

Section 128

Historical Background

The letters constituting D&C 127 and D&C 128 were written only five days apart. The historical background, therefore, is essentially the same for both. By way of review, the Prophet was suspected of being an accomplice of the failed assassination attempt of Missouri Governor Lilburn Boggs. Missouri authorities requested Illinois Governor Carlin to arrest Joseph but the Prophet knew he would not be treated fairly if he was tried in Missouri.

"On September 3, Joseph went into hiding again. At noon on the first Saturday in September, a well-armed deputy sheriff with two other men appeared at the Smiths' front door. Joseph was at the table eating dinner with his family when the threesome knocked. While John Boynton delayed the officers, Joseph slipped out of the back and ran through a cornfield to the Whitneys'. The sheriff asked Emma for permission to search the house. She inquired if he had a warrant, which he did not, but she gave permission anyway. Two more men returned to search again after sundown. After dark, Joseph left the Whitney's for Edward Hunter's.

"Joseph remained out of sight the next week, returning again when Emma said she wanted him back home. The next three months followed that pattern, times at home alternating with times away." (Richard Lyman Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, [New York: Random House, 2005], 478-479)

"Edward Hunter, who became a Presiding Bishop, records that he and the Prophet would hide in the little attic in his house, which still stands in Nauvoo. I say 'little' because they couldn't even stand up there. They went up through a trapdoor, but by then they were over the rafters and under the roof, so they had to double down and sit. They were often many hours in that exact setting. There the Prophet wrote section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants, a rhapsody in an attic...

"The sheer separation from his loved ones; the inability to speak, which he met by writing; the cooped-up feeling which because of his spontaneity and makeup he despised—all those things compounded to make life difficult. And yet he could write inspired, rejoicing literature. 'Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory.' He was not

discouraged." (Truman G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989], 63.)

Lucy Mack Smith

This time Joseph remained away two weeks, then made his family and myself a short visit, after which he again left us. In this way he lived, hiding first in one place and then in another, until the sitting of the legislature when Governor Ford wrote Joseph a letter advising him to come to Springfield, with a guard sufficient to secure himself against molestation, and suffer himself to be tried for the crimes alleged against him, namely, that of being accessory to the attempted assassination of ex-Governor Boggs. Joseph went and was tried before Judge Pope and honorably acquitted. When he returned home, there was a jubilee held throughout the city. The remainder of the winter, and the next spring, we spent in peace. (*History of Joseph Smith, Revised and Enhanced*, edited by Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], chap. 52)

Introduction

"Nowhere in his revelations does Joseph show more enthusiasm for his own work than in this letter. Whatever the miseries of the moment, he thrilled to think how the past had been welded to the present through the visions of the previous twenty years. Even after all the tension, fear, and melancholy of the summer, his unbounded enthusiasm for his revelations could not be suppressed. (Quotes D&C 128:19-20)

"No passage better captures Joseph Smith's restoration than this one, mingling the names of 'divers angels'-Michael, Gabriel, Raphael-with specific, mundane places that one could locate on a map-Fayette, Seneca County, Colesville, Broome County, and the banks of the Susquehanna River. That mixing of the mystical with the plain was pure Joseph Smith. This very concreteness gave him his highest pleasure. After the doleful days in exile, the memory of angels delivering their keys to places where he had stood cheered his heart." (Richard Lyman Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, [New York: Random House, 2005], 477-478)

DC 128:1 the subject of the baptism for the dead... seems to occupy my mind, and press itself upon my feelings

Brigham Young

Do you recollect that in about the year 1840-41, Joseph had a revelation concerning the dead? He had been asked the question a good many times: "What is the condition of the dead, those that lived and died without the Gospel?" It was a matter of inquiry with him. He considered this question for himself, and for the brethren and the Church, "What is the condition of the dead? What will be their fate? Is there no way today by which they can receive their blessings as there was in the days of the Apostles, and when the Gospel was preached upon the earth in ancient days?" When Joseph received the revelation that we have in our possession concerning the dead, the subject was opened to him, not in full, but in part, and he kept on receiving. When he had first received the knowledge by the spirit of revelation how the dead could be officiated for, there are brethren and sisters here, I can see quite a number here who were in Nauvoo, and you recollect that when this doctrine was first revealed, and in hurrying in the administration of baptism for the dead, that sisters were baptized for their male friends, were baptized for their fathers, their grandfathers, their mothers and their grandmothers, etc. I just mention this so that you will come to understanding, that as we knew nothing about this matter at first, the old Saints recollect, there was little by little given, and the subject was made plain, but little was given at once. Consequently, in the first place people were baptized for their friends and no record was kept. Joseph afterwards kept a record. Then women were baptized for men and men for women, etc. It would be very strange, you know, to the eyes of the wise and those that understood the things pertaining to eternity, if we were called upon to commence a work that we could not finish.

This, therefore, was regulated and all set in order; for it was revealed that if a woman was baptized for a man, she could not be ordained for him, neither could she be made an Apostle or a Patriarch for the man, consequently the sisters are to be baptized for their own sex only.

