

## **The Holy Order Fireside**

29 October, 2017

Denver Snuffer

**Denver:** Apparently we are still waiting on someone. I am talking about irrelevancies. Down in Dallas there was a bright light shining from where I was standing at the podium and it hit right on the top ledge of the podium. The microphone that I was using was black and it was aligned with the shadow underneath that bright surface so literally, the microphone was invisible from where I was standing and on occasion I would make a gesture and hit the microphone, which was really obnoxious in the room and I assume even more so online. But the recording people have the ability to take those spikes and reduce them down and make them better, but it was obnoxious. What bothered me was I would make a conscious effort to get back from the microphone, wherever it was. I literally could not see it against the black of the shadow that was behind it.

**Question:** How many people were there?

**Denver:** The only ones that really matter were Christians. There were probably a dozen of them. One of them, one lady leads a group of about 70 people whose primary ministry is helping feed the homeless. That group of about 70 people are from small Christian groups. None of the mega church people show up to help out. They are very grassroots, very humble, and very low key. I think she brought her son with her and afterwards she said she was going to have everyone of the 70 people that's in her group listen to the talk because she thought it would be good for them. There were a couple from another more organized religion, kind of an intermediate sized church. They started out fairly grim faced and oppositional and by the time it was done they were interested and they were going to do some more investigating on the website. There were three baptisms the day after. There were two ordinations, they had been ordained previously but they got their certification. There is two married couples down in the Dallas area, both of whom have children, who feel themselves really quite isolated and it was very meaningful for them to have a group descend from Boise and Utah and come spend a few days there. Lewis, who's not here with us, actually moved in with one of them for the few days before hand. He was passing out fliers. A lot of good was done, but it's only the Christians that matter. Since the attendance has not filled the venues, for Atlanta we don't care who comes. We don't care if there are members of fellowships. We don't care if they're local or traveling.

[Cross talk, audience banter, and laughter back and forth with Denver Snuffer.]

**Introduction:** Thank you so much for coming down. Most of our fellowship and a few others have been asked to come. This is kind of a loose meeting. I will bring some water out. Feel free to move around. There is some pop in the fridge and some water. Thanks so much. I know some of you traveled a long ways in the last 24 hours, and some shorter distances. Thank you for coming. One of the greatest faith promoting things to me; there are two things in my life that have brought me here. The rest, I struggle a lot with spirituality. I've said this before to many of you, and those in my fellowship who know, so

it's difficult for me. I challenge about everything that I see and I'm pretty critical about it all, until I kind of beat it up enough that I believe in it. The two things that I believe in the most, and why I'm here, are present in this room tonight.

I just want to let you know how much it means to me to have our fellowship and our friends here, because that is, to me, the reason why I'm here. And because I believe this man has the words of Christ. Those two things are the glue for me. The rest of it is difficult, I'll be honest, it's very difficult for me to come along. Having that here tonight is very special for Angela and I. I appreciate you being in our home. We'll turn the time over to Denver.

Denver, most of these people have been reading for over ten years, so they're well acquainted. We're up to speed on priesthood. We've reviewed most of the stuff that you've now talked about so feel free to do about whatever you can do to give us some more and widen some of those things we've kind of left on the table. We'll turn the time over to you.

**Denver:** I told my wife when it was time for me to stop that she should walk over and kick me. Very often the signal is I get kicked under the table, so if that happens you'll know that it's time to wrap up.

The biggest problem I can see with the whole topic of priesthood is that everyone's got a context already inside their own mind, and whatever is said about priesthood gets put into that context, so that it becomes almost impossible to make any meaningful forward momentum in understanding the big picture. There's a reason why, when the temple message began to roll out, the message began with telling the story of the Creation and Adam and Eve. We tend to divorce priesthood from the Creation and from the first man and woman, and to insert it into something as narrow and as limited as someone laying hands on someone, and then that person upon whom the hands are laid now having authority to go do something that is part of a bundle of ordinances or initiation rites, whereas priesthood, in it's truest sense, is much more comprehensive and far reaching.

What I would like, is for you to let me talk about what I'll call the Holy Order. Imagine, if you can, that you know nothing about the Holy Order, and that the Holy Order is not the priesthood as you understand it, it's something different. We're going to try and get our hands around that tonight as a new, and as a distinct, and as a more broad-based concept than something that is called and is familiar to you, with the term priesthood. Some of the quotes that I'm going to read to you from Joseph are going to use the word, "priesthood". I may or may not read it correctly, I might change it to "Holy Order", because I want that to be the broader understanding that we hopefully walk away from tonight.

Joseph said, "The [Holy Order] was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency." By the time this statement was made in 1839 there was something official organized in the Church that was called "First (capital F) Presidency (capital P)", and as a result of that, when Joseph Fielding Smith put together the *Teachings of the Prophet [Joseph Smith]* the words, "First Presidency" are capitalized in here as though they were an office that Adam

held. I want to get rid of the capitals and just say Adam was, in effect, the first presiding officer.

