire prediction about the fate of the City if the murders and counterfeiting didn’t stop:

²³⁷ *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, Dinger, John S., editor (Signature Books, SLC 2011), pp. 164-165, all as in original.

²³⁸ Faulring, Scott, *An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, (Signature Books, SLC 1989), p. 312.

²³⁹ The term “Bogus” meant counterfeiting.

²⁴⁰ *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, supra, p. 242, all as in original.

[The mayor] said If God ever spoke by any man [,] it will not be 5 years before this city [is] in ashes and we [will be] in our Gore unless we go to Oregon /\California/\ or some /\other/\ place, if the city does not put down every thing which tends to mobocracy – and put down these murders, Bogus Makers and scoundrels[.]²⁴¹

Every historian agrees that counterfeiting occurred in Nauvoo in 1842-1844. The divergence comes in laying blame. If you trust that Joseph Smith was not involved, then his public statements and actions exonerate him. If you think Joseph was involved, then his public statements and actions were misleading lies. It seems unlikely to me that if he were involved he would advocate for a criminal ordinance to punish the perpetrators with up to fourteen years imprisonment. Because I believe the evidence weighs in his favor, I doubt his accusers.

Filtering false accusations through a Grand Jury using perjury does not elevate a falsehood to truth. However, that has been, and continues to be, a more common occurrence than it should be.

²⁴¹ *Id.*, p. 248, all as in original.