This doctrine of baptism for the dead is a great doctrine, one of the most glorious doctrines that was revealed to the human family; and there are light, power, glory, honor and immortality in it. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 399)

Wilford Woodruff

How did we feel when we first heard the living could be baptized for the dead? We all went to work at it as fast as we had an opportunity, and were baptized for everybody we could think of, without respect to sex. I went and was baptized for all my friends, grandmothers, and aunts, as well as those of the male sex; but how was it? Why, by-and-by, it was revealed, through the servants of the Lord, that females should be baptized for females, and males for males; but the full particulars of this order were not revealed till after the days of Joseph. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, edited by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 140)

DC 128:2 there should be a recorder, who should be eye-witness

Wilford Woodruff

What have you to say about redeeming the dead, or the work of the temples of our God, that is not already revealed? I will say this: When the Prophet Joseph had this revelation from heaven, what did he do?... he went into the Mississippi River, and so did I, as well as others, and we each baptized a hundred for the dead, without a man to record a single act that we performed. Why did we do it? Because of the feeling of joy that we had, to think that we in the flesh could stand and redeem our dead. We did not wait to know what the result of this would be, or what the whole of it should be. Finally the Lord told the Prophet: "When any of you are baptized for our dead, let there be a recorder, and let him be eyewitness of your baptisms; let him hear with his ears, that he may testify of a truth, saith the Lord; that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven; whatsoever you bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth, may be loosed in heaven." That was the beginning of this work. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, edited by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 152)

DC 128:6-17 Bible scriptures regarding the doctrine of vicarious baptism

Most Bible lovers are completely unaware that there are any references to the doctrine baptism for the dead in the Bible. If they are shown 1 Cor. 15:29, they are usually surprised, not knowing what to think. Clearly, Paul was speaking about a practice in which saints were baptized for their dead, which was to save the dead on resurrection day, for the deceased can't be resurrected to a celestial glory without meeting the requirements of the celestial kingdom. But what does one single verse in the Bible prove?

Regarding this verse, **the Prophet** taught, "If there is one word of the Lord that supports the doctrine of baptism for the dead, it is enough to establish it as a true doctrine." (*History of the Church*,4:569)

But there is more than one place in the Bible which speaks of this doctrine! There are many places! In fact, the better the understanding of the reader, the more the panorama of vicarious temple work fills the pages and principles of the Bible. Joseph said that the doctrine was "the burden of the scriptures." In this section, the Prophet takes a few of these precious references and ties them in to the doctrine of Baptism for the Dead. For a doctrinal commentator, this is great stuff-the Prophet himself providing commentary on these passages!

Joseph Smith

This doctrine presents in a clear light the wisdom and mercy of God in preparing an ordinance for the salvation of the dead, being baptized by proxy, their names recorded in heaven, and judged according to the deeds done in the body. This doctrine is the burden of the scriptures. Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives do it at the peril of their own salvation.

Here then we have an account of our Savior preaching to the spirits in prison, to spirits that had been imprisoned from the days of Noah. And what did he preach to them? That they were to stay there? Certainly not. Let his own declaration testify: "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" [Luke 4:18]. Isaiah has it, "to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison house" [Isa. 42:7]. It is very evident from this that he not only went to preach to them but to deliver, or bring them out of the prison house. . . . Those who were disobedient in the days of Noah were visited by our Savior, who possessed the everlasting Melchizedek Priesthood, and had the gospel preached to them by him in prison. And in order that they might fulfill all the requisitions of God, their living friends were baptized for their dead friends and thus fulfilled the requirements of God.

He knows the situation of both the living and the dead and has made ample provision for their redemption, according to their several circumstances and the laws of the kingdom of God, whether in this world or in the world to come. . . . Let the dead speak forth anthems of

eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free. (Kent P. Jackson, comp. and ed., *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 203)

DC 128:6-7 the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life

"In referring to the judgment in light of these two sets of records, **Orson Pratt** said:

The sacred books kept in the archives of eternity are to be opened in the great judgment day, and compared with the records kept on the earth; and then, if it is found that things have been done by the authority and commandment of the Most High, in relation to the dead, and the same things are found to be recorded both on earth and in heaven, such sacred books will be opened and read before the assembled universe in the day of judgment, and will be sanctioned by Him who sits on the throne and deals out justice and mercy to all of his creation.

"Joseph Smith also placed the keeping of records in context with the doctrine that there is a series of major councils, some past and some to be held in the future, by which the inhabitants of the earth are organized in preparation for their eternal existence in the resurrection. It is important that accurate and authentic records be kept of all transactions by which the divine patriarchal order is built up among the living and the dead, that such records may be presented in a final Grand Council where all things pertaining to the divine family order will be checked before the righteous are prepared for eternity. The Prophet said:

All persons baptized for the dead must have a recorder present, that he may be an eyewitness to record and testify of the truth and validity of his record. *It will be necessary, in the Grand Council, that these things be testified to by competent witnesses.* Therefore let the recording and witnessing of baptisms for the dead be carefully attended to from this time forth. If there is any lack, it may be at the expense of our friends; they may not come forth." (Hyrum L. Andrus, *Principles of Perfection* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970], 489)

Theodore M. Burton

True there are records in heaven, but what good are they there at present? Temple work cannot be done in heaven but must be done on earth. There will hardly be enough time during the thousand years of the Millennium to take care of the special cases of those whose records have been destroyed or overlooked. We should remember that out of approximately 6,000 years of time when billions of people have come and gone on the earth, we have records for only about the past 400 years. Much of the Millennium must therefore be reserved for those who need proxy work and who lived in times when no records were kept or for which records do not now exist. Then, also, the Ten Tribes have to bring their records too for their own temple work. That will also take a high priority in the Millennium. ("Q&A: Questions and Answers," *New Era*, Sept. 1974, 13)

Rudger Clawson

The spirit of temple work has rested down upon the Latter-day Saints from that day until this, and I doubt not will rest upon them with great power from now until the morning of the resurrection, and from the morning of the resurrection until the thousand years of the Millennium have expired. This spirit will grow stronger and brighter with this people. (*Conference Report*, October 1900, First Day-Morning Session 9 - 10)

DC 128:8 whether they themselves have attended to the ordinances in their own *propria persona*, or by the means of their own agents

"The word *proprie* means "in the strict sense; strictly for oneself; personally." The term *persona* denotes "a mask, character, or person." (Hoyt W. Brewster, Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 447) Therefore, *propria persona* means "present and acting strictly for one's own self." The principle being taught is that the baptism counts whether performed in person or vicariously. If a man pays his friend's utility bill, does the utility company complain? They just want the money-whether paid by the man or his friend-the requirement has been met.