*"[The Holy Order] was first given to Adam; he obtained the [first presiding position on the Earth], and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed.<sup>1</sup> He had dominion given him over every living creature. He's Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel; he stands next in authority to Adam in the [Holy Order]; He was called of God to this office, and was the Father of all living in this day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held the keys, first on earth, and then in heaven.*

*"The [Holy Order] is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. The keys have to be brought from heaven, whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from Heaven it is by Adam's authority.*

*...He (Adam) is the father of the human family and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. This may take place before some of us leave this stage of action. The Son of Man stands before him, and there is given him glory and dominion. Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe but retains his standing as the head of the human family." (TPJS, p. 157).*

The Holy Order really begins at the point that Adam, the first man, who is called "the son of God" in Luke 3:38. Adam, the first man, obtains the Holy Order in the beginning, and included within it, is the right to preside over all of the human family and then the right to minister to his posterity, and to continue to hold that presiding position until the end of time.

Now Joseph skips from Adam down to Noah because Adam had a position and dominion and a right over all of humanity and Noah occupied the same position. All the descendants were looking to him, genealogically, as a father. The right descended down to Noah, through the Fathers, and these held that same Holy Order. But they had siblings and they had relations who were not their descendants. Therefore, although they were within the Holy Order, unlike Adam and unlike Noah, there were other people living who would descend outside of their genealogical connection. They would not be the father of these people, but the Holy Order was passed down in this fashion. Joseph is looking at this from the perspective of who has it all, and all was combined into Adam and into Noah. There's a shift in the landscape that's going to take place later but we'll get to that in a moment.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Genesis 1:26, 27, 28

Joseph says: “there are two priesthoods spoken of in the Scriptures, viz, Melchizedek and Aaronic or Levitical. Although there are two priesthoods, yet the Melchizedek priesthood comprehends the Aaronic or Levitical and is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to [I’m going to change the word now to the Holy Order] and 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 matter is revealed from heaven” comes through the Holy Order. “Its institution was prior to ‘the foundation of this [world] where the morning stars sang together or the sons of God shouted for joy’ and is the highest and holiest [order] and is after the Order of the Son of God.”<sup>2</sup> I’m going to pause there.

We think that the renaming of the Holy Order to the Melchizedek priesthood, in order to avoid the too frequent repetition of the name of the Son of God, was done out of respect for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and that’s true enough. However, the Holy Order, by its very nature, includes the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God; one of whom was also Adam. When the apostle John wrote his epistle, he described those who had come in by way of conversion through him and received from him what the Lord had given to him, and he says: *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”* (1 John 3:1-3.)

I would like to suggest that the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God includes the fact that those who inherit the Holy Order *are* sons of God. Therefore, in a way, calling it the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God, is a way of identifying the recipient as someone who has become one of God’s sons. I think it’s appropriate to regard the primary identifier—that is the subject of who the Son of God is—to be Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. Because quite frankly, He’s the only one who attained the resurrection, and it is through the power of the resurrection that we’re going to come forth. We do not have the power in ourselves to rise from the dead. The wages of sin are death, we’ve earned those wages; we all will die. The Savior did not earn those wages, He died, and therefore His death was unjust and the law of justice got broken when He died. Therefore, whenever justice makes a claim on any of us He can point to the fact that justice extracted from Him eternal life, and that is an infinite price for Him to have paid. Therefore He has compensated for all of mankind’s shortcomings [and] failures.

Christ is the means by which we lay hold upon the promises but it is His intention to make of us all sons of God. Therefore, the Holy Order after the Son of God is when the name is announced, self-identifying the person holding such a Holy Order as one of God’s sons, even though they may be mortal, even though they may be in the flesh. The Holy Order is for that very purpose and is after the Order of the Son of God. “...All other priesthoods are only parts, ramifications, powers and blessings belonging to the same, and are held, controlled

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<sup>2</sup> TPJS, p. 166-167

and directed by it. It is the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time, and through which He will make known His purposes to the end of time.”<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, among other things, the purpose of the Holy Order is to put in place a mechanism by which God can reveal from heaven what is necessary for the salvation of man on earth, in every generation, in order to fix what is broken, in order to restore what has been lost, in order to repair, heal, forgive, and reconnect those who are willing to give heed to the message sent from heaven, so that they can rise up to become sons of God.

The Holy Order descended from Adam in turn. We’re not going to do it but if you take the time to go through and look at who got ordained, Seth was a replacement for the slain Abel. Cain was an elder brother. Cain would have qualified as the elder brother if he had been righteous for inheriting the Holy Order. He had lived long enough and he had been observed by his parents long enough so that Eve identified Cain as a man who had been gotten from God. Therefore she knew he would not fail, which means that for at least some prolonged period of time after the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve had drifted into apostasy, Cain exhibited not only an interest but an adherence to what was being taught by the first parents. Eve celebrated that they at last had someone to whom the Holy Order could be passed. Cain was not the oldest son. He was the *oldest righteous son* and as the oldest righteous son it would have passed to him in due course. Abel, his younger brother, was probably in his day righteous because of the positive example of his older brother Cain. If you’ve got someone in the family who is on the right path, it’s so much easier for the sibling to respect the example of someone similarly situated with them than it is to listen to the parents. Abel likewise followed in the path of righteousness.

