

THE MISSION OF ELIJAH RECONSIDERED:

© Denver C. Snuffer, Jr. 2011; all rights reserved.

This paper continues the topic of the importance of Elijah in the last days that was introduced in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*. I will assume the reader is familiar with the content of that book in this discussion, and will not repeat the background found there. Having illustrated my view of the inadequate and inaccurate understanding found in the traditional Latter-day Saint teaching, this paper will continue to set out my view of the topic, with an explanation of Elijah's necessary future role which must precede the Second Coming of Christ.

A great impediment to learning is fear. We need to discuss "fear" before introducing some additional thoughts about Elijah's mission. Elijah has a role in the last days. It was foretold by Malachi,¹ reiterated by Christ to the Nephites,² and promised by Moroni when he visited with Joseph Smith on September 21, 1823.³ Although the tradition among Latter-day Saints is that this is a past event, having occurred in 1836;⁴ in 1844 Joseph Smith spoke of it as yet future.⁵ I hope you can consider these ideas without fear.

When you read a phrase in the scriptures that is repeated in almost identical language by John (1 John 4:18), Paul (2 Tim. 1:7) and Moroni (Moroni 8:16), it should leap out to your mind. These divergent personalities converge on the same thought, and to me it suggests something important and profound. I am going to use John's, found at 1 John 4:18: "there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

According to Joseph Smith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ comprehends [includes] all truth. (See, 9 July 1843 Sermon at Nauvoo in *Words of Joseph Smith*.) It is fear that limits our capacity to gain from what God offers us in the Gospel. It is a measure of our ingratitude when we decline the invitation extended by Joseph⁶ to search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of God, and instead elect to fearfully withdraw, concluding we are just not interested in what we might have had.⁷

It is a trick of the devil to get people to close their minds and close their hearts, because they fear what they may be learning will do damage to them.⁸ When Adam and Eve partook of the fruit, and then Satan called their attention to the fact that they were naked,⁹ that is the beginning of the mischief visited on humanity by the adversary who seeks to

¹ Mal. 4: 5-6.

² 3 Ne. 25: 5-6.

³ See JS-H 1: 12, D&C Section 2.

⁴ See Section 110.

⁵ I assume the reader is familiar with the information contained in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, in which Section 110 and Section 132 are carefully examined.

⁶ "I advise all to go on to perfection, and search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Godliness." *TPJS*, p. 364.

⁷ See D&C 88: 33.

⁸ See 2 Ne. 28: 29-30.

⁹ Gen. 3: 7.

bind, control and limit the freedom of all mankind in order to imprison them.¹⁰ He pointed out to them that they ought to be ashamed. Therefore, when they heard the voice of God speaking, they withdrew because of what the shame triggered within them - fear. They were ashamed to come into the presence of that being who they knew to be just and holy, because now they were naked and afraid.¹¹ Their “nakedness” before God came as a consequence of understanding the difference between what they were compared to the perfection of God.¹² That knowledge came as a result of partaking of the fruit out of season and out of sequence. They were not going to receive a command to partake of the fruit until after the day of rest had been observed. They were not only naked before God, but they were also violating the Sabbath. They were beginning the labor of mortal existence out of time, sequence and season. That is the way a great number of errors are made in mortality.

You see, we are commanded *not* to partake of some things out of season. Then we are commanded to partake within season.¹³ When we get the timing wrong, we wind up with difficulties and problems we should not have encountered. When we make that mistake, we are forced to repent. Repentance is a critical thing. It is the message of the Book of Mormon. It is the greatest message contained in the book of Isaiah and it is the message of all true prophets.¹⁴ There are two things that generally stir you up to repentance. The first thing is to awaken to your awful situation.¹⁵ The second is to arise,¹⁶ and connect with the source that will cure what is wrong with you. We are not self-curing. We are filled with that same shame that came in the beginning as a consequence of doing what we were not suppose to be doing. The greatest way the adversary keeps us in a state of slumber is to prevent us from looking about and awakening to the awful situation we find ourselves. Hugh Nibley commented on more than one occasion that there is nothing quite as annoying as being awakened out of a deep sleep.¹⁷ No one really likes that. When it comes right down to it, unconsciousness is a very pleasurable thing; particularly when what you awaken to what we face here.

Alma the Younger is a fairly expert source on the subject of repentance. Alma the Younger, after he had been seasoned by his dramatic conversion,¹⁸ his experience preaching the Gospel,¹⁹ and his experience as a father, gave some advice to his own children. He gave them a talk that included an explanation about the demands of justice

¹⁰ 2 Ne. 2: 18.

¹¹ This is the reaction of any who come into God’s presence in their fallen state. See Mormon 9: 4-5.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ “That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another. God said, ‘Thou shalt not kill’; at another time He said, ‘Thou shalt utterly destroy.’ This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire.” (*TPJS*, p. 256.)

¹⁴ See, e.g., 1 Ne. 1: 4; Ether 11: 20; Helaman 15: 7 and D&C 11: 9.

¹⁵ See, e.g., 2 Ne. 1: 13; 4: 28; 8: 17, 24; Jacob 3: 11.

¹⁶ See, e.g., 2 Ne. 1: 14, 21; 8: 25; Mosiah 2: 32; Moroni 10: 31.

¹⁷ See, e.g., *Last Call: An Apocalyptic Warning from the Book of Mormon*, p. 23.

¹⁸ See Mosiah Chapter 27, Alma Chapter 36.

¹⁹ See Alma Chapters 4-14.

on the one hand,²⁰ and mercy on the other,²¹ and how they are balanced with one another so that mercy can overcome the demands of justice. It is not by robbing it.²² It is by satisfying it.²³ It was a brilliant doctrinal discourse. It is followed by a series of statements at the end of his advice which we consider here. This is in chapter 42 of Alma. At the beginning of verse 27 he said, “Therefore, O my son, whosoever come may come and partake of the waters of life freely; and whosoever will not come the same is not compelled to come...” It is free, and not only is it free, it is non-compulsive.²⁴ It is purely voluntary. Anyone is free to accept it. Anyone is free to reject it. But in the last day, it shall be restored unto him according to his deeds. That is, offered freely, available to all, non-compulsory, but you are *accountable*. Therefore, when you decline what is offered to you, then you receive at the last day the recompense you merit because of your ingratitude. Those who refuse will receive whatever it is that comes as a consequence of their refusal. Those who receive will receive what God offered. He continues:

28 If he has desired to do evil, and has not repented in his days, behold, evil shall be done unto him, according to the restoration of God.

29 And now, my son, I desire that ye should let these things trouble you no more, and only let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance.

Don't trouble yourself, unless it motivates you to change. Repentance means change. Repentance actually means you turn from the direction you are facing. Whatever direction you are facing, turn from that direction, and face God. When you turn to God and face Him and let Him be the object of your focus and your attention, then you have repented. “Facing” your job, or your favorite sports team, or your religious hobby, or even your church leaders is not the same thing as facing God.

He continues:

30 O my son, I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the justice of God; but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility.

Well that is a graphic expression: being “brought down to the dust.” Dust is something that is below, beneath, on the ground. You have to grovel in order to get there. But that is the point. “Awaking and arising” always begins from the position of being in the dust. We are all in the dust anyway. Somehow we manage to ignore it. It is only by virtue of

²⁰ Alma 42: 13-14, 22.

²¹ *Id.* vs. 15, 23.

²² *Id.* v. 25.

²³ *Id.* v. 30.

²⁴ See D&C 121: 46.

waking up and discovering that you happen to be in a rather dusty spot that you finally decide to get up and brush yourself off. That is the condition we find ourselves as soon as we awaken to our awful situation.²⁵

Therefore, when listening to the voices calling for your attention to whatever it is they want you to pay attention to in this world, Alma suggests it might be helpful to your eternal salvation is to listen to those who cry repentance. Those are the voices that happen to be saying something that deserves your attention. Repent! Change the course you are on! Turn and face God! Allow the only one who can offer salvation to offer you salvation.

In *Ten Parables* there is a story of “Hope and Tarwater” --which by the way is a parable that has multiple meanings, but the intended meaning is that both Hope and Tarwater are the pre-existence. You run with that when you read it. Tonight, because parables allow you to shift meaning, what I would like the story to be about is the attitude you bring with you to any of life’s circumstances. You likely bring your life’s attitude from the pre-existence, but we’ll confine tonight to the attitude you bring with you to anything you encounter in mortality. You see, what Lance found in the forest was exactly what Lance thought he would find in the forest. What James found in the forest was exactly what James thought he would find in the forest. Neither one of them could escape the view they brought with them into the condition they found themselves. It is a painful experience to realize that the way you have always understood the world is, in fact, skewed, amiss, ugly, wrong, deceived, and even malevolent. No one wants to encounter that, which makes change so terribly difficult for us.

When I was 19, the missionaries succeeded at last in overcoming my opposition to the message they taught. I used up, with liberal abandon, a great quantity of missionaries who came to teach me. I was a “golden contact” only because the mission field was comprised of a scurvy lot of hard-headed New Englanders, with no inclination to listen to what the Mormons had to say. I made the error of complimenting a fellow and being polite to their approach. It was mistaken as interest, and so they were fetching me with pamphlets, felt boards, slide strips and the paraphernalia used in those days. Though polite, I was not really interested. I literally showed up to a missionary discussion with a six pack of beer once. I intended to share with the missionaries and LDS family whose home we were using. I also asked if I could light a cigar in the living room. I look back on that now and I cringe. I had no idea, because they hadn’t gotten to the Word of Wisdom discussion as yet, so in my ignorance I was outside the correct behavioral lines. Well intentioned, but ignorant. There’s a lot of that going on still, I suppose. Not because of bad intentions, but only because of my enduring ignorance. It is why, when we repent and face God, we tend to learn a great deal more than we know at the time.²⁶ God imparts intelligence, light and truth.²⁷ You cannot learn what He imparts if you refuse to

²⁵ Ether 8: 24.

²⁶ D&C 50: 24.

²⁷ D&C 93: 28, 36-37.

face Him. When you strain His light through another man, even a very good man, you lose a vital connection we are all intended to possess.²⁸

As the missionaries were teaching me, eventually something happened that got my attention. I began to entertain the idea that what these missionaries were saying may be the correct criteria to measure their message. The message they offered required an entire shift in my world view. I had been raised from my youth in Idaho to understand Joseph Smith was a charlatan and a fraud, and Mormons were deceived and misled into worshipping a false God, and so on. All the ridiculous and incorrect characterizations you hear in the religious (now even the political) debates of our country, I accepted.

Well, I had to make the leap from the world view of *'Lance in the forest'* to the world view of *'James in the forest'* in order to say "there might be something to this." That is the problem with the restored Gospel – there really might be something to it. And if there is something to this, then how important is it? And if it is that important, then how thoroughly ought we all to examine it? How relentlessly ought we to search into it? And, how carefully ought we to consider it? If there is some additional light that can be shed about any topic relating to the restored Gospel, how freely, how openly ought we to discuss it? These are rhetorical questions, but they deserve our careful attention because we slam the door on some of these important matters long before we have even been informed on important topics. We are not much different than the unconverted. We plug our ears, close our eyes and declare "I have a testimony," thinking that is enough. Just because Joseph had a testimony at 15 years of age, he did not cut off additional enlightenment and correction. He continued to learn through his 38th year. Some of the greatest things he learned came late in the Nauvoo period, in the final months of his life. I've written an essay on the *First Three Words [Spoken by the Players in the Endowment]* that considers some of Joseph's last talks in Nauvoo. He was preoccupied by what he was learning about the creation through the Book of Abraham. He followed his own advice: "The things of God are of deep import and time and experience and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind O man if thou wilt lead a soul into salvation must search into and contemplate the darkest abyss and the broad expanse of eternity, thou must commune with God." (*DHC* Vol. 3, p. 295.) He plumbed the depths of the Gospel and continued to search to the day he died.

I have no fear whatsoever about examining Joseph Smith from top to bottom, through and through, every minute of his life. I don't have any concerns about that. None of us should. He is the latest and best documented case of a prophet who had the heavens opened and the ministering of angels. Anyone who even pretends to be wise will seek to get informed by the things that came from his hands.²⁹

I think anyone *un*willing to entertain a thorough examination of the life and ministry of Joseph Smith is demonstrating fear, which is the opposite of love. We don't have details about the life of Moses. We don't have details about the life of Peter. We have an extraordinary limited vantage point from which to examine either one of them. We don't

²⁸ D&C 84: 98.

²⁹ D&C 122: 2.

have much in the way of detail about the life of Nephi. In fact, everything we have about Nephi is autobiographical and composed years after the events themselves.³⁰ Therefore, to some extent, Nephi is going to present a narrative that doesn't give a full, fair and impartial accounting of why his brothers continually found themselves not persuaded by the message he delivered. I understand there are always those who are hard-hearted. I understand there are natural resentments whenever a younger brother supplants the older brother. This would be particularly true when the supplanting takes place very early on in a difficult journey, as happened with Nephi, Laman and Lemuel. Nephi returned with the emblems of kingship (the sword of Laban, the brass plates, the servant of Laban's—Zoram). Then during the trek in the wilderness he actually assumes the role, and by the time they get to the coast, he is the one, and not his father, through whom revelation is coming about the construction of the boat.³¹ The supplanting was complete by the time they got to the coast. When Lehi died in the new world, the parent connection was removed, the family lost their rallying point, and the older brothers' rebellion went into full swing. But the account omits what might have been a list of legitimate criticisms by Laman and Lemuel of Nephi. We don't know what these criticisms were because we don't have any record of that. We do not have their side of the story. Nephi had no reason to include it.