The requirement to enter the celestial kingdom is baptism; that is the ticket. It doesn't matter if it was performed in person or vicariously. It doesn't matter if it was warm water or cold water; it doesn't matter if it was fresh water or salt water. Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether the individual was dressed in

white or brown. What matters is that the ordinance is administered by the binding power of the priesthood.

Joseph Fielding Smith

How could spirits be baptized in [water], or receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost? The only way it can be done is vicariously, someone who is living acting as a substitute for the dead.

But, says one, this cannot be; it is impossible for one man to stand for another. The answer to this is: The whole system of Christianity is based on vicarious work. One without blemish and without sin standing for all as the Redeemer. You answer, "This is granted in the case of Jesus Christ, for he is God, but it cannot be granted in the case of man for man."

What of the commandments given by the Lord to Moses in the case of the sin offerings and of the scapegoat for Israel? On the head of the goat Aaron placed his hands and confessed over it all the iniquity of the children of Israel, all their transgressions, and all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and then sent it away "by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." And the goat bore upon him all their iniquities into the wilderness "unto a land not inhabited." If this was done then, is it beyond the power of the lord to permit a man now to act as proxy for the man who is dead and unable to help himself in person?

... When we go into the temple to do work for the dead, we go representing the dead, acting vicariously and as proxies for the dead. We are not treating those dead individuals as if they were dead. What are we doing? We are treating them as beings living in the flesh, and we are representing them. What are we doing? Giving unto them in person by proxy that which they must receive and which should have been received here and would have been received by them here had the privilege come.

So we are only presenting to the dead such ordinances and privileges as pertain to those who are living here and now. So far as faith is concerned, they exercise that where they are. So far as repentance is concerned, they repent where they are. We are baptized for them because they cannot be baptized there. We are confirmed and ordained for them. Why? Because they cannot receive those ordinances there.

(*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 141-142)

DC 128:9 in all ages of the world, whenever the Lord has given a dispensation... this power has always been given

The Prophet is speaking of the power of the priesthood, the power by which earthly events are recognized in heaven, the power to bind and seal on earth and in heaven. Every dispensation has had priesthood power to perform, if commanded, baptisms, endowments, marriages, and sealings. But this should not be taken to understand that baptism for the dead has been performed in all dispensations; it has not.

Joseph Fielding Smith

There was no baptism for the dead in the days of Elijah, or before Christ bridged the gulf which separated the righteous in paradise from the wicked in the spirit world. Christ was the first to declare the gospel to the dead, and it was not until after his resurrection that the privilege of baptism for the dead was granted. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 114)

DC 128:10-11 thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church

The Catholic Church claims papal authority based on this verse. Peter's other name, *Cephas*, means "a stone" (John 1:42) giving credence to the idea that the church would be led by Peter. Joseph Smith corrected this teaching by explaining that the rock upon which the church is built is *revelation* not Peter (Teachings, 274). So which is it? Is the Church to be built upon Peter or upon revelation?

The answer is both. If you want to argue with a Catholic, you can say it is revelation and not Peter but that won't get you very far. Besides if the Church was built upon Peter's authority-that says nothing about the continuation of authority through the popes. With the doctrine of D&C 128, we can correctly synthesize the ideas about the foundation of Christ's true Church.

First of all, the Church of Christ must be built upon a rock so that when the rains descend, the floods come, the winds blow, and beat upon that house, it falls not: for it is founded upon a rock (Matt. 7:24-25). What makes up the foundation of this house made of rock? Paul answered that question saying,

"the household of God... are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*" (Eph. 2:19-20). So now we have correctly established Peter's role in the foundation of Christ's church. As the leading apostle, holding the keys of the priesthood, he stands next to Christ in governing the church in the meridian of time. Does he get this authority from revelation?

Yes, but only because he holds the priesthood since revelation about the salvation of men can come only through the priesthood. "Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the *summum bonum* of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the Holy Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living." (D&C 128:11). How can you obtain a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of men without revelation? You can't! How can you lead Christ's church without this knowledge obtained by revelation? You can't. How can you receive this revelation without the Priesthood? You can't!

This line of thinking clears up the apparent conflict between Catholics and Mormons on Matthew 16:18-19. After Christ's ascension, the Church would be led by Peter who could only lead it by revelation because he held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood. This was the subject on the Prophet Joseph's mind when he taught the doctrine of the rock of revelation in the first place (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 274), but somehow the role of priesthood in the discussion has been underestimated.

Harold B. Lee

Several years ago in company with President S. Dilworth Young and his wife, we toured the New England Mission. At Glace Bay on Cape Breton Island we were introduced to a lovely sister who had been studying the gospel with our missionaries and had been very much attracted to them, but as we talked with her about her understanding of what they had taught, she said:

"I cannot accept this part of your teachings about the gospel of the second chance."

As we talked on, I discovered that what she was alluding to were the teachings of the missionaries with reference to the statement of the Savior when he said:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

For as the Father hath life in himself: so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. (John 5:25-26.)

She was referring to the missionaries' interpretation of the words of Peter as he wrote them to the Saints in his day,

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3:18-20.)