Satan put it into the heart of Cain to view the inheritance that he was going to receive of the Holy Order as an opportunity to gratify his pride, and to satisfy his ambition, and to exert control and compulsion, because if he were the one in the line then the Messiah would descend through him and he would have a patriarchal position superior to the Messiah himself. This was an important part of the plot of the adversary. If the adversary could gain control over the inheritor under Adam of the Holy Order, then as I just read a moment ago, before the Savior returns, when dominion was given to Adam, it was by God’s word and God cannot break His word. The right of dominion had been conferred. It has to be returned to Him. If Cain were the one in the position to exercise control then he could exert whatever conditions Satan put into his heart before he would return the right of dominion back to the Savior. Thus, if a disciple of Satan were to be in possession of that Holy Order in that line holding dominion, all of the conditions that Satan had demanded in the preexistence, which were rejected by the Father and created the war in heaven designed to destroy the agency of man, could become the condition for the redemption of this creation. Therefore, Cain’s apostasy represented an enormous threat to the salvation of everyone who would live thereafter. As a consequence of that, the offering by the younger brother

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<sup>3</sup> History of the Church, 4:207

was approved and the older brother Cain was told, “You need to stop what you’re doing, you need to repent and return, and if you do not, sin lieth at the door. The adversary is ready to enter into your house.” This represented a serious frustration or threat to the second great conspiracy to destroy the souls of men and to capture this creation. Therefore, Satan put it into the heart of Cain to murder his brother and Abel was slain so that, the theory was, by controlling the position that necessarily meant that the Messiah would be a descendant of Cain’s, the line would come through him, and he would have the authority, the control, the dominion, and the right to change the plan or the conditions for the salvation of the souls of men in this world.

**Question:** ...You’re saying that it’s genealogical then, that the Holy Order gets passed through; it’s not verified by God?

**Denver:** At this point we’re at the very beginning, we haven’t gotten very far. But it is essential when you begin to talk about the Holy Order that you start here. If you don’t start here, if you want to start at the time of Moses and the Aaronic priests, or you want to start at the time of Joseph Smith and talk about ordinations in June 1831, or if you want to talk about the three witnesses identifying the Quorum of the Twelve and then ordaining them, you’re not going to comprehend what the Holy Order is all about because the Holy Order has, as part of its implication, the right of dominion over all creation. That was what it was established for and it came down to the beginning. It belonged to God. It is why God is God. In essence the Holy Order is to create of flesh and blood a surrogate for the Father and Mother. That’s what the Holy Order was designed to accomplish.

In the beginning, when you’re talking about this process, the reason why we have Seth as the next person is because Cain fell, Abel was murdered, and perhaps, because of the example, Adam and Eve in their sorrow were able to inform Seth of things that secured his fidelity to God. It descended in regular course down through these fathers until you get to Shem who was called Melchizedek. Mulek, king; Zedek, priest. It’s a new name for the man, Shem, and then it simply falls into disrepair or apostasy and we encounter our first gap in the descent from the days of Adam down, which lasted several generations until we get to Abraham.

Abraham also happened to have a genealogical right but that wasn’t what was important. In the case of Abraham “...finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers...”<sup>4</sup> The “blessings of the fathers” after which he was seeking was the Holy Order. He wanted to become one like those that had been in the beginning.

**Question:** If Cain got the Holy Order and decided to use it for nefarious purposes how come he wouldn’t just lose it by virtue of having evil intention?

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See Abraham 1:2

**Denver:** When God spoke to Cain He called him to repent. So, God speaks to Cain and tells him to repent. He didn't repent; he did forfeit, but he forfeited by becoming the first murderer. So the first time that you do something wrong, would you want God to say, "There you go, you're done, you're cut off, you will never have an opportunity to become what I would like you to become, a son of God," or would you want him to call you to repentance? Because God called Cain to repent and he didn't; he went out and he murdered his brother. He just got more determined to accomplish what he wanted. At that point Cain did not die as a result of the murder of his brother. He was driven out but he wasn't killed, and he did lose the right. So, even though he was living and even though he was alive at the time of his brother Seth, the right went to his brother exactly for that reason. The first instance of error, I mean heavens, [the] Kirtland Safety Society may have been out to get rid of Joseph's position.

*"...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 to possess a greater knowledge."<sup>5</sup>*

When you think of the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God, don't think of it exclusively as some sort of status. It's implicit that what that includes is possession of *great knowledge and greater knowledge*. "A man cannot be saved in ignorance," as Joseph put it. "A man is saved no sooner than he gets knowledge,"<sup>6</sup> but implicit in those statements by Joseph Smith is that the purpose of the knowledge is so that you can be a greater follower of righteousness. It's not so that you can play spiritual Trivial Pursuit and win because the knowledge has to be implemented into practice in order for it to have the desired effect. Without accompanying obedience to the things that are known there is no salvation in that. It has to be as Abraham puts it:

*"To be a greater follower, 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, I became a rightful heir." (Abraham 1:2).*

At this point in the creation Adam would have all mankind descend from him and Noah would have all mankind descend from him, and therefore they would be the fathers of nations. Abraham knew that was part of what was involved. It's not merely knowledge for knowledge' sake, it's being put into a position in which there is a posterity involving nations that would look to him as they looked to Noah, [and] as they had looked to Adam, as their father.