But when it comes to the Prophet Joseph Smith, I do have that! You see, I not only have his autobiographical account, but I also have the written accounts of those who hated him. I have the written accounts of those who conspired to kill him. I do not have only the autobiographical material, as with Nephi. I have a wealth of information from many diverse sources about him.

I can still choose to be '*Lance entering the forest*' in my approach to Joseph Smith. I can say I want to hear every word of criticism that anyone ever fabricated against the Prophet Joseph Smith, because it salves my conscience and it makes it easier for me to ignore what he restored. I needn't "awake" and I needn't "arise," and I needn't do anything about a message that may be authentic and comes from God, because I am able to find flaws in the messenger. But there is risk to that approach. I may be ignoring an authentic prophet who knew God, and was commissioned by Him to announce His message to me.

To return to the earlier questions: How important is it to look carefully at Joseph's words? How carefully should we consider what he left us? Is it enough to just take a superficial glance, trust others with institutional bias and motives? Do we need to show our gratitude and interest to God by looking as deeply as we can into his ministry? After all, he was among those who "knew more than [a person would] by reading everything that has ever been written on the subject" of heaven, because he had actually looked into it for himself.³²

³⁰ See 2 Ne. 4: 16.

³¹ 1 Ne. 17: 8.

³² "Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject" (*TPJS*, p. 324.)

When you have the unique opportunity to reckon the stature of a prophet from those who loved him and those who hated him; from those who merely admire him, but are not converted, and can consider as well those who resented him; or who were one time converted by him, but left his side yet felt no need to turn violent toward him; you have a window available to you beyond anything comparable for another dispensation-opening prophet of God. When you take the mix of those various personalities and viewpoints converging on Joseph to let you fully consider the meaning of the Prophet Joseph Smith's life, and the more of that you can gather in one place and consider, the greater your understanding becomes. You can measure the various reports in light of the motivations of the writers. You can see from all of them a great deal more of Joseph's humanity and frailties, as well as his astounding strengths and power. Joseph Smith was not a deeply flawed human. Joseph Smith had a great deal about him that was altogether commendable. But he was too eager to take some people into his confidence, and he was often time misled by others because he attributed motives to them that reflected his motives.

Unlike most people, I have the experiences in my life of having been hired to handle the problems of other people as their attorney. Because of these professional encounters, some of the shine has been taken off of the LDS business leader, the church leader, and the seemingly perfect, but abusive spouse. I have seen too often that the fraudulent purveyor of a security scam whose entre' into the trust of his victim came because he was an LDS bishop or stake president. Consequently I am unimpressed with office, social standing and religious reputation. It is conduct alone that matters. I taught a course at BYU Education Week on recognizing fraud during an Education Week years ago. In it I suggested it was one of the "badges of fraud," and likely a scam, if the person who is trying to get you to invest tells you in the first 15 minutes about their religion and church calling. That is almost always an indicator they are trying to distract you into quick acceptance of their scheme. After all, the purpose behind the "sheep's clothing" is always to mislead. The only reason you don the clothing is because you hope that by appearing to conform to a superficially recognized image, you will be able to mislead and deceive. It is always the substance that matters. I do my best to avoid as much as possible the stereotypes of Mormonism. I do not want anyone to think I *should* be trusted. The truth is always about the underlying message. Does the message cause you to awake? Does it cause you to arise? We must be reminded relentlessly that the condition we find ourselves in is one where it is absolutely necessary to awake and arise, shake off the dust, and, get out of the slumber you are in. There are those who have awakened only to find themselves in a nightmare of their own making because the reaction to awakening is violent. Don't fear that. You will get over it. You will find God is eager to help once you've awakened. He has not left you here alone. He will always comfort you.³³ In the proper circumstances, and after your awakening has proceeded to the proper point, He will personally comfort you.³⁴ He will also introduce you to the Father, and they will take up their abode with you, just as they did with Joseph Smith.³⁵

³³ John 14: 16.

³⁴ John 14: 18.

³⁵ John 14: 23

I don't swim in the shallow end of the pool when it comes to Mormonism. The only end I have ever been in is the deep end. It began when, indoctrinated by a Baptist mother, I sincerely believed the missionaries teaching me were out to perpetuate fraud. I had to overcome that to be converted to the faith. By overcoming that initial bias, and putting Mormonism to the test, I got an answer to prayer. There is no argument you can advance that will succeed in altering the reality that God answered my prayer. Therefore, when someone came to me after that point said to me, "Yeah, but they didn't tell you that Joseph Smith had wives! That is in the plural!" My reaction was, "Well, okay. I gotta look into that." Sure enough, there it was in section 132. I suspended judgment on the entire plural marriage issue from the moment a critic tried to dissuade me from conversion because I hadn't the time to really consider it. I have to tell you it was a real low priority for me. I thought it was weird, okay. I don't care if you are an advocate and I don't even care if you practice it. You have to admit it's a weird arrangement. I love my wife. I don't want another one. In fact, my view is that the more you love your wife the less you want another one. The more delightful the relationship is the less need there is to multiply complexity or try to find harmony among a larger group.

So when I first encountered this topic by someone hoping to deter me from becoming Mormon, I concluded "if Joseph was going to take that on, then someday I will look into it and try to figure it." I suspended judgment on the issue, and I actually didn't reach closure on that topic until, maybe four or five years ago. It just wasn't that important to figure it all out in a hurry. [Meaning that something of that sort cannot be decided correctly if you are in a rush — not that the topic lacks importance. It is the haste that is wrong.] I have reached closure on the issue, and you have the benefit of what I now think about it in the last book, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*. In there I explain my understanding of why Joseph practiced it. It is not what most folks suggest. I should add I considered information from the polygamist community during the years of considering the topic. I have read most, but not all of Ogden Kraut's information. Listening to those who believe intensely about the subject is something I felt I was required to do before reaching any conclusion on the matter.

There was news on this topic of Joseph Smith's plural wives while *Passing the Heavenly Gift* was still in manuscript form. I could have added information about the recently concluded DNA testing. That is a study which has been updating through additional tests, and as a result there was another study in the news. The article was in the Deseret News on November 10, 2007.³⁶ We ought to be very open and fearless about searching for truth. They have been trying to figure out all of the genetic markers that relate to Joseph Smith and his purported, prodigious sexual exploits with the plural wives. As of a year and a half ago, the last remaining trail that could have led to Joseph Smith having sired a child came to a dead end. Right now the only children conclusively Joseph Smith's are those children born to Emma Smith. That is it. We have that story about Eliza R. Snow and that pregnancy, but even if you accept the account there was no progeny from that. You can put Eliza R. Snow on your list to investigate further, if you like. Nevertheless, Joseph Smith fathered children only with Emma Smith.

³⁶ *DNA Tests Rule Out 2 as Smith Descendants: Scientific Advances Prove No Genetic Link*, which is available on-line.

Joseph Smith, as I walk through the topic in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, got an answer to his inquiry concerning plural wives in 1829. It came to him as he was translating Jacob chapter 2 with Oliver Cowdery as scribe. This subject was just like the earlier encounter on the topic of baptism during translating the book which provoked him to inquire about the subject. As a result, John the Baptist appeared to him and both Joseph and Oliver were baptized. It was translating the Book of Mormon that was the trigger for the inquiry. He translated the Jacob 2 material and the topic of plural wives came up. This was during the year 1829.³⁷ He received an answer to his inquiry. The answer informed him about the eternal marriage covenant first. When something provokes a person to inquire of the Lord, particularly when what they are inquiring about is something that really matters to them and they would really like to get an answer, the answer usually contains at least two parts. In the one, the answer responds to the inquiry. In the other, the Lord tells mankind what matters to the Lord. The problem is a pretext, used by the Lord, to drive the inquiry. The answer to the inquiry includes much more than the subject about which the prophet inquires.

For example, in the case of the Brother of Jared, the inquiry was about the interior lighting on the barges under construction.³⁸ That inquiry was used by the Lord as a convenient introduction to something that mattered a great deal more.³⁹ The Lord wanted to talk about the redemption of Mahonri from the fall,⁴⁰ taking him back into His presence, and then give to him a plenary tour through the endowment so he could understand the mysteries of God.⁴¹ In other words, how everything in creation fits together. But the problem the man approached the Lord with was merely the practical problem of interior lighting.

Likewise, Joseph approached the Lord regarding the topic of plural wives. The answer he received began with another topic: the eternal marriage covenant. For that portion of the revelation, the information did not respond to Joseph's inquiry, and was limited to a single wife. You can read the first 28 verses and the language revealing the eternal marriage covenant is always in the singular. It is "a wife" throughout.⁴² The eternal marriage covenant is between a man and "a wife." After the portion of the revelation involving the eternal marriage covenant concludes, the Lord addressed the topic Joseph

³⁷ Now keep in mind he began with the record of Lehi abridged by Mormon, and he went all the way through 116 pages of translated text. At that point he entrusted Martin Harris and the 116 pages were lost. Joseph commenced the translation from the point it had stopped, after the 116 pages, till the end. When he got to the end, he was told to go back and use the small plates of Nephi and translate them to replace the missing 116 pages. So he translated the small plates of Nephi in which we find the text running from 1 Nephi to the Words of Mormon. The portion of the text in which the topic of plural wives is mentioned appears in Jacob 2, toward the end of the small plates of Nephi. So the translation raising of the topic is found in Jacob 2, and occurs very late in the process. The Book of Mormon was by that time all but finished. He still had the rest of Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni and the Words of Mormon left to do, but the work of translating was essentially complete by the point and he inquires on the topic.

³⁸ Ether 2: 22.

³⁹ Ether Chapter 3.

⁴⁰ Ether 3: 13.

⁴¹ Ether 3: 18.

⁴² See D&C 132: 1-28.

asked about. Beginning at verse 29 and going through 39, the answer to his question is given. For that, there are two specific and quite limited circumstances. I discuss all that in *Passing the Heavenly Gift* and won't repeat it again here.

Joseph dictated Section 132 on July 12, 1843 at Hyrum's request. Hyrum asked it be written down so he could take it to Emma and persuade her it was a true principle. Joseph Smith dictated the revelation July 12, 1843, but by that time much more had been received on the subject of eternal marriage and plural wives. As a result, when it was dictated he included not just the first answer, but also a series of revelations related to this topic, all the way down through the events that were unfolding in Nauvoo at the time. There are at least 5 different revelations written into section 132, but there had been at least 6 revelations on the topic of plural marriage. One of those Joseph didn't bother putting into the text of Section 132. The one that is missing is one in which Joseph was commanded by an 'angel with a drawn sword' to take plural wives. He found the idea to be detestable. Joseph Smith complied after he had been told to comply by an angel who threatened him with being cut off. As I discuss in the book, I believe Eliza R. Snow's account is the most accurate one. According to Sister Snow, he was told he would forfeit priesthood if he did not comply with the requirement. Therefore, Joseph complied. It was a dreadful ordeal for him, but he complied. Despite the omission of that information from Section 132, the results of Joseph's compliance are there. The Lord pronounced that Joseph had laid his heart on the altar and complied with what he was loathe to do, and would be rewarded for his sacrifice. The Lord conferred upon Joseph his calling and election, and gave to him the sealing power.⁴³ All of that happened before 1833 because Joseph uses the sealing power in 1833.⁴⁴

Which leads us then to the topic I intend to write about here; I wanted to first remind you of this background before discussing The Mission of Elijah. Among the Latter-day Saints there is a narrative about Elijah you are welcome to accept. I am going to explain only how I understand the topic. You are free to reject anything I have to say, and conclude the traditional narrative we have been handed is the right story. It is just like Alma said above, we can "take of the waters of life freely and whosoever does not come the same is not compelled to come." You don't need to come with me. You don't need to come with any man. You can be content as you are and dismiss all I have to say as just my own suppositions. I should add that I've made this a matter of study and inquiry, and therefore I think I am right. It is settled enough in my mind I feel comfortable writing about it now, and will bear testimony of it at the end. For me, that is a serious matter.

Well, the story of Elijah actually began a long time ago. Joseph received a revelation stating that, "Three years previous to the death of Adam he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, 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*.⁴⁵ And they rose up and blessed Adam and called him Michael the Prince, the archangel. And the

⁴³ D&C 132: 45-50.

⁴⁴ See D&C 88: 1-5.

⁴⁵ The reference to "them" is not to the entire group, but to the seven High Priests.

Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him, I have set thee to be at the head, a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince forever over them. 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 generations. These things were all written in the book of Enoch.” (D&C 107: 53-57, emphasis added.) Enoch was one of the seven High Priests who were invited. By the way, the reference to “High Priests” in this account is not to the office we have in the church. In those days there was one, integrated priesthood. It was “after the Order of the Son of God.”⁴⁶ There were no divisions and no offices, but a single integrated priesthood that possessed all the rights, including sealing authority, which comes with The Order of the Son of God. Later the priesthood was divided, separated, and limited. It wasn’t that way in the beginning. In the beginning, it was one. With the passing of the various dispensations, and the limitations put on wicked men, priesthood was divided into three: Patriarchal, Melchizedek and Aaronic, including Levitical. In the church today we have two of those.⁴⁷ That original, unified priesthood will return again, in the end of the world.⁴⁸

Enoch was one of the seven High Priests who participated in that early meeting. So, here you have an interesting setting worth careful thought. It takes place on the earth, three years previous to the death of Adam. There was a gathering where there are seven priests who are qualified to stand before the Lord. The Lord comes and appears unto *THEM*—that is the seven who hold this priesthood and Adam. These seven who are present with Adam are direct lineal descendants of Adam, members of the same family. Therefore, I would suspect they had all things in common among them. If the Lord came and dwelt among them, even if only for this ceremonial moment, then this was the first Zion.