They had taught her what Peter explained from what the Master must have told of his visit to that spirit realm, when he said:

For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh but live according to God in the spirit.

I answered her, "You misunderstand our teachings. We don't believe in the gospel of the second chance. We do not believe in the gospel of the first chance but we believe in a chance or full opportunity for everyone to hear and to accept the gospel."

...Many times I have thought back over that conversation, and I believe now I am beginning to understand what the Master meant when he said to Peter, after Peter had declared his testimony of the divinity of the Savior. The Master had told him that this was a revelation from God, and then added,

And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18.)

There are those with limited or little understanding who believe that statement to refute our teaching that there has been an apostasy. They

say, "If there was an apostasy, then the gates of hell did prevail against the Church, contrary to the words of the Savior to Peter."

As I have thought of the true meaning of that statement, I have said to myself, "Oh, how great is the wisdom of God as contrasted with the foolishness of men."

...The **Prophet Joseph Smith** in speaking about this matter said this:

The great Jehovah contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth, pertaining to the plan of salvation before it rolled into existence, or ever "the stars of morning sang together" for joy; the past, the present, and the future, were and are with Him, one eternal "now"... He knows the situation of both the living and the dead, and has made ample provision for their redemption, according to their several circumstances, and the laws of the kingdom of God, whether in this world or in the world to come. (Smith, Joseph Fielding, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 220.)

That plan, which had been laid in the heavens before the foundations of the world were laid, contemplated a testing in the spirit world. It contemplated the plan of salvation given in various dispensations of the gospel here upon the earth.

As President Joseph Fielding Smith told us this morning, it was not God who sealed the heavens following a dispensation of the gospel. It was man. Hence, we are to believe that there would have been but one dispensation beginning with Adam and reaching down to now, except had it been for the wickedness of men.

Then there came into my mind a scripture in which the Lord said,

Now the great and grand secret . . . and the *summum bonum* of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the Holy Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living. (D. & C. 128:11.)

Truly as I thought about her plight the gates of hell had prevailed against her church because the keys and the power to reveal knowledge from heaven was not to be found in that church.

In other words, the Lord has said to Joseph Smith what he said to Peter and what he has said to every prophet in every dispensation. He gives to each the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and the power to receive revelation in order that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his plan.

What he said to Peter was tantamount to saying to Joseph, if I can make this meaning clear-

"And I say unto thee, thou art Joseph, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

What he said to Joseph, might well have been said to Peter:

"I give unto thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven, for he to whom these keys are given shall have no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of both the salvation of the living and the dead."
(*Conference Report*, April 1953, Afternoon Meeting 27)

DC 128:13 the baptismal font was instituted as a similitude of the grave

Paul taught:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3-4)

The ordinance of baptism is symbolic of death and rebirth in two ways; Christ's triumph over physical death and spiritual death are both represented. First, the natural man, the carnal man must die. He is an enemy to God. Baptism symbolizes that death as the body is laid in the water just as a corpse is laid in the tomb. The result is the birth of a new man, the man of Christ, a son or daughter of Christ. If one walks in 'a newness of life,' enduring to the end, he or she overcomes spiritual death. **Joseph Fielding Smith** said of Romans 6:6, "Here is a very definite statement that through baptism we have been transplanted from the life of sin to the life of faith and obedience to the

kingdom of God. In other words obtained a spiritual resurrection, or transfer from the life of sin to the kingdom of God, where sin should no longer abound." (*Take Heed to Yourselves* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966], 312.)

The second symbolic element is Christ's triumph over physical death. All of us will die and our physical bodies will be laid in the tomb like the body is laid under water at baptism. Being brought out of the water at baptism represents being brought out of the grave by the power of the Resurrection. Hereby, we overcome physical death.

Both physical death and spiritual death must be overcome for us to live in the celestial kingdom. The very act of baptism by immersion beautifully symbolizes Christ's triumph over all the consequences of the Fall, allowing us to return to the presence of the Father.

Rudger Clawson

Oh! how simple is this ordinance, to some perhaps even foolishness, that a man or woman, by going down into the water and being immersed can have his or her sins washed away. . . By study and reflection, we can see the beauty of the ordinance. We can see that it is typical of death and the resurrection, and that as man goes out of the grave to a newness of life, to immortality and eternal life, so he goes into the water of baptism, is buried therein, and comes forth again to a newness of life upon the earth. Being relieved of his sins, he is a new creature, with a new heart, with new prospects, and with bright and glorious hopes before him. (Roy W. Doxey, comp., *Latter-day Prophets and the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 2: 187)

Rulon S. Wells

How completely then are the crucifixion and the resurrection of our Lord, these two historic events the greatest events of human history how beautifully are they symbolized in the holy ordinance of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. And what an unjustifiable change the sectarian world has perpetrated by substituting sprinkling in lieu of immersion, thus destroying utterly its sacred meaning, its beautiful symbolism of the death and burial of our Redeemer on the one hand and on the other his glorious resurrection. (*Conference Report, April 1937, Afternoon Meeting 69*)

DC 128:14 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural

This passage of Paul, like many others, has been misunderstood. We are accustomed to thinking of the spiritual preceding the temporal because all things were created spiritually first.

For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea all things both spiritual and temporal-
First spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work...
(D&C 29:31-32)

Why does Paul list the natural before the spiritual? In this case, Paul is not speaking of the pre-mortal existence when he says the natural comes before the spiritual. Understood correctly, there is no doctrinal problem for the Lord continued in section 29 saying:

...and again, first temporal and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work. (D&C 29:32)

The beginning of the Lord's work refers to the first estate in which He created spirit children prior to mortality. He created all of us spiritually first, and temporally second. The Lord is still working on those who kept their first estate. This is "the last of [His] work," when the temporal precedes the spiritual. In the second estate, the temporal comes first, and Baptism for the Dead is a doctrine pertaining to those who have kept their second estate.