Think of fatherhood as an opportunity to nurture, to assist, to provide for, to care for, to bring along, to take what is innocent and malleable, and turn it into something that is God-like, responsible, capable, something or someone who can stand on their own two legs and defend the truth when called upon to do so. Someone that will themselves be a vessel

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<sup>5</sup> See Abraham 1:2

<sup>6</sup> History of the Church, 4:588

of righteousness. Don't think of a father as a bully with a whip or a belt. What Abraham desired was to be a servant; that was what his ambition to be a father of nations involved. And so he became a rightful heir, 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... even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down 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."* (Abraham 1:3). That's where it came from. A son of God descended through those fathers to Abraham, because Melchizedek, after a period of apostasy lasting generations, reconnected father Abraham into the fathers. Which is the issue raised a minute ago about this genealogical thing. This is non-genealogical. This is a righteous man in a world of apostasy, looking to reconnect to heaven. He becomes the father of the righteous because he's the first example of a generation, a man in a world of apostasy coming out of that apostasy and reconnecting to Heaven.

There were generations separating Abraham from Shem. Abraham qualified to receive the rights belonging to the fathers because he sought for his appointment, he possessed knowledge, he lived consistent with the knowledge he had, and he wished to have greater knowledge, so that he could obey more commandments so that he could gain further light and knowledge by the things that he learned through obedience.

When you get to what happens after he's connected up, the Lord talking to him says: *"My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Holy Order unto all the nations; And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father; (See Abraham 2:8-10).* That's non-genealogical. That's the same process through which Abraham went to become a descendant of the fathers. It's reconnecting. Whoever does that, in whatever generation, is a descendant and can call Abraham their father.

**Question:** What reference was that?

**Denver:** Abraham 2:9-10, and I am going on to 11, so right in there.

*"...I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Holy Order) and in thy seed (that is, the Holy Order), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (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 eternal life."* (See Abraham 2:11).

Abraham says: *"Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee."* (Abraham 2:12). He's saying, that whenever you receive the Gospel, whenever you receive **this** Gospel, and it's really hard to try and get this Gospel back on the earth. There



was still a great deal left to be recovered, restored, and returned when Joseph was killed at 38½ [years old]. But when this Gospel—the one that Abraham had received—was on the earth at any time then whoever receives that is a descendant of Abraham. They are part of the family of Abraham and he is their father, and so he becomes the father of many nations. He instructed and passed along the same birthright to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to Joseph, and to Ephraim, and then it rather turns into the same sort of mess that we had previously until the time of Moses.

I don't know how much to say. Moses really didn't belong to the tribe. Moses really was not identified with the tribe that held the birthright. There's no question that by the time you get 200 years downstream from the days of Joseph and Ephraim, that through intermarriage Moses would have had in him blood of Judah, blood of Ephraim, blood of Benjamin; they intermarry.

There's a practice among some Indian tribes. The tribes are the nation and inside the nation there are clans. When a daughter gets to be marital age she is forbidden to marry inside her clan. She has to go marry into another clan. The boys from the other clan court girls who are not of their clan and when they marry, the girls go to live with the clan of their husband. If the female is from the water clan and she marries someone who is the bear clan she is now part of the bear clan. Genealogically she is water clan. Governmentally she is bear clan.

How you reckon who Moses was a descendent of, is not based upon doing a DNA search or looking at a genealogy chart to figure it out. That's not how it was done. Moses is an isolated restoration of a single person into the position in which he could have brought all of Israel back into God's presence. We could have had essentially Zion. Israel was, after being habituated to slavery for 200 years, not willing to climb up the Mount, probably felt themselves incapable of climbing up the Mount. They were perfectly willing to go along with Moses. Of course, there were some ne'er do-wells out there in the wilderness too, and they kept them out of the Holy Land, but Moses arises and that brings up a statement that Joseph Smith made.

During the period of time after this, down to the time of John the Baptist, there were prophets who ministered in Israel. Joseph had this to say about those prophets: "All the prophets had the Holy Order and were ordained by God himself. If they didn't have what they needed to have they would not be in possession of the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven. They would not have the ability to hold the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing his glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which he has continued to reveal himself to the children of men to the present time." It was essential that they be put in possession of something that equipped them to be able to minister in a way that guaranteed, if anyone would listen, salvation.

Then we get down to something more immediately important to us and that is Peter, James, and John. I'm not going to read it because I want to move along a little more quickly.

Remember a few minutes ago I read to you that Adam holds the keys of all dispensations, and that Adam holds the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times, those are Adam's. Peter, James, and John declare themselves as possessing the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times. Adam holds keys in order to bring about every dispensation from the time of Adam down to the very end of time, but Adam didn't live through every dispensation from the beginning to the very end of time. Therefore, although he is in possession of it and although he has a say about who was involved with it, and although he may exercise the right of dominion in the counsels of Heaven, (because he is resurrected now after all), it still requires for salvation that flesh and blood accept and act on the challenge of redemption.

Salvation is a mortal challenge. Whether or not we're saved depends upon what we do. We don't have angels running around fixing all our errors. We have no immortals that are going to come to our rescue, except for the Second Coming, to destroy the wicked and to visit with those who are wheat. The best way to understand it is, once the lifetime of the three Nephite disciples who asked to tarry on the earth ended, the way they continued their ministry was to minister to prophets, mortals, and then the mortals ministered to others. They came and they visited with Mormon, for example, but the people to whom Mormon ministered didn't see them. They ministered to Moroni, but those to whom Moroni ministered didn't see them. They become as a ministering angel, and the ministering of angels is predicated upon the faithfulness of people.