One of the participants in that moment on that day in that group was Enoch. It was Enoch who recorded it. He testified of it in a book which we will be able to read at some future point.⁴⁹

Here we have the first moment in the history of man that fits the definition of Zion. It is diminutive, temporary, and tightly confined to a narrow group. But we should take notice of it. It is not a thundering, congregation of 3.7 million temple recommend holders, all crowding about. It isn’t a crowd at all. It is instead a very small group. It is a group with whom it is possible for the Lord to come and dwell. Among their number is Enoch. So we see Enoch observed the pattern for Zion, even if his city was hundreds of years still in the future. He first saw it in a meeting held three years previous to the death of Adam. Once he saw the pattern, then it was his duty to work to repeat it, to teach it, to bring it about.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ D&C 107: 3.

⁴⁷ D&C 107: 1.

⁴⁸ Moses 6: 7.

⁴⁹ D&C 107: 57.

⁵⁰ This is not unlike Joseph Smith conducting Zion’s Camp, which Brigham Young observed. Later, when faced with the exodus from Nauvoo, Brigham mimicked Joseph’s organization and propounded “The Word and Will of the Lord” which is now Section 136 of the Doctrine & Covenants. It was, in Brigham’s mind, the Lord’s will to repeat the pattern Joseph showed them earlier.

If you want the criteria or the description of Zion, you can read it in the Book of Moses. In Moses 7:16 we find this description: “From that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them. But the Lord came and dwelt with his people and they dwelt in righteousness.” This is an interesting contrast. Here you have wars and bloodshed on the one hand, but then you have the Lord dwelling among people, who are living in peace and righteousness on the other hand. “The fear of the Lord was upon all nations so great was the glory of the Lord it was upon his people.” (*Id.* v. 17.) It was the “glory of the Lord upon his people” that intimidated the wicked. The Lord doesn’t show Himself to the wicked except to destruction, but the Lord shows Himself unto those who are prepared. The “glory of the Lord upon them” is what others find intimidating.⁵¹ And that was the case with these people of Enoch’s Zion.

“And the Lord blessed the land and they were blessed upon the mountains and upon the high places and did flourish.” (Moses 7: 17.) That is literal, by the way. Zion is not located in a valley, either in the past or in the future. Zion belongs on a high place. Read the prophecies and you will note that to be true. I’m not going to walk through that here. “And the Lord called his people Zion because they were of one heart and one mind, dwelt in righteousness, and there were no poor among them.” (*Id.* v. 18.) Of these, the words “and the Lord dwelt among them” are the most important. But He could not do so unless they were united. Becoming one and rising up to receive the proper order of things is but a prelude to the Lord’s presence. For us this poses a socio-economic problem because we do not think it is even wise to attempt to have no poor among us. We think people prosper according to their genius, and therefore have earned all they have; or correspondingly, deserve all they lack.⁵² When you are a family, as the original Zion, those competitive ideas are not even entertained.

We need to understand Enoch because he is important for us to be able to understand Elijah. Again, I am only explaining my understanding of the relevance of Elijah. I want to be clear this is not the same story other Latter-day Saints tell concerning Elijah. You are free to accept what other folks say because, well, who am I? I’m just another Mormon with my own opinion, and nothing more.

So, we have Enoch present at the first Zion (D&C 107: 48). Enoch was 25 years old when he was ordained under the hand of Adam. Then he was 65 when “Adam blessed him.” That ought to tell you something right there. In *Passing the Heavenly Gift* I suggest it is useful to view ordination as only an invitation. The invitation given through ordination is authoritative and available through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You should not expect to get an invitation through ordination elsewhere.⁵³

⁵¹ See, e.g., Exo. 34: 34-35.

⁵² This is the anti-Christ Korihor’s doctrine. See, Alma 30: 17.

⁵³ The only limit on that would involve John the Beloved or the Three Nephites, or the other angels mentioned in D&C 77: 11. I discussed these other sources of priestly power in *Beloved Enos* and it is beyond the scope of this essay so it will not be repeated.

However, an ordination or invitation is not the same thing as receiving the power of the priesthood. When you walk through the lives of all these priestly men, you see there is a two-fold event. First is an ordination. Then later there is empowerment or ratification of the ordination by heaven. Ordination involves men. Empowerment involves the heavens.⁵⁴ In the case of Nephi's brother Jacob, who was ordained by Nephi, we see the pattern set out. Jacob explains about his ordination by his brother,⁵⁵ and then later confirms, he "first obtained mine errand from the Lord." (Jacob 1: 17.) There is a difference between the invite extended through ordination, and the blessing that comes when the power is conferred by heaven. You can see that dichotomy again in the case of Enoch. Enoch was 25 years old when he was ordained by the hand of Adam, and forty years later he was 65 when Adam blessed him. Once the power came, "he saw the Lord, and he walked with him, and was before his face continually; and he walked with God 365 years making him 430 years old and he was translated." (D&C 107: 49.) So, he is ordained (the first requirement), then he is blessed (the second part), which has the effect of him becoming "continually before the Lord" (the intended result of ordination). We pick up the story once again in Moses 6:25: "And Enoch lived 65 years and begat Methuselah." Enoch had been ordained to the priesthood, but was not a father until he was "blessed" and entered the Lord's presence. These little details matter. Having a wife and being able to ascend to the Lord's presence are not unrelated.⁵⁶ They are instead, intimately connected. They matter more than you can possibly imagine unless you comprehend the Gospel of Christ. There is something coincidental with Enoch becoming approved by the Lord and Enoch becoming completed as a person; neither the man without the woman separately in the Lord.⁵⁷ They are both together. Therefore, the narrative we are reading assumes you might know something about the Gospel, and assumes when you see this that you will take note of it. It just presupposes you understand that man cannot be saved separately and singly.⁵⁸ Man is saved in a union designed, like God, to produce progeny. Without the woman there is no salvation for man. There is no happiness without the woman, and when you manage to cajole, intimidate, berate and belittle a spouse to you obtain from her (or him) reluctant submission, you haven't produced anything worthy of eternal preservation. You haven't produced anything that God will take note of and say, "Hey! This looks like Heaven. Let's hold on to this for all eternity. Because this is an environment inside which we can produce progeny and they will grow up to inherit worthy opportunities from their parents."

If you have read the Tenth Parable,⁵⁹ you will recall the thing that caused the stirring to begin among the angels was something on earth that looked like Heaven. There was a man and a woman whose experience and circumstances mirrored the same kind of things that the angels, who are always watching, recognized from where they come from. They got the Lord and He came and evaluated, concluding to save this union into eternity. He

⁵⁴ See D&C 121: 36. This is why priesthood power is so rare a commodity, appearing only infrequently on the earth.

⁵⁵ See 2 Ne. 6: 2.

⁵⁶ Man is not completed until married. But marriage is not completed until an enduring relationship exists.

⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 11: 11.

⁵⁸ See D&C 132: 15-17.

⁵⁹ *The Missing Virtue*, found in *Ten Parables*.

gave the angels a “to do list” for the preservation of the couple; hence the title of the parable. The angels then got busy with the assignment, and eighteen years later there was fruit worthy of storing in the Lord’s storehouse.⁶⁰

Returning to the record in the Book of Moses, Enoch had fathered a child and “Enoch journeyed in the land among the people, and as he journeyed the spirit of God descended out of Heaven and abode upon him; and he heard a voice from heaven, saying: Enoch, my son, prophecy unto this people.” (Moses 6: 27.) It goes by real quick, but in this verse God just took Fatherhood over Enoch as His son. You ought to note that because that means something too. The phrase “Enoch, my son,” lets you know Enoch has arrived in the place where priesthood is intended to bring him. The direction given to Enoch by God is this: “prophecy unto this people, and say unto them—Repent, for thus saith the Lord: I am angry with this people and my fierce anger is kindled against them for their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off. And for these many generations, since the day that I created them, they have gone astray, and have denied me, and have sought their own counsels in the dark; and in their own abominations have they devised murder, and have not kept the commandments, which I have given unto the father, Adam.” (Moses 6: 27-28.) As soon as Enoch is restored to God’s bosom, to the abode of the Father, to fellowship with the Church of the Firstborn, or in other words, when he receives power in his priesthood; immediately he receives a commission to cry repentance. His message, like the message of any true prophet, is for man to repent. Because there won’t be a single soul saved if he does not repent and return to God.

“And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying: Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; [that doesn’t mean what you think it means] wherefore am I thy servant?” This comment about being “slow of speech” does not mean he is inarticulate or somehow impaired. He is not at all “slow” as we use the word. He was a brilliant man. He was an articulate man. He was a most capable man. He wrote the record which Moses preserved in his account, and Joseph Smith restored to us by revelation. He is always envisioned anciently as the Great Scribe. By the Egyptians he is thought by antiquity to be the one that brings wisdom, who brought knowledge. So this phrase probably means something else.

He is “slow of speech,” quite frankly, because he would rather think about it than talk about it. He would rather consider a matter carefully than speak quickly about it. He would rather be left alone than to make public declarations. He would rather have his privacy, his family, and a few close intimate friends, than he would to minister to people who don’t give a damn about what he has to say. He would have preferred to avoid contact with those who think he is a wild man come among them,⁶¹ because they believe he has no business delivering the message. He was trusted by the Lord precisely because the message was the Lord’s and Enoch would not add to it because he craved attention.

⁶⁰ See Jacob 5: 74.

⁶¹ Moses 6: 38.

In other words, being “slow of speech” is a qualifier, not a handicap, for Enoch as the Lord’s messenger.

Well, the Lord wouldn’t take Enoch’s reluctance. He told Enoch: “Go forth, do as I have commanded.” (*Id.* v. 32.) The Lord says, “Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good. Say unto this people: Choose ye this day, to serve the Lord God who made you. Behold my Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify.” (*Id.* vs. 32-34.)

Enoch is told at this point, though he was a person who was “slow of speech,” or in other words a reluctant draftee, that the mountains will flee before him and the rivers will turn their course and Enoch will abide in the Lord and the Lord will abide in Enoch.⁶² A person who is “quick of speech,” given the power to speak and alter the location of mountains and rivers is completely unqualified to receive the power. They must be “slow of speech” or, in other words, must be willing to proceed meekly, with long suffering, kindness, gentleness and unfeigned love as they minister in the priesthood.⁶³ This is always the case. Therefore, only few ever receive priesthood power from God.⁶⁴

These things happen to Enoch when he is 65 years old. But it will be some several hundred years later before the word of Enoch has the effect the Lord promises to Enoch at this point. The Lord has all things in front of him, and therefore could see where this was going.⁶⁵ But Enoch, although a seer,⁶⁶ who is down here in this fallen world, has not developed to this point yet. What the Lord gave to Enoch is not akin to “pixie dust.” These great gifts of the Spirit are always acquired in exactly the same way, in every generation when they appear, by everyone who acquires them. It is always through the exercise of the person’s faith. The way people exercise their faith is always by conforming their outward actions to their innermost true beliefs, even when the actions taken are difficult. Even when the Lord asks of you something you are very reluctant to place upon the altar. Even when everyone will hate you for what it is you do. Nevertheless, Enoch did what he was asked. We haven’t time to fully discuss Enoch’s ministry and I wouldn’t want to rob you of the joy of discovering for yourself what great things then unfolded. It is covered in Moses Chapter 6, but we are going to have to move on.

I do want to take note the Lord gives to Enoch a description of the Holy Ghost. That description is found in Moses 6: 61: “Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment.” That is the definition of the Holy Ghost. On the list was the word “Comforter.” It is the definition

⁶² Moses 6: 34.

⁶³ See D&C 121: 41-42.

⁶⁴ D&C 121: 40.

⁶⁵ D&C 130: 7.

⁶⁶ Moses 6: 36.

that Jesus will endorse later.⁶⁷ I don't know if He had the record of Enoch in front of Him when He made that endorsement. But it was Jesus speaking to Enoch at the time this revelation was given, and the "Comforter" shows up as a common descriptor.

If you take verse 61 as the definition of the Holy Ghost, then the Holy Ghost is the "record of Heaven." The Holy Ghost is the "Comforter." The Holy Ghost is "the peaceable things of immortal glory." The Holy Ghost is "the truth of all things." The Holy Ghost is "that which quickeneth all things which maketh alive all things." The Holy Ghost is "that which knoweth all things and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment." You will get a lot closer to understanding about why it is that the Holy Ghost is a "personage of spirit that dwelleth within you" and is not a personage of tabernacle because otherwise it could not dwell within you"⁶⁸ and other such interesting things, if you consider carefully the definition of the Holy Ghost given by the Lord to Enoch in this verse.