DC 128:15 these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over

Russell M. Nelson

With that, natural affection between generations began to be enriched. This restoration was accompanied by what is sometimes called the Spirit of Elijah—a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family. Hence, people throughout the world, regardless of religious affiliation, are gathering records of deceased relatives at an ever-increasing rate.

Elijah came not only to stimulate research for ancestors. He also enabled families to be eternally linked beyond the bounds of mortality. Indeed, the opportunity for families to be sealed forever is the real reason for our research. The Lord declared through the Prophet Joseph

Smith: "These are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, ... they without us cannot be made perfect-neither can we without our dead be made perfect."

Among the first in this dispensation to sow seeds of interest in family history were the brothers Orson and Parley P. Pratt, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Their efforts resulted in a Pratt family genealogy and the performance of temple ordinances for about 3,000 of their ancestors.

Yet there were many Church members who did not fully understand the responsibility for their own kindred. President Wilford Woodruff was so concerned that he made the issue a matter of fervent prayer. Then, at April 1894 general conference, he presented a revelation to the membership of the Church. From it I quote: "We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. ... This is the will of the Lord to his people."

Later that year, the First Presidency and the Twelve established the Genealogical Society of Utah. ¹⁴ From modest beginnings in an upstairs room of the Church Historian's Office, ¹⁵ its collection and facilities have grown. Today the Family History Library™ occupies a modern five-story building with access to 280,000 books, 700,000 microfiches, and more than 2 million rolls of microfilm, making it the largest library of its kind in the world. ("A New Harvest Time," *Ensign*, May 1998, 34-35)

Wilford Woodruff

I wish to say to the Latter-day Saints that we live in a very important generation. We are blessed with power and authority, holding the Holy Priesthood by the commandment of God, to stand upon the earth and redeem both the living and the dead. If we did not do it, we should be damned and cut off from the earth, and the God of Israel would raise up a people who would do it. The Lord would not permit me to occupy this position one day of my life, unless I was susceptible to the Holy Spirit and to the revelations of God. It is too late in the day for this Church to stand without revelation. Not only the President of the Church should

possess this gift and give it unto the people, but his counselors and the Apostles and all men that bear the Holy Priesthood, if they magnify their calling, should possess that gift for themselves and to assist them in their duties, although they may not be called to give revelations to lead and direct the Church. The spirit of revelation belongs to the Priesthood. (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 4, April 8, 1894)

DC 128:16 if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

The Corinthian saints were plagued with false teachers who denied the resurrection. Paul was calling their attention to the practice of baptism for the dead which must have been common among them. His rhetorical questions demonstrate the inconsistency of those who would deny the resurrection and still perform baptisms for the dead. It just doesn't make sense.

What good is baptism if there is no resurrection? We know that baptism is the key to entering into the celestial kingdom, but nobody can qualify for that kingdom without a resurrected, celestialized body. **Howard W. Hunter** noted, "There would be no sense in such ordinances except there be a resurrection. Nothing matters if there is not a resurrection; everything would end in the darkness of death." (*Conference Report, April 1969, Afternoon Session 137.*)

So if there is no resurrection, there is no point to performing baptisms for the dead. Likewise, if there is no resurrection, there is no point to performing any temple ordinances. If there is no resurrection, there is not point to performing ordinances for the living. If there is no resurrection, we might as well stop redeeming the dead, proclaiming the gospel, and perfecting the saints. All are vain unless placed in context of a glorious resurrection. This is why, as Elder Maxwell taught, the empty tomb is so full of meaning.

DC 128:18 I might have rendered a plainer translation to this

Joseph Smith heard Moroni quote this verse 4 times on September 23, 1823. Moroni's version was different:

Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. (JS-Hist. 1:38-39).

Apparently, the Prophet preferred Moroni's translation to that of the King James Bible. Moroni's version emphasizes the return of the *priesthood*. It also emphasizes the promises made to the fathers. Priesthood power, then, is used to fulfill the covenants made to the fathers. The ideas of *priesthood* and *promises* according to the covenant are emphasized.

Joseph Smith

The world is reserved unto burning in the last days. He shall send Elijah the prophet, and he shall reveal the covenants of the fathers in relation to the children, and the covenants of the children in relation to the fathers. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 321)

Bruce R. McConkie

Both of these translations are correct; both convey the mind and will of the Lord; and both teach sound and true doctrine. Taken together, they give us an expanded and comprehensive view of the mission of Elijah that we would not gain from either of them alone. (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 266)

DC 128:18 we without them cannot be made perfect

Robert L. Simpson

The largest segment of Heavenly Father's family that needs our help is our kindred dead. To suppose that we as baptized members of the Church can turn away from our forebears is the surest way I know of becoming [page 59] ineligible for the ultimate blessings we all seek so earnestly. The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded this in the 128th section of the Doctrine and Covenants as he wrote to the Church members in 1842 under the spirit and direction of the Lord:

"And now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers-that they without us cannot be made perfect-neither can we without our dead be made perfect." (D&C 128:15.)

We seek exaltation. To achieve that means perfection, and the direction is clear. We cannot be made perfect without our dead. We must seek them out; we must do for them that which they cannot do for themselves.