You can read about how the system of salvation works, it's in Alma. Angels minister to those who are supposed to then preach salvation to others in order to inform them about the conditions that are needed to be met for the salvation of others. John the Beloved has become a ministering angel and he has a ministry. There are those people who expect them to step out in public and to do what people of flesh and blood are obligated to do. Why, that's kind of unfair to that generation. An apology will be owed to every other generation, if the angels suddenly assume the obligation to accomplish things, which from the days of Adam had been primarily the obligation of mortals to accomplish, with some to whom angels minister, ministering to others.

This may seem like a diversion but it's really not. I'm going to read to you. This is the fifth volume of the *Documents of The Joseph Smith Papers*. In the regular course of maintaining documents there were patriarchal blessings that had been given some time earlier than this *Volume 5* and the blessings are in *Histories, Volume 1* where they're written down; a whole bunch of blessings given at the same time. They're written down and they take about a page. No, it takes about three pages of typewritten material to put them all in, and it's just person after person after person, patriarchal blessings. When they get recorded in the documents of the blessing, Oliver Cowdery is the one who is acting as scribe to convey them from the notes you get in *Volume 1* of the *Documents* into the separated, separate blessings in *Volume 5*. Before they show you the version that Oliver Cowdery records in [Volume] 5, the Church Historian's Office gives a little explanation of why what you are about to read is enormously expanded from what you saw in *Volume 1*: "It seems more likely that Cowdery made the expansions without direction from Joseph Smith. This would

not have been the only occasion he did so. There is evidence that Cowdery altered at least one other blessing text, his own, when he recorded it in the volume. There is no direct evidence that Joseph Smith was involved in expanding and editing the 1833 blessings in September or October of 1835 and there are reasons to think he was not.” This is the document transcript of what Oliver Cowdery recorded in the 1835 blessing book, and I’ve highlighted what was in the original. It’s part of that last paragraph.

[Inaudible audience comments.]

**Denver:** No, this is Don Carlos’. Oliver Cowdery’s is too many pages. Don Carlos’ was the only example I thought I’d copy because it’s easy to hold in one hand.

**Question:** Why did he do that?

**Denver:** Someone in my handwriting has written in pencil on the margin of my version of this book: “If Cowdery made changes on his own to patriarchal blessings did he also do so for Section 27? Why did he do so?”

Oliver was told in a blessing when he failed to translate the text of the Book of Mormon that he would have other opportunities to write spiritual stuff, and sure enough, he took advantage of the license and he did so. The point I’m on right now is that if the Church Historian’s office is being candid about the fact that when we get to the patriarchal blessings, and Oliver Cowdery, on his own, blows up the content and includes a lot of stuff on his own initiative, which the greater proof suggests Joseph had no hand in, the reason why the Church Historian’s office is not equally candid with many other parts of the historical record that were altered by Oliver Cowdery is because they like what Oliver added. They want what Oliver said. It helps support a traditional narrative that gives them certain rights that they would love to be able to claim belong to them. It’s one of the reasons why it was necessary in the third volume of the new scriptures to go back and to painstakingly examine the original documents of the original revelation that we know that Joseph Smith gave, and then to augment that only with anything that was altered in the handwriting of Joseph Smith, and to limit the revelations given to Joseph to that. It’s one of the reasons why the new third volume, *Teachings and Commandments*, are going to be a superior set of scriptures, even though many of the revelations that we’re familiar with are going to have greatly reduced content, and some of the revelations will be gone altogether, because they simply have no basis for being able to say Joseph was the originator of that, some of which are foundational to authority claims.

One more aside: the word “apostle”. There is no such thing as priesthood called *apostle*. It is an office in the Church like Relief Society president, like Primary president. (Like used to be Scout leader but that’s not so much now.) There’s no such priesthood as elder, it’s an office in the Church. This is why in the office of elder, Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith could function in the Church as elders before the restoration of any of the higher priesthood. This is one of the reasons why we are particularly vulnerable in our lines of authority, because for about 22 years during the presidency of Heber J. Grant, ordinations

did not confer any priesthood, they ordained to an office in the Church. And while the person ordained to the office in the Church was authorized to function in the office to which they were ordained, conferral of priesthood is a separate matter. You can have them be apostles without them being recipients of the priesthood.

I say all that to suggest that when it comes to parsing the events of the restoration involving Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, the historical narrative upon which you base your understanding needs to be pretty carefully examined. The best source of material from which to draw is actually a composition that Joseph Smith began after Oliver Cowdery had been excommunicated from the Church. Oliver's excommunication happened in April 1838 and with him and David Whitmer and John Whitmer gone—John Whitmer was the Church historian. He took with him all of the records that had been compiled involving the events of the restoration up to that time. In 1838 Joseph Smith began the recreation of the history of the events in the restoration. Joseph Smith's history is identified in *Histories, Volume 1 of The Joseph Smith Papers*. What he wrote in 1838 is draft one and it's been lost. We don't have what he wrote in 1838. But Mulholland,<sup>7</sup> who was his clerk at the time, recopied it in 1839 and that's called draft two. We have internal material in draft two to suggest it was a really faithful copy because he copied it in 1839 but all of his dating is 1838, the year before. So when the internal dating copied by Mulholland in 1839 is 1838, a year earlier, it suggests that he was not doing anything to revise, change, or alter what Joseph had put down.