Well, Enoch launches his ministry, cries repentance to his generation, and at some point in his ministry he does accomplish what the Lord said he would do some hundreds of years earlier. Skipping forward to Moses 7:13 we read: "And so great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him." This is also one of the unique attributes about Zion. The Lord will fight the battles for Zion, when Zion exists.⁶⁹ You will not need to have a weapon's budget in Zion's camp. It doesn't happen that way. The battle to be fought is fought by the Lord. The prophecy given through Joseph Smith about the last days predicts the wicked decide they will not take on Zion, because Zion is too terrible. They will reach that conclusion entirely because of the presence of the Lord there.⁷⁰ It is not because of munitions. In fact, that same description includes a statement about Zion's residents. They are those who will *not* take up arms against their neighbor, but instead flee to Zion. They are the only ones that aren't killing others.⁷¹

Which then begs the question: Why is the remnant that will build Zion also going to "tear in pieces and trample under foot" the gentiles?⁷² Why or how do they do that? Oh, stop thinking of Zion as a bunch of action film heroes, a Rambo with a damn howitzer in his hand, and instead start thinking about the image of Babylon to be torn in pieces and be trodden under foot.⁷³ You do not need anything other than the truth to tear in pieces the Gentile's false kingdoms. And I can assure you, it will all be trodden under foot by the truth. All that is needed is the truth proclaimed by someone sent by Him, then rejected

⁶⁷ John 14: 16-17.

⁶⁸ D&C 130: 22.

⁶⁹ See, e.g., D&C 45: 67; 64: 43; 49: 27; 3 Ne. 20: 42; 21: 29.

⁷⁰ D&C 45: 67.

⁷¹ *Id.*, v. 68.

⁷² See Christ's description in 3 Ne. 16: 8, 15.

⁷³ Daniel 2: 44-45.

by those claiming they are God's chosen, saved people, and the Lord will bring the entire Gentile idol down to ashes. Then it will be trodden under foot.

Zion's final development in Enoch's day is described in these words: "The fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish." (Moses 7: 17.) That is where you will find Zion in Enoch's day. Not on a plain and not in a valley. You will find it in the high places on the mount. Not merely symbolically. No one will have a height from which to overlook into the goings-on of Zion. They will be beneath, and Zion will be above. Zion's presence will be terrible. For the wicked, it will be the same problem Israel had before the mountain when Moses was upon the mountain communing with the Lord.⁷⁴

Mountaintops, as we all know, are acceptable substitutes for temples. I doubt the kind of people who initially build Zion in any day have had, or are going to have, the means with which to build what needs to be built. It is of no concern, however, because the Lord has a way of making due. "The Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart, and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." (Moses 7: 18.) There were no poor among them physically; there were no poor among them spiritually. They did not compete, they cooperated. They did not envy, they shared. They did not pass a zoning law. I will tell you how to ruin Zion, how to keep it from coming, pass a zoning law. Decide you're going to 'police the neighborhood.' Start thinking you should have restrictive covenants so you can enforce views upon one another. The instant you start to regulate one another, Zion is gone. It slips right between your fingers. No man needs to say to another: 'know ye the Lord; for they all are going to know him who dwell in Zion.' The new song to be sung presupposes the residents of Zion will know the Lord.⁷⁵

I thought about writing a fictional account of this curious city where those people who have several children live in big houses, while those who have no children live in small houses. In the place, no one has a job or schedule, but everyone works. One day the lead character gets up, walks outside, and notices that the lawn needs to be mowed. So he goes and finds a lawn mower and starts mowing. He mows at his house, then the next, then finds he has spent days mowing grass and is across the city to the other side. Everywhere he has been he found grass needing mowing, and he took care of it. He finishes after a couple of weeks, then returns to his house and says, "Hey, look at that the grass has grown again." So he starts mowing again. He does this because he feels like mowing the grass at the time. He just wants to.

Then after the season, he notices there is only one person working in the local bakery. He had never worked in a bakery, but he decides to go see what it is like to work in a bakery—and he rather likes that. So he spends the next seasons in the bakery doing that. The following year he wonders whatever happened to the lawns. They have been cut

⁷⁴ See Exo. 20: 18-21 for a description of how the unworthy react to God's appearance. See Mormon 9: 2-5 for the reason for this reaction.

⁷⁵ See D&C 84: 98-102.

since the spring, but he doesn't know who has been cutting them. He goes on his way to find out who has been cutting the lawn because he liked doing that and he has something in common with whoever is now mowing the grass. He would like to know how they like it and what their pattern for taking care of the work has become. He wants to ask them: "How did you do that?" On his way, he gets distracted by the orchard needing harvesting, so he spends that fall harvesting there.

So the story just ends, with what appears to be total chaos. A completely ungoverned society, where oddly enough everyone is at peace, but no one is in control. No one has a job, but everyone works, and the only thing that motivates any resident is what needs to be done. "Hey, let's take care of this" is the only motivation. And they do it for as long as they feel like doing it, and then they do something else. It is a story I've considered writing, but have never done so. But now the idea for the story is in this talk, so you can write it in your own mind.

Our vision of Zion is regimented, regulated. We're Mormons after all! We want to be controlled. A man cannot be saved unless there's a boss at the top. "This is your assignment." "We are going to call you; we are going to sustain you." "We are going to put your conscripted ass in this position and park it there and you must *magnify* that job!"—I am not sure anyone knows what "magnify" means, but I tell you, you better be calling attention to yourself so that everyone notices. We can't have the invisible lawn mower. We can't have the invisible baker. We can't have the invisible in harmony with everyone around them harvesting the orchard when it needs doing. Because this is the Zion Reich!—As soon as you do that, it is gone. It has slipped through your fingers. Zion is without compulsion.⁷⁶ Zion will occur when the Lord brings again Zion.⁷⁷ And it will happen perfectly naturally. But only among those who are fit to participate.

But we have to move on because we are trying to figure out what role Elijah occupies in this return of Zion.

Continuing in Moses 7: 20-21, 23: "And it came to pass that Enoch talked with the Lord; and he said unto the Lord: Surely Zion shall dwell in safety forever. But the Lord said unto Enoch: Zion have I blessed, but the residue of the people have I cursed. And it came to pass that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth; and he beheld, and lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven....And after that Zion was taken up into heaven, Enoch beheld, and lo, all the nations of the earth were before him;" and so on. Enoch and his city depart. Zion existed then it was taken to heaven and fled from this earth. Zion really never belongs here. When it comes, the Lord dwells among them, and in the process of time the city is taken to heaven. At least that was the case in the past. In the future, it will be established to throw down the kingdoms of this world and displace them.

We have looked at two examples; one from Section 107, and this one from the Book of Moses involving Enoch. Remember Enoch was there at the previous event described in

⁷⁶ D&C 121: 46.

⁷⁷ See 3 Nephi 16: 18, Isaiah 52: 8.

Section 107. These two moments of Zion have Enoch in common between them. But they also have two other things in common: They were one—united and in harmony with one another, and the Lord came and dwelt among them. Those are all essential for Zion.

Well, so Enoch and his city were taken up. Noah remained behind and the story continues. Before continuing, however, let me remind you again I am offering you my view. I am not offering you something which has been endorsed by anyone, although there are those folks on the fringe who have suggested some of the same things I believe. This next idea has been denounced by Elder Bruce R. McConkie. In any event, it is my view that Melchizedek was the new name given to Shem. Shem is, of course the son of Noah. When it is talking about the priesthood through the father's unto Noah⁷⁸ as the basis for a doctrinal interpretation⁷⁹ I do not believe that means there were generations separating Noah from Melchizedek. That is not how I read the verse. I read it to mean "through the fathers from Adam down to Noah." I think the connection between Noah and Melchizedek was immediate, father and son, Noah the father and Shem the son. If that is correct, the connection between Enoch's Zion and Melchizedek's City of Peace is much more direct. There is a connection between the two. Shem was an adult when he entered the Ark with his family. He would have known of, perhaps even known residents of the Zion of Enoch. These initial appearances of Zion in this world are connected because the first one, in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, occurs while Enoch is present. The second one occurs with Enoch in a city he established and taught for 365 years.⁸⁰ The third was with Shem, who would have known of Enoch, if he did not actually know him, if Shem is in fact Melchizedek.

The third Zion occurred when Melchizedek, who was acquainted with those earlier patriarchs who lived on the other side of the flood, established his City of Peace. Melchizedek or Shem was an adult when he entered the ark. He knew of Enoch and the options presented to mankind through Enoch. They would either be taken into heaven, or they would have to board the Ark.

At that moment in history God was going to destroy the world. A dilemma arises because a group living in the world had attained the status of Zion. Since they are in a state of Zion, the world could not destroy them.⁸¹ It is fair game for the wicked to destroy the righteous. The wicked are allowed to destroy the righteous all the time in history. If you don't believe that then go ask Amulek, who suggested to Alma they stretch forth their hands and use the power of God to stop the killing of innocent believers.⁸² Alma rejected

⁷⁸ D&C 84: 14.

⁷⁹ Bruce R. McConkie, for example, taught: "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.*" (D. & C. 84:14.) In other words, there seem to have been at least two generations between Melchizedek and Shem." (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 475.) Deseret Book has just discontinued printing *Mormon Doctrine*. Perhaps Elder McConkie's views will be less important to the Saints in the future.

⁸⁰ Moses 7: 68.

⁸¹ Moses 7: 17.

⁸² Alma 14: 10.

the idea saying “the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory; and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just.” (Alma 14: 11.) These people are received up into glory. These people who are righteous are slain this way because the wicked get to kill them. They get to kill them because God will judge the wicked by taking their lives. That is the system. God can slay the wicked, but God cannot slay the righteous. The wicked kill the righteous.

The most righteous man who ever lived was allowed to be killed by the wicked. In fact, it was indispensable for the wicked to kill Him, because otherwise there could not have been an atonement made. Therefore, Christ was slain at the hands of wicked men. But there is always a problem when it comes to Zion. The wicked cannot destroy it, and God cannot do so, because it is contrary to the justice of God to do the killing. So what does God do to solve this dilemma? Well, what was introduced was a new status for a portion of humanity. That new status is to take them into heaven and translate them into a new condition above the status of mortality on this earth, but the Lord did not (perhaps could not) take people into heaven without giving them an associated calling to justify taking them. There is no reason ever to take a person off the earth, even if they are righteous, unless there is some calling to justify it. Abraham was the father of the righteous, yet he died and was buried. Christ died, and He was more righteous than anyone that ever lived. He died and was buried. Though He rose again the third day, He was not spared death by being translated. God does not take any man off the earth through translating them unless they have a calling to minister. So, the City of Enoch received a calling to minister to others. They were given 2 callings: Their first assignment is as ministering angels,⁸³ not only here but elsewhere to other people.⁸⁴ The second calling (and I don't want to appear irreverent in saying this), but they are the cheering group backing up the Lord at His Second Coming. They come when He comes in the clouds with his angels; that group is Enoch's and Melchizedek's people.⁸⁵ They are the certifiers, the testifiers, the chorus, they are the entourage.

There is a reason why our tin-horn dictators and our phony idols have an entourage. It is to mimic the real deal, because when the Lord comes again in His glory, He is going to come with an entourage. The pretenders mimic the real thing. Oddly they are “inspired” to do so, because somewhere deep within we all know the Lord has His “hosts” who come with Him. We reenact something Divine without even knowing it testifies of Christ.

So, to save Enoch's City, they got the calling to minister and accompany the Lord at His return. Melchizedek, who was acquainted with Enoch's conditions, in my view, had to be offered the same option. Melchizedek should have been able to leave with Enoch. But he also had the option to remain and enter the ark. Noah was also qualified to leave, but was

⁸³ D&C 130: 5.

⁸⁴ See *TPJS* p. 170.

⁸⁵ Jude 1: 14.

asked to remain. All of those who were saved on the ark were aware of the possibility of translation with Enoch's City, perhaps excepting only Ham's wife, Egyptus.⁸⁶

It seems like a reasonable request by Melchizedek to be permitted, at the end of his mortal sojourn, to join Enoch. After he finished his ministry following the Flood, he should have been given the option to also take qualified people with him into heaven, just as Enoch had done before.

In the course of time, Melchizedek established a city, a City of Peace, a city of righteousness. He was a king and a priest, and he presided over his people in righteousness.⁸⁷ You should read the word "presided" as "taught" rather than a strong-man.⁸⁸ Abraham, who was converted to the truth, came to Melchizedek and paid tithes.⁸⁹ They had a ceremonial get-together, which among other things included a sacral meal.⁹⁰ Melchizedek, who has been waiting for this moment, *'hands the football'* to Abraham (or in other words appoints the new presiding High Priest) and says in effect: "At last! Me and my people are gone!"⁹¹ So, once again Zion flees.

Notice, if you will, that the Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God has been renamed the Priesthood of Enoch,⁹² and then renamed again the Melchizedek Priesthood.⁹³ The reason for renaming the priesthood was because these priests established Zion, took people into heaven, and were Preachers of Righteousness.

For Melchizedek we have an extended explanation of him in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, in Genesis Chapter 14, beginning with verse 25:

"And Melchizedek lifted up his voice and blessed Abram. Now Melchizedek was a man of faith, who wrought righteousness; and when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch," (Vs. 25-27.) He's got the same covenant as had been previously made with Enoch. He possesses the same, single High Priesthood which was in the beginning. When there was only one, and not three, orders, Melchizedek is one of those who held this High Priesthood. Continuing, "It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God; And it was delivered unto men by the calling of his

⁸⁶ See Moses 7: 22; Abraham 1: 22-23.

⁸⁷ JST-Gen. 14: 36.