Many of us are coasting along under the false illusion that now the computer and the microfilm will do it all for us! Though these modern methods are essential and helpful, no machine will ever be able to provide salvation for any man unless that man does what he must do himself. There are no shortcuts to exaltation. ("These Four Things," *Ensign*, May 1976, 59)

Howard W. Hunter

On the eve of my eighty-seventh birthday, I look back in wonder at the tapestry woven by the Lord in the furthering of temple and family history work. When I was president of the Genealogical Society of Utah, we had visions of how it would move forward mightily. Now we are observing something glorious occurring throughout the world. The gospel is moving forward to encompass every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Temples are located throughout the earth, and the spirit of Elijah is touching the hearts of many members, who are doing family history and temple ordinance work at an unprecedented pace...

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead" (History of the Church, 6:313). He also stated: "This doctrine was the burden of the scriptures. Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation" (ibid., 4:426).

Catching the same vision of this important revelation, **President Brigham Young** said: "We have a work to do just as important in its sphere as the Savior's work was in its sphere. Our fathers cannot be made perfect without us; we cannot be made perfect without them. They have done their work and now sleep. We are now called upon to do ours; which is to be the greatest work man ever performed on the earth" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p. 406)...

With regard to temple and family history work, I have one overriding message: This work must hasten. The work waiting to be done is staggering and escapes human comprehension. Last year we

performed proxy temple endowments for about five and a half million persons, but during that year about fifty million persons died. ("We Have a Work to Do," *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 64-65)

DC 128:18 that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam

Brigham Young

[January 1847, Winter Quarters] I told the brethren I dreamed of seeing Joseph the Prophet, last night, and conversing with him; Joseph appeared to feel extremely well, was sociable, and laughed heartily, conversed freely about the best manner of organizing companies for emigration, etc...I said, "Brother Joseph, the brethren you know well, better than I do, you raised them up and brought the Priesthood to us; the brethren have a great anxiety to understand the law of adoption, or the sealing principles, and if you have a word of counsel for me, I should be glad to receive it."

Joseph stepped toward me, and, looking very earnestly, yet pleasantly, said, "Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to keep the Spirit of the Lord... Tell the brethren if they will follow the Spirit of the Lord they will go right. Be sure to tell the people to keep the Spirit of the Lord, and if they will, they will find themselves just as they were organized by our Father in heaven before they came, into the world. Our Father in Heaven organized the human family but they are all disorganized and in great confusion."

Joseph then showed me the pattern, how they were in the beginning; this I cannot describe, but I saw it, and saw where the Priesthood had been taken from the earth, and how it must be joined together, so that there would be a perfect chain from Father Adam to his latest posterity. ("The Prophet and Brigham Young" by Susa Young Gates, *Improvement Era*, 1919, Vol. Xxiii. December, 1919. No. 2)

Brigham Young

The ordinance of sealing must be performed here man to man, and woman to man, and children to parents, etc., until the chain of generation is made perfect in the sealing ordinances back to father Adam; hence, we have been commanded to gather ourselves together,

to come out from Babylon, and sanctify ourselves, and build up the Zion of our God, by building cities and temples, redeeming countries from the solitude of nature, until the earth is sanctified and prepared for the residence of God and angels. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 12: 165 - 166)

DC 128:18 those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world...shall be revealed

Joseph Fielding Smith

When the Latter-day Saints are willing to keep the commandments of the Lord perfectly and walk in his statutes with full purpose of heart, then these things are to be revealed, not only to the mature but also unto "babes and sucklings."

And when the end shall come, and the Lord makes known to us "all things," "things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth and in heaven," then shall we discover that our Father knew the end from the beginning, and his plan is a perfect plan of salvation for every creature, both man and beast, and for the earth upon which we dwell. (*The Way to Perfection* [Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949], 40 - 41)

DC 128:19-23 Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of gladness!

"In September 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith was hiding in the house of Edward Hunter in Nauvoo... Yet it was in the cramped quarters of Edward Hunter's home that Joseph penned the most majestic hymn of praise of the Restoration.

"Perhaps you have been to a symphony and listened to a piece of music that begins with a single, clear note played by a violin or a flute. The single instrument holds center stage for a time and then slowly, sometimes almost imperceptibly, is joined by other instruments. As the piece continues, the music swells as more and more instruments join in until all are playing and the whole hall is filled with the beauty of sound.

"Or perhaps you have listened to a great choir perform. Often a single soloist with a clear voice will begin to sing. As with the symphony, that single voice sounds in our ears without distraction. Then, slowly, other

voices begin singing until, in a wonderful unity of sound, all are singing as one.

"This is the structure of Joseph Smith's hymn of praise, only it is a hymn not of voice in song or note of violin but in words played upon the soul and recorded in the scriptures. Joseph's hymn, too, begins with a single voice, 'a voice of gladness.' Listen to the words and see if you can hear the other voices join in to sing one unified song of praise for the blessings of the Restoration: (quotes D&C 128:19-23.)

"What could have possibly been on Joseph Smith's mind to bring forth from his pen such a beautiful summation of the Restoration? The central theme of D&C 128:1 is the salvation of the dead through the ordinances of the House of the Lord. Indeed, the verse immediately preceding Joseph's song of gladness speaks of a 'welding link . . . between the fathers and the children,' a link that would be 'whole and complete and perfect.' (D&C 128:18.)

"Earlier in the letter, and serving as introduction to his song of praise, Joseph Smith told the Saints, '[The work of the temple] seems to occupy my mind, and press itself upon my feelings the strongest.' He assured them, 'These are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation.' (D&C 128:1, 15.) Joseph understood that the culmination of the Restoration, the point to which all the voices were leading, was the temple and the redeeming work for both living and dead that would take place within its walls. Without that work, the song of the Restoration would have 'become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.' (1 Corinthians 13:1.) Or, as Malachi wrote, 'The whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.' (D&C 2:3.) Temple work was the soul of Joseph Smith's song as it is the soul of the Restoration." (S. Michael Wilcox, *House of Glory: Finding Personal Meaning in the Temple* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 5-7)

DC 128:20 A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette... declaring the three witness to bear record of the book!