In the earliest history that Joseph Smith wrote there's a revelation that's given in March 1829. It's a revelation to Martin Harris that includes some interesting language that touches up against the topic we're on tonight. It says: *"Verily, I say unto you, that woe shall come unto the inhabitants of the earth if they will not hearken unto my words; For hereafter you shall be ordained and go forth and deliver my words unto the children of men. Behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe you, my servant Joseph, if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you."* (D&C 5:5-7). The statement in the revelation to Martin Harris includes this content addressed to Joseph Smith, telling Joseph that he's going to be ordained to go forth and declare God's words. But when he's ordained to go forth and declare His words, he's supposed to say what God tells him to say, "and if they won't believe, that it wouldn't matter if you told them everything that had been committed to Joseph Smith, they wouldn't believe that either. So, you only tell them what I allow you to tell them and then they can receive what they need to receive in that mechanism." Joseph had things which were committed unto him but which he did not reveal to anyone else.

Promise of ordination. Then we get down...this is May 1829:

*"We...went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a*

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<sup>7</sup>

James Mulholland

*messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:*

*Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.*

*He said this Aaronic Priesthood had not the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter; and he commanded us to go and be baptized, and gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and that afterwards he should baptize me.” (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith History 1:68-70).*

Joseph was the first to baptize but he was the second to be baptized.

This ordination takes place. At this ordination they have the authority to baptize and get angels to minister to them, but they don’t have something else that involves the power of laying of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that would be conferred thereafter. So go baptize. Something more is coming.

You read through the history and there’s no mention of the appearance of Peter, James, and John but there is a desire on Joseph’s part to get this higher priesthood. There is also in the account a statement in Joseph Smith’s History that is the exact same wording that gets used involving ordinations in the Book of Mormon. These are the words: “To ordain priests and teachers, to declare my gospel according to the power of the Holy Ghost which is in you.”<sup>8</sup> So the power to ordain in the early days of the Restoration was derived from the power of the Holy Ghost which is within the person that is doing the ordaining. Ordinations continue. Now we’re talking about “elders, priests, teachers, or deacons is to be ordained according to the gifts and calling of God unto them and is to be ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one that ordains him.”<sup>9</sup> Ordination early in the restoration was accomplished in the same way as ordination was accomplished in the Book of Mormon, that is by the power of the Holy Ghost that is in the person being ordained.

Joseph Smith writes a letter while he is in exile in Nauvoo and the letter also tracks what he did in his histories, but he mentions something that is not mentioned in the histories:

*“And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfilment of the prophets—the book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca county, declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book! The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light! The voice of Peter, James,*

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<sup>8</sup> See: D&C 18:32 and Moroni 3:4

<sup>9</sup> See: D&C 20:60

*and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times!" (D&C 128:20).*

I have the keys to my Dodge truck. Do you have the keys to my Dodge truck? Well, they've declared themselves as possessing the keys.

*"And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer...and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! And the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!" (D&C 128:21).*

Joseph Smith is saying that he was in possession of great knowledge but he also came into possession of greater knowledge. Because Joseph was going to be called upon, in a very serious role, to achieve something that involved trying to bring back nations into the Holy Order, that makes sons of God. Therefore, Joseph could not accomplish what needed to be accomplished without having greater knowledge than existed on the earth. Despite the discovery of Dead Sea scrolls, the Nag Hammadi, and research and translation of texts that were not available in English at the time of Joseph Smith's lifetime, the fact remains that much of that material was simply corrupted. If you are going to try and understand the truth, the way in which that is brought about is by having possession of a "...channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from Heaven". Therefore, Joseph needed to not only be in possession of that channel, but the channel needed to respond to, and did respond to Joseph's petitions and inquiries, in order for him to be able to function in the position that he held.

There's a revelation that was given in January 1841, the last lengthy revelation given while Joseph was alive. His last vision—that's a second-hand account, still reliable because it was recorded so quickly after, and that contains... William Smith is going to replace Hyrum as a counselor to Joseph. The revelation in January 1841 records: *"And again, verily I say unto you, let my servant William be appointed, ordained, and anointed, as counselor unto my servant Joseph, in the room of my servant Hyrum, that my servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, which was appointed unto him by his father, by blessing and also by right; That from henceforth 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 whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. And from this time forth I appoint unto him that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph; That he may act in concert also with my servant Joseph; and that he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive, and be crowned with the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and*

*gifts of the priesthood, that once were put upon him that was my servant Oliver Cowdery; 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, forever and ever." (D&C 124:91-96).*

Hyrum was put into a position that was once occupied by Oliver, to stand with Joseph, possessing the ability to ask and receive, so that the channel through which you can know and understand what God wants or intends for people is open as the mechanism to save souls. At the end of this it's sole purpose is to save souls. It talks about him, and his name had an honorable remembrance from generation to generation. Only descendants of Hyrum occupied the position of the Presiding Patriarch of the Church until 1979 when Eldred G. Smith was made emeritus, but he still signed everything as Patriarch to the Church and he still kept an office in the Church Office Building. (Dave, I think you went and visited with him before he died?)

**Comment:** He got changed. Not in the Church Office Building but over in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building.

**Denver:** Smith Memorial Building.

**Comment:** Like in a broom closet or something.

[Crosstalk and audience laughter.]

**Denver:** But he insisted on attending the Thursday meetings for a long period of time and maybe right up until the end. On 04 April, 2013 he died; the office has not been filled, and so far as we know it's gone forever.