⁸⁸ Throughout the competition between Nephi and the older brothers, the word "ruler" is synonymous with "teacher" over them. See, e.g., 1 Ne. 2: 22; 2 Ne. 5: 19. When, therefore, a pretended "ruler" spends his time controlling and dominating others, but fails to teach them in the path of righteousness, he fails to qualify as a "ruler" and has abdicated his position before God.

⁸⁹ JST-Gen. 14: 36-39.

⁹⁰ Gen. 14: 18-19.

⁹¹ See JST-Gen. 14: 32—I am, of course, converting the dialogue into modern language. There was a complete sense of relief and fulfillment when Abraham arrived and the city could move up.

⁹² D&C 76: 57.

⁹³ D&C 107: 3.

own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as believed on his name.” (Vs. 28-29.)

This is how this priesthood is delivered. It is given by God’s “own voice” calling to the man. In my view, Joseph Smith tells us when he got this Melchizedek Priesthood. And in my view (which is not the view taught in church), it did not involve Peter James and John. I think they, like others, delivered keys to Joseph, but Melchizedek Priesthood came to Joseph the same as it came to Melchizedek, and the same as it is delivered to anyone: “by the calling of [God’s] own voice” as the verse above states. Joseph said he received it through “the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county.” (D&C 128: 21.) I am persuaded that Peter James and John like other angelic ministers came to deliver keys, but not Melchizedek Priesthood because the priesthood of Melchizedek comes only from God’s own voice. Joseph knew this, of course, because he translated the above verses of the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis Chapter 14. Just as was done anciently, “it was delivered unto [Joseph Smith] by the calling of [God’s] own voice, according to his own will.” We can ordain people all day long, but the manner the ordination assumes power is through “the calling of God’s own voice.” That’s the description given by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the translation of Genesis 14. Joseph mentions that event took place from the voice of God to him in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, as set out in his letter now found in D&C 128: 21.⁹⁴

As an aside, D&C 128 is a letter Joseph Smith wrote in Nauvoo. It is late in his ministry. He wrote it while in hiding in Nauvoo. He was trying to stay in contact with the Saints. I make no reference to this in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, but it is another example, just as it is a glaring omission from the last testimony of Oliver Cowdery that Joseph also makes no mention of Elijah’s appearance in his letter (now Section 128). In the list of the angelic ministrants who came to Joseph Smith in his letter composed in 1842, six years *after* the appearance of Elijah in the Kirtland Temple, Elijah is not mentioned. Likewise, throughout the Nauvoo time period up to 1844, Joseph refers to Elijah’s coming as a future, not a past event. If the return of Elijah is a still future event in 1842, 1843, and 1844, then the appearance of Elijah in the Kirtland Temple cannot fulfill the promised mission of Elijah.

But we are ahead of the story. Let’s go back to the ministry of the man called Melchizedek for a moment. Once again, we see a repetition of the pattern where there is a prophet-minister as well as a people who respond to the message of repentance. The people left their wickedness and established a City of Peace,⁹⁵ where the Lord could come to dwell with them.⁹⁶ In both Enoch’s and Melchizedek’s cities, when they obtain this condition they are taken up into heaven. Zion, in the form of these cities taken into heaven, evaporates from the scriptural record after that.

⁹⁴ There is an essay written by Andrew F. Ehat on this topic. He writes about the difference between conferral of Melchizedek Priesthood, by God’s voice, and a subsequent visit by Peter, James and John to deliver keys. See, *The Joseph Smith 1839 Account of Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood: A Personal Essay*. The “voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer” is the source of the priesthood that made Joseph and Oliver apostles, as referred to in Section 18 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

⁹⁵ JST-Gen. 14: 36.

⁹⁶ *Id.* v. 34.

We do have the Nephite experience, where the Lord came and He dwelt among them.⁹⁷ The corridor was opened and the Lord and His angels descended to them.⁹⁸ But they were not taken up into heaven through the ascent, and for a moment I want to stay on the idea of Zion's ascent up the heavenly corridor. The Nephite experience, as with the first Zion experience, resulted in the righteous living to old age, and then dying rather than being taken into heaven. All of those with Adam died, except Enoch and his people. Enoch's people did not die, but were instead taken up to heaven. Then Melchizedek and his city were likewise taken up into heaven. In all the subsequent experiences, when the Lord visited with people, whether it is in Jerusalem, or whether it is in the new world, it never again resulted in Zion ascending into heaven. That didn't happen. But there are other incidents which occurred, involving individuals who made the ascent. Moses was taken up into heaven. The last person to make the ascent was Elijah.⁹⁹ Let's turn to some of what the record tells us about the ministry of Elijah.

Elijah is an interesting fellow. He raised someone from the dead,¹⁰⁰ he helped the widow of Zarephath whom he miraculously saved through a drought,¹⁰¹ and he went upon the mountain to be taught by the Lord. On the mountain he encountered the Lord, who told him the way in which he can recognize the voice of God forever thereafter.¹⁰² He confronted the priests of Baal, and called down fire from heaven.¹⁰³ This last incident was rather a remarkable demonstration. Before calling fire down, he had water dumped all over the altar of twelve stones, until a trench around the altar was filled with water.¹⁰⁴ Then he called down fire from heaven, which consumed the sacrifice, the water and the altar itself.¹⁰⁵ He then killed 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of the groves.¹⁰⁶ All of this going on rather testifies Elijah is now in possession of some of the power and spirit of God that belonged to the order of Enoch and Melchizedek order.¹⁰⁷ In his career, he developed to the point that he became quite adept at its use. So much so that he stopped being inhibited about public displays.

Well, the moment came when Elijah was going to leave. It is interesting because his coming departure was not a secret. When Elisha and Elijah were on their way to the place where Elijah was going to be taken up into heaven, as they were going along there were folks (also called "prophets") who said, in effect, "Hey, Elisha you are loosing Elijah today. This is the day he is going."¹⁰⁸ It was not a secret. Everyone knew it was going to happen. So, Elijah was on his way and Elisha was with him, and Elisha wanted to know if

⁹⁷ See 3 Nephi beginning with Chapter 11.

⁹⁸ See 3 Nephi 11: 8; 17: 24.

⁹⁹ See 2 Kings 2: 11.

¹⁰⁰ 1 Kings 17: 17-22.

¹⁰¹ 1 Kings 17: 9-16.

¹⁰² 1 Kings 19: 11-12.

¹⁰³ 1 Kings 18: 18-40.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.* vs. 33-35.

¹⁰⁵ *Id.* vs. 37-39.

¹⁰⁶ *Id.* vs. 20, 40.

¹⁰⁷ See JST Gen. 14: 30-32.

¹⁰⁸ See 2 Kings 2: 3-7.

he could obtain the same priesthood. He asked: “I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.”¹⁰⁹ Elijah, recognized this is not a connection which men form among men, but this kind of connection is one that requires a connection to heaven. Therefore, he told Elisha, “it is a hard thing” to accomplish this. However, if Elisha was there when the corridor opens and the fiery ascent was shown to him, Elisha would have this priesthood conferred by heaven upon him.¹¹⁰ This was because when the heavens open the presence of God is always there. A person cannot behold such things without possessing this priesthood.¹¹¹ The witness, if he was there, will have the power conferred upon him to stand in the presence of God and live. Elisha was told, in effect, “if you witness it, it will be yours to know and have.” Elisha was in fact with him when he was taken up.¹¹² In a sign of benevolence and charity, Elijah cast his mantle down and Elisha picked it up.¹¹³ Then as Elisha returned from the ascent of Elijah, as he got to the river Jordan he struck it with the mantle, and the river stopped and he walked over on dry ground.¹¹⁴ Elisha then knew this priestly power had descended from heaven upon him,¹¹⁵ and Elisha’s ministry continued from there.

All of this is, in my view, the reason why Elijah must return. Elijah went up the same fiery ascent as the earlier translations. In the last days the system that began at first with Zion going up to heaven, will transpose. It is going to open again, but this time instead of Zion leaving, Zion is going to stay and the residents of Zion will be joined by those who were translated. Zion will not return through a fiery ascent. Those who ascended will come again back through the corridor to join a small group prepared to endure such glory. There is this marvelous description given to Enoch of when they return, they will fall on one another’s necks and they will kiss one another.¹¹⁶ Zion below and Zion above will be reunited.

The purpose of the return of Elijah, which Joseph talked about being a yet future event in Nauvoo, has everything to do with the return of Zion and the Lord’s Second Coming. You can look at the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* to find references to what I’m covering next. But that book is taken from the diaries of those who were present and recorded what they heard Joseph say. The diaries of the audience on the days Joseph gave the talks have been amalgamated into a single account which appears as the *Teachings*. These various accounts were compiled into a consolidated version and edited for grammar, punctuation and spelling, which is what you have in the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. But if you want the actual journals or diaries, that is found in the *Words of Joseph Smith*. Unfortunately that book is now out of print, and it is extravagantly expensive if you decide to buy a copy. The last I heard they were going for over \$300, and, that copy was not in very good condition. However, you can find a copy through an LDS electronic library rather inexpensively. I understand there is work being

¹⁰⁹ *Id.* v. 9.

¹¹⁰ *Id.* v. 10.

¹¹¹ D&C 84: 21-22.

¹¹² 2 Kings 2: 11-12. Interestingly he cried out, as the event took place: “My father, my father!”

¹¹³ *Id.* v. 13.

¹¹⁴ *Id.* v. 14.

¹¹⁵ Others knew this as well. See 2 Kings 2: 15.

¹¹⁶ Moses 7: 63.

done by Andy Ehat to bring it back into print, as well as to add a second volume to it which is to include comparable information taken from the Kirtland era talks of Joseph Smith. The *Words of Joseph Smith* in its current form is a compilation of only the Nauvoo era discourses. If the new project gets completed, it will be a two volume set covering both Nauvoo and Kirtland.

Well, to resume the topic, we go to January of 1844 in Nauvoo. This is some eight years post-Kirtland Temple appearance of Elijah.¹¹⁷ On January 7, 1844, Joseph delivered a talk in front of Robert E. Foster's hotel, near the Nauvoo Temple. I am going to quote from Wilford Woodruff's Journal as the account of the talk that day. Joseph discussed the importance of Elijah, and said the following:

“The Bible says, ‘I will send you Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord Come that he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children & the hearts of the Children to their fathers lest I Come & smite the whole earth with a Curse,’ Now the word turn here should be translated (bind or seal) But what is the object of this important mission or how is it to be fulfilled, The keys are to be delivered the spirit of Elijah is to Come,¹¹⁸ The gospel to be established the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, & and the Saints to Come up as saviors on Mount Zion but how are they to become Saviors on mount Zion[?] by building temples erecting Baptismal fonts & going forth & receiving all the ordinances, Baptisms, Confirmations, washings, annointings ordinations & sealing powers upon our heads in behalf of all our Progenitors who are dead & redeem them that they may Come forth in the first resurrection & be exalted to thrones of glory with us, &”¹¹⁹

What comes next is quite important, and I want to call attention to it before reading it. Joseph is about to lament the condition of the Saints then in Nauvoo. And it is quite important, I think, that this critical talk given by Joseph is recorded by no one in the audience other than Wilford Woodruff.¹²⁰ Thankfully Bro. Woodruff did so. But here is a statement of such terrible importance that it can change your entire understanding of what Joseph was teaching, and only a single person present bothers to record it. Well, Joseph laments:

“I would to God that this temple was now done that we might go into it & go to work & improve our time & make use of the seals while they are on the earth & the Saints have none to much time to save & redeem their dead, & gather together their living relatives that they may be saved also, before the earth will be smitten & the Consumption decreed falls upon the world.”¹²¹

¹¹⁷ D&C 110 is dated April 3, 1836.

¹¹⁸ Notice Joseph's phrasing is future. The keys “are to be delivered” rather than they “had been delivered.” The “spirit of Elijah is to come” and not that it had already come in 1836.

¹¹⁹ *Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 318, spelling and punctuation as in original, all footnotes omitted, from this and subsequent excerpts which follow.

¹²⁰ Willard Richards only notes the weather “was somewhat unpleasant.” As to the talk, he recorded Joseph spoke “on sealing the hearts of the fathers to the children & the heart of the children to the fathers.” *Id.*, p. 319.

¹²¹ *Id.*, p. 318.

Joseph lamented that the “seals” were still, with him “on the earth.” But he noted that the Saints should be making use of them, in the Temple, “while they are [yet] on the earth.” It implies, of course, that the available time was drawing to an end. That the haste required by the Lord¹²² to have the Nauvoo Temple built was because a real threat existed that these seals were going to be lost to the Saints.¹²³ The consequence of failing to have these things accomplished while the seals were on the earth was that “the earth will be smitten¹²⁴ and the consumption decreed¹²⁵ would fall upon the world.” Joseph had made a hard bargain to get time in which to rescue some portion of the family of man from this looming catastrophe.¹²⁶

This is the talk, and this the place in the talk, when Joseph laments the Saints’ failure to accept the truth. In the context of Elijah’s mission, turning hearts to the fathers, and using the seals then available on the earth, Joseph speaks of our hard heads, resistance to truth, and flying to pieces when something new is taught about the work of God. He continues:

“Their has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation it has been like splitting hemlock knots with a Corn doger for a wedge & a pumpkin for a beetle, Even the Saints are slow to understand I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God, but we frequently see some of them after suffering all they have for the work of God will fly to pieces like glass as soon as any thing Comes that is Contrary to their traditions, they Cannot stand the fire at all, How many will be able to abide a Celestial law & go through to receive their exhaltation I am unable to say but many are Called & few are Chosen.”¹²⁷

The Saints of that day were unwilling to hear from Joseph about these doctrines. Therefore they left us with a single version of his talk about this most important subject, given on January 7, 1844. Joseph would be dead six months later. The catastrophe of his death loss was, of course, unanticipated by them at the time. Therefore their indifference may seem somewhat excusable. When, however, the importance of the topic is weighed in the balance, how is anyone to conclude that either they, or we, are excused from careful, solemn and ponderous investigation into this topic? Even if considering it causes us to fear, we should trust that a loving Heavenly Father will not leave us in the dark about such matters. And, of course, the first step to repenting and reclaiming what God offers is always to awaken and arise from your pitiful condition lying in the dust. To repent, and return to Him will always allow us to regain His grace. But unless we awaken, we are not in a position to even attempt to repent. We don’t know we need to! We remain in our slumber, lying in the dust, unredeemed, unawake, and without understanding which might have saved some few of us.