David Whitmer

Joseph and Oliver and I were sitting on a log, when we were overshadowed by a light more glorious than that of the sun . . . It extended away round us, I cannot tell how far, but in the midst of this

light . . . there appeared as it were, a table with many records or plates upon it, besides the plates of the Book of Mormon, also the Sword of Laban, the directors-i.e., the ball which Lehi had, and the Interpreters. The Interpreters . . . which I saw . . . in the holy vision . . . looked like whitish stones put in the rim of a bow . . . like spectacles, only much larger. The heavenly messenger brought the several plates and laid them on the table before our eyes. I saw them just as plain as I see this bed . . . and the angel told us we must bear testimony to the world. . . . / *[also] heard the voice of the Lord, distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life*, declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and power of God. Our testimony as recorded in the Book of Mormon is absolutely true, just as it is there written. (Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 154 - 155, italics added)

Joseph Smith

We heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, "These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear." (*History of the Church*, 1:54-55)

Martin Harris

I saw the angel descend from heaven. The angel stood on the opposite side of the table on which were the plates ... took the plates in his hand and turned them over... one by one. I [also] saw the Urim and Thummim, the Breastplate, and the Sword of Laban. The angel declared that the Book of Mormon was correctly translated by the power of God and not of man, and that it contained the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Nephites, who were a branch of the lost sheep of the House of Israel and had come from the land of Jerusalem to America. When he [the angel] had finished his message, I saw him ascend up into heaven. Then... *I heard the voice of God declare that everything the angel had told us was true and that the Book of Mormon was translated correctly. I was [then] commanded by God's voice to testify to the whole world what I had seen and heard.* Following the vision, I cried out in . . . ecstasy. (Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 157 - 158, italics added)

DC 128:20 Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light!

Other than this reference, we have no record of this event. Remarkable things happened to the Prophet that we don't know about. In this instance, the greatest of all the angels, Michael, the archangel-he who helped form the earth-visited Joseph Smith and showed him Satan's deception. What else did Michael say to Joseph? What did he teach him about the first dispensation? What did he teach him about Satan appearing as an angel of light? Perhaps this is where he learned the doctrine of D&C 129:

[If an angel appears to you, and if] it be the devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands he will offer you his hand, and you will not feel anything; you may therefore detect him. (D&C 129:8)

"Since the Prophet did not return to the Susquehanna River area near Harmony, Pennsylvania after 1830, this experience with Michael and the devil disguised as an angel of light would have occurred by that year." (Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 1: The Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 503)

Tradition and scripture teach that the archangel, Michael, is the captain of the Lord's host and the chief angel in the fight against Satan. The Prophet's brief reference to Michael fits perfectly with his role of limiting Satan's power, casting him out when necessary, and ultimately destroying him (Rev. 12:7-10; Jude 1:9, Daniel 12:1).

"Just as the War in Heaven continues, in a sense, into our own time, even so Adam's efforts to thwart and oppose Satan, the son of the morning, have continued since Adam's mortal death. In the context of counseling the Saints to avoid speaking evil of responsible persons, Jude, the brother of our Lord, observed that 'Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee' (Jude 1:9). This appears to be a reference to a rather obscure pseudepigraphic work known as the Assumption of Moses. We know that Moses was translated. It appears that Satan, as lord of the material world, sought Moses' death in order to gain control over his body, so that Moses 'would not have a tangible body in which to come-along with Elijah, who also was taken up without tasting death-to confer the keys of the priesthood upon Peter, James, and John' on the Mount

of Transfiguration. In our own day Michael, on the banks of the Susquehanna River, detected 'the devil when he appeared as an angel of light' (D&C 128:20). We wonder how many other occasions there may have been in earth's history when Michael the archangel has stood to rebuke and set the bounds of Lucifer the archdeceiver." (Robert L. Millet, *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars Series* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000], 163 - 164)

John Taylor

If you were to ask Joseph what sort of a looking man Adam was, he would tell you at once; he would tell you his size and appearance and all about him. You might have asked him what sort of men Peter, James, and John were, and he could have told you. Why? Because he had seen them. (*Journal of Discourses*, December 31, 1876, 18:325-26)

DC 128:20 **The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness**

Franklin D. Richards

The account of this is not given us very fully as to when it occurred; but Brother Addison Everett, who died a short time ago, has left it on record that he heard the Prophet Joseph say in the Mansion House, in Nauvoo, that it was on an occasion when they were returning from Colesville in York State, to Harmony, in Pennsylvania. A numerous mob had gathered in Colesville determined to destroy him, and the only way to save his life, to all human appearance, was to leave at once, and he and Oliver Cowdery went. After traveling and wandering along on the banks of the Susquehanna, through the marshes and swamps, all night long, and having had little or nothing to eat the day before, they were weary, faint and well nigh exhausted. Oliver became so weary that Joseph had to put his arm around him to steady him while they got out on to dryer land where they could sit down and rest. When they came out into this place, this brother [Everett] says, Joseph told him that it was there that Peter, James and John met them in their loneliness and weariness, and declared unto them their testimony, that they had been sent of the Lord Jesus Christ to ordain them to the Apostleship. The Prophet Joseph, in writing about the great work of the Lord in his seclusion in the days of Nauvoo, says: (quotes D&C 128:20-21).