What the Holy Order consists of is being able to have a channel which not only is occupied by God at the far end, but is reigned over by the man who first held dominion over all the earth, Adam. I'm not going to talk about this until March but there's a reason why it was Eve who identified Cain as the worthy recipient to be the successor. There is no authority that gets established on earth that the mother does not approve of. Fathers can be quick to give up hope. Moms hold on a lot longer. Therefore, mothers control certain decisions. When you say that Adam holds the keys at the far end to preside over it, the name "Adam" was given to not just the man, Adam, but the name "Adam" was given to Adam and Eve jointly. When you hear that Adam holds the keys, the best way to read it is in the second way in which the name Adam is applied in scripture; that is to both the man and the woman.

We're running out of time. This subject is bigger than most people have ever grasped. We could talk about it a whole lot longer but I want to answer some of the questions that were put.

If I had children who could not go to the temple today I would not personally induct them into the temple ceremony because despite the fact that I have been excommunicated from the Church I made promises in the temple which I have kept. You may say, "How the hell can you claim that given the fact that you got kicked out of the Church." I have kept the covenants. Part of what I was obligated to do was to not disclose certain things, but that rather than do so I would suffer my life to be taken, because I went to the temple before 1990.

Since I am under an obligation not to disclose certain things to people, if it were my children I would not induct them into a temple ceremony because to do so, in my view, would violate my obligation. But if they go and read the ceremony on line—and the pre-1990 transcript is better than the post-1990 altered ceremony—they can learn everything there was in the ceremony before 1990 and I'm not disclosing anything to them. There was nothing in the ceremony or the covenant or the obligation that says, if you already know something and I'm not disclosing it to you, there's nothing that says that we can't talk about what you already know. I'm just not allowed to disclose it to you. Similarly, if I had a kid who goes through the temple today, I would want them to read the ceremony as it existed before the changes in 1990. I wouldn't disclose it to them, I'd say go read it online. Then after they've read it online I'd feel free to discuss what they know and I'm not revealing to them.

I do think that the ceremony is useful even though I don't think that the transmission of it has been altogether correct. I think it is merciful by God that the way in which it came down was altered, because we can enter into the covenants of the temple and take them very seriously. But if we wind up violating them we have not violated an authentically empowered ordinance, so we're really not offending God by violating something.

Ordinances that were ordained by God cannot be changed. If they're changed they're broken; if they're broken they're ineffective. Therefore, an altered ordinance can be informational and if you take it sincerely, and if you adhere to the covenants and if you obey, God can work with that because God can work with any soul. You can ultimately realize every blessing and every promise of the temple. You're just going to get it as a one off from heaven, as God, by the Holy Spirit of Promise, works with you to confer upon you blessings that are intended for you. There's no downside, but there's a considerable upside if you're true and faithful to the things that you obligate yourself to do, and the temple tells you that:

"Brothers and sisters, if you're true and faithful the time will come when you will be called up and anointed kings and queens, priests and priestesses, whereas now you're only anointed to become such. The realization of these blessings depends upon your faithfulness." They dial it right back in the introduction to the ceremony itself, almost as if they're making an admission against interest.

The purpose of a temple is to allow the communication of great knowledge and greater knowledge, to restore what has been lost since the time of Adam in order for people to rise



up and receive the Holy Order. You don't get saved in ignorance, and there are so many gaps in what was going on.

The way in which the blessings of Peter, James, and John, and the naming of Peter, James, and John occurs on the Mount of Transfiguration—they went up and they were on the Holy Mount. They were endowed with knowledge. They saw the history of the world right down to the end of time. They were given an insight into things. We learn about that in Doctrine and Covenants; I think it's 67 but it's in there, you can read it. They were shown essentially everything because they saw what they saw. This was the reason why Peter negotiated a rapid resurrection. He didn't want to camp in the spirit world. This is why John said, "I don't want to go there, let me just stay here and I'll minister here." They made choices as a result of the knowledge that they got on the Mount about what was going to happen down to the end of time. But this is an order. Peter, and James, and John are symbols of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Grandfather, father, and son. It was Jacob through whom the nations, the twelve tribes, the twelve nations of Israel, were established. So John, he produced a righteous son. I don't know about the children of Katura, but Ishmael and Jacob have continued their bloodshed right down to this minute. Esau sold his birthright and the garment to Jacob, who presented it to Joseph. He's the one through whom a great progeny developed.

Peter, James, and John—John is the one who remained to create, as a ministering angel, an analogous progeny by his ministrations as a ministering angel through the ages. When you get to the names of Peter, James, and John in the restoration story, we don't have enough details of what happened to be able to correctly construct exactly how Peter, James, and John fit within the restoration of the Gospel in the last days. If we're going to put them into a context, I would not say that the reason that they came was in order to ordain someone, when that has a really good account provided to us in the account of the conference that happened in June 1831. I described that it *A Man Without Doubt*, beginning on about page 19 and going through the end of that section.

The folks that got ordained at that conference included five that Joseph Smith ordained; Lyman White, who was excommunicated in 1848. Harvey Whitlock, excommunicated in 1835. Thomas Marsh, who left the Church in 1838, signed an affidavit against Joseph which contributed to his imprisonment in Missouri. He was excommunicated in 1839. Parley Pratt, who apostatized and was excommunicated in 1842, but then reinstated in 1843. Those are the ones Joseph ordained. The ones Lyman White ordained; John Whitmer excommunicated 1838, Rigdon excommunicated in 1844, Partridge died in 1840, Ezra Thayer refused to follow the Twelve after Joseph and Hyrum were martyred. (Well, that guy has some potential.) Joseph Wakefield was excommunicated in January 1834. Ezra Boothe apostatized within months and went on to write anti-Mormon and anti-Joseph publications, and it just goes on; you can read it in there. It didn't work out as well as had been hoped.