¹²² D&C 124: 26, 31.

¹²³ *Id.* v. 32.

¹²⁴ D&C 2: 3.

¹²⁵ D&C 87: 6.

¹²⁶ D&C 124: 1. I discuss this verse at length in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*.

¹²⁷ *Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 319.

Joseph revisited the topic of Elijah's meaning again in a talk given on March 10, 1844. When he picks up the subject again to discuss Elijah, he says, "The spirit power & calling of Elijah is that ye have power to hold the keys of the revelations ordinances, oracles powers & endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood & of the Kingdom of God on the Earth & to receive, obtain and perform all the ordinances belonging to the Kingdom of God even unto the sealing of the hearts of the fathers unto the children & the hearts of the **children unto the fathers even those who are in heaven.**"¹²⁸

Notice the connection between these parties. It is not to connect you to your kindred dead. They are in the world of spirits. They are not "in heaven." Joseph is talking about a connection of your hearts to "the hearts of the fathers who are in heaven." That is the mission of Elijah. If you will receive it, this is the spirit of Elijah: That we redeem our dead, but then connect ourselves with our "fathers which are in heaven." Our dead are saved through us, but we are saved by connecting to our "fathers in heaven." Who are our "fathers in heaven" to whom we must be connected? If all we do is connect ourselves to our dead, then neither they nor we are connected to the "fathers in heaven." So it becomes quite important to understand why Joseph is talking in these strange terms. Who are these "fathers in heaven" to whom we must form a connection? We want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those which dwell "in heaven." Merely connecting the earthly to their kindred dead will not suffice. Joseph is explaining something more cosmic in this integration of generations. It is greater than mere genealogy.

Remember, those who are in the spirit world, our dead, are in need of redemption. They don't have these ordinances yet. We are supposed to take care of that for them. Our dead are the ones that need redemption from us, and cannot be the "fathers in heaven" Joseph is discussing. They cannot be "in heaven," because they need us to be redeemed. We need to be redeemed by our connecting to "the fathers who are in heaven."

This is important enough for Joseph to have focused on it in the remaining months of his life. As we have seen, Joseph expressed exasperation at the hard heads of the Saints, who would not listen to new information. Let us not repeat the error. We must do something more to avoid being "utterly wasted" at the Lord's return.¹²⁹ We must connect ourselves to "the fathers in heaven." Joseph understood this doctrine.

Unlike most Latter-day Saints, it is my view that the idea you go to the temple and do genealogical work to respond to the coming of Elijah does not, indeed cannot, conform to the description here from Joseph Smith. Our ancestors, our kindred dead, need to be redeemed. They all have an interest in you and your life. The work that is being done on behalf of the dead needs to be done. But the gulf which must be bridged through the work of Elijah, in the words of Joseph Smith "to form a bond or connection," is not completed unless we have been sealed to "the fathers in heaven." Those there include, of

¹²⁸ *Id.* p. 329, emphasis added.

¹²⁹ D&C 2: 3.

course, as we have seen, Enoch's City and Melchizedek's City, and extend further to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.¹³⁰

Well, we should ask ourselves about Elijah's role in all this. If the "fathers in heaven" are going to return, then what must be done to prepare for them? If they will bring with them—or perhaps it might be more correct to invert that—if it is the Lord who will bring them, what must be done to live in His presence?¹³¹ How does a person qualify to survive such an appearance?¹³² What kind of priestly authority allows a man to behold God's face and live? These questions all have answers in the scriptures. They are not hidden from us. Joseph's revelations are as consistent as Joseph's sermons in giving us what we need to know to preserve ourselves for the day of the Lord's return.

All of this does involve Elijah. He is not, as we often tell ourselves, the last person to hold the sealing power. That would have been Peter.¹³³ Or, since we don't have accurate dates for their respective deaths, it may have been Nephi,¹³⁴ on this continent. But you can know for a certainty that it was *NOT* Elijah. Therefore anyone who teaches Elijah's return is connected only to sealing power used to connect ourselves to our kindred dead, but which does not also include connecting us with the "fathers in heaven," does not understand the truth as yet. Joseph's description of Elijah's mission included a connection using Elijah's seals between the living and the "fathers in heaven." The kindred dead are beneficiaries of that also; but the link, the thing which would prevent mankind from being "utterly wasted" at the Lord's return,¹³⁵ was this connection to the "fathers in heaven." He proclaimed it to an indifferent audience at Nauvoo, who hardly took note of the teaching. Today, as descendants from the Nauvoo audience, we use still Joseph's vocabulary. We talk about "seals" and about "sealing." But we have a vastly different picture in mind than the one Joseph was setting out. We know nothing about the connection to the "fathers in heaven" and instead focus on the genealogical connection to our kindred dead. No matter how much we connect them to us, we cannot help them, nor can we be helped either, if we do not have ourselves bound to "the fathers in heaven." We will all be "utterly wasted" unless we reform the correct connection and use the correct authority to accomplish it.

Here, then, we have finally arrived at Elijah's significance as the one who must first return. He was not the last one living who held the sealing power, though he did in fact possess it. Instead, he is vital as the last one to make the ascent from earth to heaven.¹³⁶ He rose up through the fiery corridor, and went to God's presence. He joined the "fathers in heaven" who are to return. He last opened the way by his physical ascent. He will be the first to physically descend through the fiery corridor to return from heaven to dwell again on earth. His return will not be made in a temporary opening. We've had plenty of

¹³⁰ See D&C 132: 37.

¹³¹ Consider what happens when someone enters His presence that is not prepared: Mormon 9: 2-6.

¹³² See D&C 84: 21-22.

¹³³ Matt. 16: 18.

¹³⁴ Helaman 10: 7.

¹³⁵ D&C 2: 3.

¹³⁶ John the Beloved's ascent and subsequent ministry connect him to this end of the corridor. John's ministry here includes responsibility to prepare mortal man to come up to Zion. See D&C 7: 6.

those.¹³⁷ His return will open a permanent, fixed stairway between the “fathers in heaven” and those who are prepared for the return of Zion. Zion will be overshadowed by the Lord’s glory.¹³⁸ The fiery corridor, or pillar of fire,¹³⁹ or ladder to heaven,¹⁴⁰ or conduit into heaven,¹⁴¹ or chariot of fire,¹⁴² will be opened by Elijah’s descent. It will remain over Zion and will be visible there.¹⁴³ It will not be temporary. It will be the place from which the first preparations for the Second Coming begin. At that location a small group will be prepared to endure this opening. They, and those called to join with them, will escape being “utterly wasted” at the unveiling of our Lord in glory at His return. It is Elijah who will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children or, in other words, he will reestablish the lost corridor between heaven and earth that connects those in heaven with those on earth.¹⁴⁴

This fiery path needs to be opened beforehand. The path, once it opens, will allow men on the earth to be prepared for the coming again of those who are Zion above. Well, Elijah answers to this. Joseph continued in this March 10th discussion teaching:

“in the days of Noah God destroyed the world by a flood & has promised to destroy it by fire in the last days but before it took place Elijah should first come & turn the hearts of the Fathers to the Children &c now comes the point what is this office & work of Elijah, it is one of the greatest & most important subjects that God has revealed, He should send Elijah to seal the children to the fathers & fathers to the Children. ... I wish you to understand this subject for it is important & if you will receive it this is the spirit of Elijah that we redeem our dead & **connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven** & seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection & here we want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those which dwell in heaven.”¹⁴⁵

This quote divides mankind into three groups: First, us, the living, are required to do work using Elijah’s guidance. Second, the “fathers which are in heaven” to whom we must have a bond to avoid being wasted at the Lord’s return. Third, “our dead” who are intended to benefit from our connection and qualify to be resurrected into a saved line of priestly authorities stretching through us to the “fathers which are in heaven.” We must be sealed to “the fathers which are in heaven” in order to be saved. “Our dead” must be redeemed and sealed to us, that they may also inherit eternal life with us. Doing a sealing between our dead and ourselves, however, is not enough and only connects two of the three groups together. Until we are also connected to the third group, that is “our fathers which are in heaven,” we remain vulnerable to being “utterly wasted at His coming.”

¹³⁷ Joseph had a temporary opening in the First Vision (JS-H 1: 16), and again when Moroni appeared (*Id.* v. 30). Likewise, the Nephites had it open in the presence of 2,500 believers (3 Ne. 17: 24). There have been others, also, for whom the fiery ascent has opened, but they have all been temporary.

¹³⁸ See, e.g., D&C 64: 41; 133: 32; 136: 31; 84: 32, among other places.

¹³⁹ See Exo. 13: 22.

¹⁴⁰ Gen. 28: 12.

¹⁴¹ See JS-H 1: 43.

¹⁴² See 2 Kings 2: 11.

¹⁴³ 2 Ne. 14: 5.

¹⁴⁴ See D&C 128: 17.

¹⁴⁵ *Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 329, emphasis added.

Joseph knew what he was talking about. He used the correct terms and outlined the correct path. We have just ignored it.

Joseph continued:

“Again, the doctrin or sealing power of Elijah is as follows if you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be Crafty, the first thing you do you go & seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, & yourself **unto your fathers in eternal glory**,”¹⁴⁶

Notice that. You seal “yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory!” These are not your kindred dead, who have died without the Gospel are in the Spirit World, awaiting salvation from your efforts on their behalf. They do not live “in eternal glory” because their hopes are dependent upon you performing the required connections between them, you and “the fathers who dwell in glory.” This connection is to come, if it comes to us, from Elijah’s return.

Who are “the fathers who dwell in glory?” Well, go back to the revelation in which Joseph Smith received the sealing power, D&C 132:49. There you learn the sealing power was conferred upon Joseph by God’s voice: “I the Lord thy God will be with thee even unto the end of the world and through all eternity for verily I seal upon your exaltation. Prepare your throne for you **in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father.**” (Emphasis added.) This is Joseph’s calling and election. Then, in verse 46 Joseph is given the power to seal: “I say unto you whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven. Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth in my name by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens. Whosoever’s sins are remitted on earth shall be eternally remitted eternally in heaven” and so on. This reference to Christ’s “Father, and [Joseph’s] father Abraham” is important. The connection was made between Joseph and Abraham, one of the “fathers who dwell in glory” because as soon as Joseph received the sealing authority and was promised exaltation, the Lord immediately describes the effect of the Lord sealing Joseph to eternal life and exaltation. It connected Joseph with “the fathers who dwell in glory.” It made Joseph a living member of the family of the exalted.

Just before this in verse 37, the revelation also clarifies the status of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Those three are among the “fathers who dwell in glory” in the heavens. As the revelation puts it: “Because they did none other things in that which they were commanded they have entered into their exaltation according to the promises and **sit upon thrones and are not angels but are Gods.**”¹⁴⁷ (Emphasis added.) This is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These are the ones who are now Gods. The “seals” which Joseph tells us we should be “crafty” and use for our salvation, are what could connect us to the “fathers” Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who dwell in glory. They are part of the Family of God. They are among those who are exalted.

¹⁴⁶ *Id.*, p. 331.

¹⁴⁷ These fathers are already exalted. For them it is not future. They occupy a throne now.

I think that Christ was deliberate about everything He said during His ministry, including the analogies He used in the stories He told. When Christ took occasion in the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, to tell us about the status of individuals in heaven, we should take careful note. When the beggar Lazarus died, he was “carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.”¹⁴⁸ Lazarus leaves this world accompanied by angels, and is taken to Abraham’s bosom. The definition of reward in the afterlife is to go to “the bosom of Abraham.”

The rich man dies and is in torment. But Jesus does not tell us the rich man cried out to God for relief, instead Christ has the tormented man cry out to Abraham.¹⁴⁹ That is important, as well, but a detour from what we’re discussing, so it must be left at that.

When Jesus is describing positions of authority in the afterlife, He uses Abraham as the key to relief from torment. The deceased looks to Abraham’s position and knows there is relief there. The man petitions: “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”¹⁵⁰ Ask yourself if being connected to “the fathers which dwell in heaven” or, in other words Abraham (among others) is any clearer a topic from the roles Christ uses to teach us in this parable.

It continues: “But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received the good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou are tormented.”¹⁵¹ There is an equation. Everything will balance. You rich people had good before, but allowed Lazarus to suffer from evil you could have relieved. Now it is put back into balance. In the immediate afterlife you get to suffer, so you may understand the error of your way. You may at last understand how charity is critical to make the universe whole. See, if you are one who chooses to inflict tears (or even ignore tears you might have wiped away), then that will be recompensed to you. And if you wipe away tears, from others, that will be returned to you as well. Because what will be restored unto you is exactly, as we began with Alma, what you send out.¹⁵² It is an equation after all.

The rich man cried out, “I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went into them from the dead, they will repent. He said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”¹⁵³ I’ve discussed this parable more fully in *Come, Let Us Adore Him*, and would refer you to that discussion. Here we are only concerned with the high status in which Jesus puts Abraham in the afterlife. He

¹⁴⁸ Luke 16: 22.

¹⁴⁹ *Id.* v. 24.

¹⁵⁰ *Id.*

¹⁵¹ *Id.* v. 25.

¹⁵² Alma 41: 15.

¹⁵³ Luke 16: 27-31.

used this parable in exactly the same way as Section 132 refers to Abraham; that is, as if he becomes godlike in the afterlife, an arbiter of men's fate.

One of the things we have mistaken in our Elijah theology also is the incorrect notion that on the Mount of Transfiguration Elijah and Moses appeared to Peter, James and John. We analogize it to the Kirtland Temple appearance described in Section 110. We also connect that to sealing power in both dispensations.¹⁵⁴ However, Joseph Smith did not teach that and therefore we ought to re-look at the topic so we have Elijah's role as clearly set out as we can get it.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Elijah did not appear. It was John the Baptist. At least if Joseph Smith understood the matter correctly, it was John the Baptist. First, we need the account from Matthew 17, which reads:

1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

¹⁵⁴ Christ gave Peter the sealing power in Matt. 16: 19. Some six days later the events on the Mount of Transfiguration occurred. (Matt. 17: 1-9.)

13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them
of John the Baptist.

Therefore on the Mount of Transfiguration the “Elias” mentioned is John the Baptist, not Elijah. When Joseph Smith rendered a correct translation for the event in Mark, he makes it even more clear. Beginning at Mark 9: 2 and going through verse 4 we read:

2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses, *or, in other words, John the Baptist and Moses*: and they were talking with Jesus.

In the Joseph Smith translation he inserts into verse 4 “or in other words, John the Baptist and Moses.” Therefore, Joseph rewrote the verse to clarify the identify of who was on the Mount at the time of transfiguration. It was not Elijah. It was John the Baptist. If Joseph Smith understood the matter [and I think he did], then it was John the Baptist and Moses who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. We, however, have instead adopted a long tradition of associating the appearance there with Elijah and Moses, which is part of our Elijah theology.¹⁵⁵ If this is important enough that we will be “utterly wasted” if we get it wrong, then it probably deserves the kind of careful consideration recommended earlier in this paper. But, again, I want to remind you that I am offering my view, and explaining why I hold the view I do. You can disagree and accept what is traditionally taught among the Saints; if you do you will be in a very large company. My view is held by only a few. So if you believe there is safety through numbers, you will not find that safety thinking as I do. I’m rather a lone voice crying from outside, and not in the well-established broad, mainstream thinking of the Latter-day Saints. This is, of course, something church authorities have warned you against.¹⁵⁶ I want to emphasize, therefore, that I’m only explaining my views and why I hold them. They are intended only to stimulate thought, nothing more.

¹⁵⁵ The most recent restatement of our tradition can be found in last General Conference (October 2011) in the talk titled: *The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn*. In it we were taught, among other things: “Elijah appeared with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17: 3) and conferred this authority upon Peter, James, and John. Elijah appeared again with Moses and others on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple and conferred the same keys upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.”

¹⁵⁶ For example, Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave a talk on January 10, 1982 in which he taught: “Now is the time and the day of your salvation, so if you’re working zealously in this life – though you haven’t fully overcome the world and you haven’t done all you hoped you might do—you’re still going to be saved. You don’t have to do what Jacob said, ‘Go beyond the mark.’ You don’t have to live a life that’s truer than true. You don’t have to have an excessive zeal that becomes fanatical and becomes unbalancing. What you have to do is stay in the mainstream of the Church and live as upright and decent people live in the Church – keeping the commandments, paying your tithing, serving in the organizations of the Church, loving the Lord, staying on the straight and narrow path.” (*The Probationary Test of Mortality*, delivered at the University of Utah.)

When I consider this matter, I reach a different conclusion than the generally accepted Elijah narrative. I think when it comes to Elijah's role and mission; his purpose will be fulfilled on the cusp of the Lord's return, in order to open the fiery ascent through which the Zion above can return. That ministry was still future in March, 1844 and it is still future today. If it was still future some three months before Joseph's death, then it was not satisfied by the Kirtland Temple events. Elijah's purpose is to make it possible to reunite those that dwell above in glory with those that dwell below on the earth. Those who dwell below for whom Elijah's mission will be relevant will need to be capable of bearing the presence of the Lord. They must be able to come back into His presence and endure the glory of it all rather than being consumed by it.¹⁵⁷ For this, of course, there are some requirements.¹⁵⁸ But these will be those who will dwell in peace in Zion, where He will come and dwell among a City of Peace, having all things in common, and possessing one heart.

Another relevant topic is "the promises made to the fathers." What were those? We try to focus on the children, since we regard ourselves as that. But it is equally important to know what the promises were to the fathers, and who they were. Once you have the right fathers and the right promises in mind, it leads you to understand more clearly Elijah's role in fulfilling the promises.

Abraham is, as we saw, the "father of the righteous." All those who live after his day will need to be connected to him if they are to be saved. After all, salvation is a family affair. God's family will include Abraham's line, including any people living after his day who receive the Gospel. In the promises made to Abraham, the Lord covenanted that "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[.]" (Abr. 2: 10.) These are important matters. When anyone "receives this Gospel"—meaning the same Gospel which Abraham received—then they will acknowledge Abraham as their father, but the covenant goes further. "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), ... shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (*Id.* v. 11.) There is a connection between Priesthood, Abraham, salvation and being the "seed" of father Abraham. Priesthood is a connection between those in heaven and those on earth. Unless there is a connection between a man and his fathers, or brethren in heaven, there is no power in his priesthood.¹⁵⁹ This is the reason Moroni explained Elijah's return was connected to priesthood.¹⁶⁰ Malachi does not make this connection in his prophecy.¹⁶¹ Nor does Christ point out the priesthood

¹⁵⁷ See D&C 84: 20-22.

¹⁵⁸ See Abraham 2: 8-11. Abraham was, as we have seen, such a person. He entered the Lord's presence. The Lord told Abraham about his "seed" or, in other words, those who would similarly come to know God and receive the same standing as did Abraham.

¹⁵⁹ See D&C 121: 36.

¹⁶⁰ See D&C 2: 1: "Behold, I will reveal unto you the priesthood, by the hand of Elijah..."

¹⁶¹ Mal. 4: 5: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;"

connection to Elijah.¹⁶² All of the accounts, however, connect Elijah's return to connecting the "children" – who are to inherit Abraham's Priesthood as his "seed" – and "the fathers." Moroni merely clarified this connection would give power to the priesthood, because once connected to "the fathers who dwell in heaven" the children are in possession of priesthood. They are part of the Heavenly Family, which is a Priesthood order.

As I explained in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, Joseph was working to re-establish this connection in the Nauvoo Temple. He received a revelation promising the "fullness" that the Saints had lost, would be restored again, if the Temple were completed.¹⁶³ The fullness would come because the Lord would visit with His people there.¹⁶⁴ If the Lord visited with His people, it would have been Zion. But the Lord did not come to Nauvoo, and that Temple was utterly destroyed, not one stone left atop the other.

Joseph wanted the Saints to enter into the Lord's presence. He began to set up the Temple rites, including beginning the endowment above his red brick store. The endowment instructs the initiated in the path back to the presence of God. However, he died before the saints completed the required Temple for the Lord to come and restore the fullness. It is clear however that Joseph anticipated there would eventually be more added to the Temple. In fact, he connected Elijah's mission not just to sealing, but also to everything including animal sacrifice.¹⁶⁵ While this is a little-studied topic, this was mentioned early in the Restoration by John the Baptist.¹⁶⁶ That rite does not presently exist among the saints, and the idea of "the sons of Levi offering an offering" is not connected to animal

¹⁶² Christ had the Nephites add the prophecy to their scriptures. When He does, however, He repeats the formula of Malachi: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (3 Ne. 25: 5.)

¹⁶³ D&C 124: 28.

¹⁶⁴ *Id.*

¹⁶⁵ "Why send Elijah because he holds the Keys of the Authority to administer in all the ordinances of the priesthood and without the authority is given the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness. It is a very prevalent opinion that the sacrifices which were offered were entirely consumed, this was not the case if you read Leviticus [2] Chap [2-3] verses you will observe that the priests took a part as a memorial and offered it up before the Lord, while the remainder was kept for the benefit maintenance of the priests. So that the offerings and sacrifices are not all consumed upon the Alter, but the blood is sprinkled and the fat and certain other portions are consumed These sacrifices as well as every ordinance belonging to the priesthood will when the temple of the Lord shall be built and the Sons Levi be purified be fully restored and attended to then all their powers, ramifications, and blessings--this the Sons of Levi shall be purified. ever was and will exist when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood are sufficiently manifest. Else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by all the Holy Prophets be brought to pass. It is not to be understood that, the law of Moses will be established again with all it rights and variety of ceremonies, this had never been spoken off by the prophets but those things which existed prior Moses's day *viz* Sacrifice will be continued --It may be asked by somewhat necessity for Sacrifice since the great Sacrifice was offered? In answer to which if Repentance Baptism and faith were necessary to Salvation existed prior to the days of Christ what necessity for them since that time" [This is taken from the only discourse of Joseph Smith which was written before being delivered. It was given October 5, 1840. The original is in the hand writing of Robert B. Thompson (a clerk for Joseph Smith); maintained in the LDS Church Archives. It is cited in Smith, William V. A, *Joseph Smith Commentary on the Book of Abraham: An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Abraham*. 2nd ed. Provo, UT: The Book of Abraham Project, 2002, pp. 65-66.]

¹⁶⁶ See JS-H 1: 69 and Oliver Cowdery's version in the footnote at the end of the JS-H.

sacrifice in the minds of the Saints.¹⁶⁷ Joseph Smith foretold this but did not live to accomplish it. We now have the responsibility to preserve,¹⁶⁸ and act, on those ordinances he was able to restore. They can bring us back to the Lord's presence. The Lord, of course, can and will instruct us further. That was the anticipation for the Nauvoo Temple, for the Lord was going to be the one who restored the fullness there. As I discuss in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, it did not occur at the time. It remains a future event, connected to establishing Zion.

I would suggest the peace of Zion is different than some people believe also. I do not think Zion's peace is related to taking up arms and fighting. It is true that Zion will not take up arms against others.¹⁶⁹ But that is secondary. What is primary is the basis for that peace. It comes having shed your sins and being able to endure the presence of the Lord because these are those people who have "let virtue garnish their thoughts unceasingly because their bowels have been full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith."¹⁷⁰ Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that it is necessary that you have charity for those who are within your own household of faith! Can you imagine that each of us need to tolerate, and even love, those inside our own community of belief who think you are an emissary of the devil? Who "have a testimony" and do not want to hear anything new or different from their proudly held errors? Who think you are an apostate if you search more deeply into the faith than they will ever do? Toward them we must all show charity? Well, yes, of course. They get to abuse and spitefully use you.¹⁷¹ And you, as Christ both taught¹⁷² and lived,¹⁷³ must return good for evil. That is His standard, and He expects anyone who will come up to live with Him in Zion to live the standard. Otherwise they cannot dwell with Him.

We must also "let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly." If you are not so constituted within your own heart-- where there can't be any lies-- if within your heart you are not at peace through charity toward those who would, in the name of your own religion spitefully use you, then your "confidence [cannot] wax strong in the presence of God."¹⁷⁴ And all of this is necessarily connected to "the doctrine of the priesthood."¹⁷⁵ This is because you can never know the Master whom you have not served.¹⁷⁶ The service which brings you to Him, which lets you understand Him, and which gives you

¹⁶⁷ All those ordained in the church are reminded of the "oath and covenant of the Priesthood" found at D&C 84: 33-39. This oath makes all who hold the church's two priesthoods responsible for becoming "sons of Aaron" and "sons of Moses"—both of whom are of Levi.

¹⁶⁸ It is a terrible offense to God to change His ordinances. See Isaiah 24: 5. Joseph also instructed that "Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. ...He set the temple ordinances to be the same forever and ever and set Adam to watch over them, to reveal them from heaven to man, or to send angels to reveal them." (*DHC* 4: 208.)

¹⁶⁹ D&C 45: 69.

¹⁷⁰ D&C 121: 45.

¹⁷¹ Matt. 5: 43-45.

¹⁷² Matt. 5: 44.

¹⁷³ Luke 23: 34.

¹⁷⁴ D&C 121: 45.