The way in which I would suggest it would be best to understand is that they came, not for purposes of conferring priesthood that would occur in June 1831, but for reconnecting the

genealogical line that required someone to be designated as descendants from “the Fathers”. Now, some folks have argued that that meant that Joseph Smith was **the** birthright holder in the line from Ephraim. Given the way in which genealogical lines run, and given all of... If you kill Charles and William and George (and I think there’s another one [in] the royal line of England), then it’s all the way back to Andrew. You can have a line that goes on a long distance. But if you have the Thirty Years War, and you have World War I, and you have World War II, and you have the Black Plague, and you’re following genealogical lines, there’s no way to track who God thinks holds the birthright. Then you have the added complication that Esau was older than Jacob but Jacob was more righteous, and so Jacob got the birthright. Seth had older brothers who were grandfathers by the time he was born but the birthright went to Seth because he was true and faithful.

I would suggest that it may be possible that in this room there is a lot of people who could qualify. Whether or not that ever happens depends upon being a son of Abraham, which requires you to receive this Gospel, meaning the one to which Abraham had been exposed, which requires a great deal of correct information to be restored.

It’s almost amusing for people in their arrogance to assume that they know enough to understand what God is doing or has done. The things of God are of deep import, and careful and solemn and ponderous and prayerful thought can only find them out. Your understanding has to reach into heaven itself and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, if you’re going to save any soul, including your own. That’s not accomplished casually, nor is it accomplished without sacrifice.

The Lord, whose own heart was broken, ultimately requires a great deal to happen to create a broken heart and a contrite spirit willing to endure, however uncomfortable it may make you feel, all that God requires of you to do in order to be a son of God. That’s not accomplished in an instant suddenly, it’s accomplished carefully and over trial after trial, test after test, temptation after temptation, but ultimately it will be required before the return of the Lord. It will be mandatory, before the return of the Lord, for the original Holy Order to exist in all of its components, it has to. There has to be established on the Earth all of the rites that originally belonged in the days of Adam, because that has to be surrendered back. It has to go back through those that had possessed it in order for God to have the right to come and claim this world as His own, and to exercise dominion over it. Because if the dominion over the world belongs to someone other than Him, His word cannot be broken, and He cannot come and interfere with the right of dominion that exists on the Earth. It has to exist. It has to be fully restored, and it has to be in the possession of those who will not covet it. Those who will not, like Cain, attempt to influence the conditions of salvation for the souls of men. Those who look upon it merely as a burden to be held, under the authority of God, belonging to Him, to be returned to Him so that He can come and fix this broken world and bring wickedness to an end.

If an aspiring, or ambitious, or a vain person is given that position, all of the Lord’s plans can be frustrated. Therefore we need to be like our Lord, the greatest of all, who came here and knelt, and served, and washed the feet of others. Who gave His life as a sacrifice. Who

trembled and begged not to be put through what the Father commanded that He endure. Nevertheless, that is despite His own will, that is in spite of the fact that He did not want to do it, He partook of the bitter cup, to the dregs. He was slain, and He gives all glory and all majesty to the Father. That's the kind of person you have to become if you're going to be of any utility to the Lord in the final scenes that are approaching.

I hope we've expanded somewhat the context of the Holy Order, and that you realize that the term "priesthood"—is bandied around in our day among most people when they talk about the subject of priesthood—is a really tiny sliver of a very big subject, about which the world knows very little. Latter-day Saints, because of their arrogance, know even less because they wrongly assume that an incorrect model constitutes what God is all about. The restoration of all things literally means "the restoration of all things" including the Holy Order, and it doesn't stop with a New Testament church. It's got to go back to the days of Adam.

Of that I bear testimony, with ample reason to be able to discuss these things. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Denver:** We've gone over the time I thought we would be. Come claim your phone.

**Question:** Are you open to answering any questions about the content?

**Denver:** On my way to the car, yes. Questions just create problems but if it's a good one then yes.

**Question:** In St. George you rather emphatically declared that anyone who declares the Gospel of Abraham is inferior or less than the Gospel that was given to Adam; that person, if they don't repent, they're going to regret it. I'm paraphrasing. I see here what that means based on what you put on the board, this Gospel, it's the same thing that Adam had. Who is teaching that it's not, that was so emphatically called to repentance? It's just bewildering.

**Denver:** There are some folks who have studied this out, who believe that the Gospel of Abraham is inferior to the Gospel of Noah, and the Gospel of Adam.

**Comment:** Someone was teaching that.

**Denver:** Yes, they've written about it. There's an enormous volume of pompous screeds available on the Internet to expound endlessly the stupidity of some people who are carefully studying and feel a burning apparently, either in the bosom or in their fingertips, and have vomited nonsense onto the Internet. I'm not here to argue with people. I'm not here to correct all of the lies, all of the misstatements. I'm not here even to defend. There we are; the answer to your question.

**Comment:** Better run for it.

[End recording]

(Transcript: Kiyoko Ball, v1.0)