¹⁷⁵ *Id.*

¹⁷⁶ Mosiah 5: 13.

insight into the “doctrine of His Priesthood” comes only by taking up your cross and following Him.¹⁷⁷ Not as a proud hypocrite claiming you have the truth and are better than others, but as the servant of others¹⁷⁸ bearing their scorn and patiently testifying to the truth they do not want to hear. As the letter Joseph wrote from Liberty Jail states: “Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly, then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews of heaven.”¹⁷⁹ Doctrine and truth will just condense upon your soul because when you do that, you reach ‘dew point.’ You come to a place in which it is possible for God’s mercy to water your soul.¹⁸⁰

The letter continues: “The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and they scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth;” [I need to pause there for a moment because there are so many who cry out: “I want a scepter! Because can’t you use those things to bash people in the head and say ‘big me, little you?’” Scepters have nothing to do with ruling and reigning. Scepters have to do with serving and kneeling. The One, who made Himself the least, even though He was the greatest, kneeled and washed the dirt from the feet of those who in every respect He excelled. He wanted to give *them* the chief seats. He didn’t envy those He raised. He didn’t envy those that presided over Him.¹⁸¹ He declared the truth and He declared it boldly because He knew what the truth was. To the extent that He could do so diplomatically, He did. When the moment came and it was necessary to lay it out, it was He who chose the moment of sacrifice. It was He that went up to Jerusalem to be crucified, and it was He who in righteous fury cleansed the Temple. He provoked the reaction that resulted in the sacrifice of His life at the appropriate moment because the fullness of time had come for that offering on that Passover. [I talk about that in a chapter in *Come Let Us Adore Him* and won’t repeat it here.]

Well, to return from the interruption: “The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and they scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.”¹⁸² You cannot compel these things. You can qualify by submitting to the conditions. When you submit to His will it flows to you naturally, and without compulsion. This form of “dominion” is dominion over your own soul. You conquer your desires, appetites and passions, and you confine them entirely to the bounds which the Lord has prescribed. This begins in your own thoughts, when you let virtue garnish them unceasingly. Question your own motives, not others’. Question your own obedience and service, not others. Be quick to judge yourself, and cover the mistakes of others with charity.¹⁸³ Pray for your critics and those who you know offend God by the things they

¹⁷⁷ Mark 8: 39.

¹⁷⁸ Matt. 23: 11.

¹⁷⁹ D&C 121: 45.

¹⁸⁰ See John 4: 10.

¹⁸¹ Matt. 23: 2-3.

¹⁸² D&C 121: 46.

¹⁸³ Joseph Smith taught: "If you do not accuse each other, God will not accuse you. If you have no accuser you will enter heaven, and if you will follow the revelations and instructions which God gives you through

are doing. They are ignorant, and if you do not ask for God’s mercy on their behalf they will never know enough to ask for it themselves. Make intercession for them. (If you’ve not read about that in *The Second Comforter: Conversing With the Lord Through the Veil*, then I would refer you to that discussion there.)

The peace in Zion is the same peace Joseph described in his letter from Liberty Jail, from which I have just been reading (D&C 121). That peace begins inside you. It is not merely the discipline of warfare and enforcement of rights through conflict. That will be the way the wicked seek peace. For Zion, the peace comes from within.

Going back to the account of Enoch, we read about these issues there, as well. Concerning the priesthood, we read in Moses 6: 7: “Now this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also.” Elijah’s role is a priestly role. The original Holy Order, the Holy Order after the Son of God on the earth when there was a when there was a single form of Priesthood is what will return. It includes “a fullness” because it has not be fractured apart by men qualifying for only piecemeal authority. That is a vast topic and takes us afield from this subject. We need to remain on Elijah’s importance.

Well, when you add the promise that the same priesthood will return together with Christ’s comment “as it was in the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be,” you have something noteworthy. The “days of Noah” overlapped the time of Enoch. As we saw earlier, Enoch’s City survived the flood of Noah by fleeing. This time, however, because of Elijah’s coming ministry, there will be those who escape the upcoming fiery ordeal by connecting with heaven in advance. They will not be “wasted at His coming” because they are able to endure His presence.

Remember, the first Zion had seven High Priests along with their posterity, who were righteous.¹⁸⁴ That posterity included those family members who were righteous and reared by these High Priests. I have to assume that included multiple generations. Even so, the original Zion to which the Lord came was essentially seven extended families. So it was quite small. According to some estimates, this small group came at a time when the population of the earth may have been in the billions.

Other than one statement in the book of Jude, we don’t have any geographic description or numeric description of the Zion established by Enoch. That statement is really quoting from an earlier text of Enoch. Jude refers to the return of Enoch “with ten-thousands of his saints.”¹⁸⁵ Those kinds of numbers are not particularly reliable, because given the way numbers were symbols in those days, the error, if there is one, is an over-statement, not an understatement. In other words there would *not* be millions described as ten thousands; but there could be hundreds described as ten thousands. So it is again possible

me, I will take you into heaven as my back load. If you will not accuse me, I will not accuse you. If you will throw a cloak of charity over my sins, I will over yours—for charity covereth a multitude of sins. (DHC, vol. 4: 445.)

¹⁸⁴ D&C 107: 53.

¹⁸⁵ Jude 1: 14.

that Enoch's City may be less than the great numbers some have thought. It may be they number in the mere thousands, and not as many as 100,000. We don't know. But we shouldn't assume the numbers were necessarily great.

When it comes to Melchizedek's City of Peace, the area occupied was apparently an agrarian setting that could have been located on something as small as 20 city blocks of our current type. I doubt it would have numbered more than 1,000. Again, however, we do not know. But we shouldn't assume the numbers were significant; probably a branch or branches of a single family.

Whatever the numbers were, the significance of Zion is not, and never was, its numerosity. The significance of Zion is its spiritual endowment. It is the power of heaven, and not the voting block. It is not their big numbers which intimidate the ungodly. Even a handful is sufficient. Righteousness is a power in itself.

Remember from the account of John when they came to arrest the Savior. He asked who they were seeking. They said "Jesus of Nazareth." He declared, "I am He." The guard stood face to face with righteousness. The imposing figure of the righteous Lord was enough to intimidate those who came with swords and with shields, protected and armed, while He was clothed only with the garments He had on and the force of righteousness within him. The guards "went backward, and fell to the ground."¹⁸⁶ At that moment in that garden, in that presence confined to the person of one individual, there was Zion. I do not think the picture we have in our head of the role, mission, ministry and purpose of the return of Elijah is necessarily one that is accurate. Nor do I think that the role, mission, ministry and the effort of Elijah is something from our past. Just as Joseph predicted the future return in January and March of 1844, I think the role and mission of Elijah is intimately connected with the immediate return of Christ. He will open the capacity for a group of people, however few, who will be able to endure the burning accompanying Christ's return.¹⁸⁷ The heavens will be rolled together, like a scroll.¹⁸⁸ The Lord's glory will shine forth, un-tempered by the veil now in place.¹⁸⁹ The few who can endure this prevent the earth from being "utterly wasted at His coming."¹⁹⁰ Because they have already been prepared by Elijah, and others, for this great day, they will be able to greet the returning hosts of heaven, and fall upon one another's necks and kiss one another.¹⁹¹

Those few who are prepared will live in peace with one another. There will be, among them, no rivalry, no disparity, no hierarchy, and all things in common. These things are rather difficult when you have a society with "big" and "little" people; when you have important and wealthy in one portion of the society, and obscure and poor in another group. We cannot create such a place because we have those who are mighty and

¹⁸⁶ See John 18: 4-6.

¹⁸⁷ Malachi 4: 1.

¹⁸⁸ Isa. 34, 4; Rev. 6: 14; D&C 88: 95.

¹⁸⁹ D&C 5: 19.

¹⁹⁰ D&C 2: 3.

¹⁹¹ Moses 7: 63.

wonderful at the top, and those who are subservient and nothing at the bottom. Our society is sick, from top to bottom.¹⁹² We are not Zion, nor anything like it. Therefore, the mission of Elijah will be as critical for us as it is for any other person living today. Our church affiliation is of little benefit until we awake and arise to the point where we can stand in the Lord's presence.¹⁹³

Hugh Nibley used to talk; I think rather tongue in cheek, about how he would be content to be nothing more than the door keeper in the House of the Lord, because if he were he would be standing next to "the keeper of the gate who is the Holy one of Israel who employeth no servant there." (2 Ne. 9: 41.) That idea is an important one. The real House of the Lord is not a building. It is you.¹⁹⁴ If you will permit Him, He will come to dwell there, and even bring His Father to you.¹⁹⁵

Well, I wrote a book and I made some people angry, but I also returned some people back to the faith through that same book. And I don't want there to be any mistake about my view of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day saints. If anything, I feel more strongly now, than I did when I was baptized at age 19, of not only the relevance, but the importance of the church. It is the body set in motion by the hand of the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is authorized by commandment to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel. It has been commanded to preach, teach, exhort, expound.¹⁹⁶ It has been commanded to baptize.¹⁹⁷ It has been commanded to lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.¹⁹⁸ It has been commanded to bless and pass the sacrament.¹⁹⁹ This is the only church authorized and instructed to perform these rites. If you want to get baptized, then you need to leave the Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics and even Reverend Loveloy's Presbylutherans²⁰⁰ and to come to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

¹⁹² See, Isaiah 1:2-8: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city."

¹⁹³ See D&C 93: 1.

¹⁹⁴ 1 Cor. 3: 16-17.

¹⁹⁵ John 14: 23.

¹⁹⁶ See D&C 20: 37-60.

¹⁹⁷ D&C 20: 37, 72-74.

¹⁹⁸ D&C 20: 41.

¹⁹⁹ D&C 20: 75-79.

²⁰⁰ Reverend Lovejoy is a fictional character on *The Simpson's* cartoon. He is a minister in the fictional sect of the Presbylutherans. His fictional faith, however, has as much right to baptize as any other "Christian" denomination, because none of them have been commanded to perform these rites. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints alone has a commission from the Lord to administer these rites.

Elder Dallin Oaks gave a talk in General Conference in April, 2006, in which he mentioned the continuing presence of the Holy Ghost within the church.²⁰¹ All of the examples used in this conference address were drawn from the experiences of those in the lowest level of the church. It is at the lowest levels of the church that I have always lived. And it is in the lowest levels of the church where the Holy Ghost most frequently appears. If you have been on a mission and testified to the truthfulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you know this. If you have seen another person convert to the church, you have seen it. You know the hand of God is still over the work of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It will continue to be there as long as we bring the Book of Mormon to the world, and offer them baptism and laying on of hands for the Holy Ghost.

Any of you who choose to preach the Gospel as a missionary in the church in the future will see the hand of God still working among the saints. But it is my view, and it is my conviction to my core, that if I were to encourage any of you to stop short of pressing forward to finding your Lord, I would risk damnation. I believe such teaching would contradict the invitation extended to every one of you through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the revelations contained in the D&C.²⁰² You read D&C 93:1 and you tell me who has a right to say to you that you should not press forward to see His face and know that He is—not believe, not trust, not hope, but know. *Know* that He is.²⁰³

There should be an entire chorus of Latter-day Saints who are able to say these words as their own testimony, and not just a quote from the Prophet Joseph Smith: “I had actually seen a light and in the midst of that light I saw two personages and they did in reality speak to me. And though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision yet it was true and while they were persecuting me and reviling me and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying I was lead to say in my heart, Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, and why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.” (JS-H 1: 25.)

It is not the purpose of the restored Gospel to have you get a testimony of the Book of Mormon, only to then be co-opted into depending upon anyone other than God for the knowledge of the truth of all things. Here is the message: “And when you shall receive these things I would exhort you that you would ask God the Eternal Father in the name of Christ if these things are not true. If ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ He will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost and by the power of the Holy Ghost you may know the truth of all things.” (Moroni 10: 4-5.) The truth of *all things*. Not some, but all.

²⁰¹ The talk is titled *All Men Everywhere*, and can be found either online or in the May, 2006 Ensign.

²⁰² Because of the volume of the information supporting that understanding, I would refer you to *The Second Comforter: Conversing With the Lord Through the Veil* for a full discussion of why I believe this to be true.

²⁰³ Ether 3: 16-17.

It is a terrible thing for anyone to presume they can limit your inquiries to God, and curtail the scope of truth God can give you. It is a terrible responsibility. I would suggest anyone who tries to keep you from inquiring to know the truth of all things is, like Satan, using fear to stop your approach to the Being who loves you more than life itself. He who would gather you as a hen gathers her chicks, if you will come and be gathered.²⁰⁴ He would have gathered us and brought again Zion time after time after time, but *WE* would not. I know there are people that write books about the future coming of Zion, and I know they use quotes from those who think differently than I do. Most of the information in them is really quite unrelated to Zion actually returning. From the death of Joseph Smith until today, there has not been anything helpful added to what Joseph said on the subject. Although tens-of-thousands of words have been spoken or written about Zion since Joseph's life ended, none of it has brought us any closer. If anything, we are further away from it today than we were on June 27, 1844.²⁰⁵ However, I am not trying to persuade anyone about anything. You are free to believe whatever you want to believe. I only attempt to explain what I believe and why I believe it. You owe it to yourself to investigate these things and ask God about them. I would discourage you from accepting what I, or anyone else, have to say on the subject. Ask God. See if He will not make the matter clear to you.

Perhaps if enough were able to rend the veil of unbelief,²⁰⁶ there would be reason to send Elijah and begin the final preparatory work. It only takes a few, as we have seen.

With Joseph Smith I also testify Elijah is to return before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ doing so in the name of Him whom I serve, Amen.

[This paper is based on a talk given by Denver C. Snuffer, Jr. in October, 2011, but has been corrected, and some content clarified and expanded.]

²⁰⁴ See, e.g., 3 Ne 10: 4-6; D&C 43: 24-25; Matt. 23: 37.

²⁰⁵ This is the day Joseph and Hyrum were killed.

²⁰⁶ Ether 4: 15.