This corresponds with our brother's statement, though we are nowhere told just when it occurred. When they had received this ordination and

blessing, they arose and walked the remaining seventeen miles like giants refreshed with wine, strong and able to finish their journey to Harmony. The Lord in His various and peculiar ways has restored authority and power to the human family, to administer and to receive the everlasting gospel. How strangely He led the Prophet Joseph from time to time, from place to place, in His great work to build Temples and establish His people in the gathering places and to accomplish the wonders that have been performed, for he was attacked by the powers of darkness from the day he began to receive the discipline of the Lord. He says himself that he was used continually to wading in deep water. (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 5, October 5, 1896)

DC 128:21 the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer

Joseph Smith

(Spring, 1829) We had for some time made this matter (the matter of obtaining the Melchizedek Priesthood according to the promise of John the Baptist) a subject of humble prayer, and at length we got together in the chamber of Mr. Whitmer's house, in order more particularly to seek of the Lord what we now so earnestly desired; and here, to our unspeakable satisfaction, did we realize the truth of the Savior's promise-"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"-for we had not long been engaged in solemn and fervent prayer, when the word of the Lord came unto us in the chamber,fn commanding us that I should ordain Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ; and that he also should ordain me to the same office; and then to ordain others, as it should be made known unto us from time to time. We were, however, commanded to defer this our ordination until such times as it should be practicable to have our brethren, who had been and who should be baptized, assembled together, when we must have their sanction to our thus proceeding to ordain each other, and have them decide by vote whether they were willing to accept us as spiritual teachers or not. (*History of the Church*, 1:60-61)

"The Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery set forth the order and manner of priesthood conferral and ordination, affirming that Peter, James, and John had been given the authority and responsibility for conferring the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood on them, Joseph and

Oliver. 'The word of the Lord' that had come in the chamber of the Whitmer log house to Joseph and Oliver was not a bestowal of Melchizedek Priesthood authority by 'voice command.' Rather, it was instruction that with the future acceptance of their leadership from the consent of assembled brethren, Joseph and Oliver could organize the Church, using the authority that had already been bestowed upon them by the three ancient Apostles, Peter, James, and John, by the Susquehanna River (see D&C 128:20). Then they could proceed to ordain each other as first and second elder within that Church (see D&C 20:2-3)." (Larry C. Porter, *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 42)

DC 128:21 the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of diverse angels

Religious literature from all over the world and from many traditions teach of the greatest of all the angels-the archangels. Some traditions say there are three, four, or seven archangels, but uniformly, the first three are Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. The Prophet revealed to us the identity of Michael and Gabriel; they are Adam and Noah respectively. The identity of Raphael is not known.

"Archangels are found in a number of religious traditions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. Michael is the only archangel named in the Bible as recognized by both Jews and Christians. Gabriel, named in Luke, is considered to be an archangel, as are Raphael (mentioned in the Book of Tobit) and Uriel (mentioned in the Book of Enoch). The Book of Tobit is included in the Catholic Canon of the Bible; however, this book is considered apocryphal by many Protestants. The archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are venerated in the Roman Catholic Church with a feast on 29 September. The named archangels in Islam are Gabriel, Michael, Raphael and Azrael." (Wikipedia, "Archangel")

Archangel	Michael	Gabriel	Raphael
LDS Doctrine	Adam	Noah	Unknown
Judaism	Michael serves as a warrior and advocate for Israel. He is the field commander of	Mentioned in the Book of Daniel and the Talmud.	Not mentioned in the Torah by name but is mentioned in apocryphal works.

Archangel	Michael	Gabriel	Raphael
	the Army of God.		
Christianity	Michael in the Hebrew means "Who is like unto God?" He is in constant battle with Satan, fighting against the dragon and his angels (Rev. 12:7-9)	Gabriel means "Man of God." He is the herald of the mysteries of God. He appears to Zacharias and Mary heralding the births of John and Jesus.	Raphael means "God's healing." In the Book of Tobit, he heals Tobit and his son of blindness and drives away a demon.
Islam	Michael is often depicted as the archangel of mercy who is responsible for bringing rain and thunder to Earth.	Gabriel reveals the Koran to Mohammad.	Raphael is responsible for signaling the coming of Judgment Day by blowing a horn and sending out a Blast of Truth.

Source: Wikipedia.

What makes an angel an archangel? The Priesthood. Michael is first, Gabriel second, and presumably Raphael is third.

Joseph Smith

The Priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed, as in Genesis 1:26, 27, 28. He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel: he stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood; he was called of God to this office, and was the father of all living in this day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held keys first on earth, and then in heaven.

The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from heaven, it is by Adam's authority. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157)

Bruce R. McConkie

As to Raphael's mortal identity, we can only speculate. We do know the personages, however, who restored the keys exercised in the various great dispensations mentioned in the Bible, with the exception of the dispensation of Enoch. An inference thus arises that Raphael may be Enoch or some other great prophet from his dispensation. (*Mormon Doctrine*, 168)

DC 128:22 Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause?... Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!

"'God Almighty is my shield,' stated the Prophet Joseph Smith. 'What can man do if God is my friend?' His bold pronouncement of divine friendship as he confronted mounting persecution and affliction evidenced his unwavering trust in God. With his own life as a prototype, the Prophet encouraged his faithful followers with these moving words: 'Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!' (D&C 128:22).

"To obtain the anticipated victory, the brethren did go on with fearless valor. 'I just do the thing that I know to be right,' said President Brigham Young, 'and the Lord blesses me.' On 4 February 1846 he gave the Saints nestled in Nauvoo an opportunity to draw upon their courage when he advised them to prepare to leave: 'We can do almost anything, for our Father in heaven will strengthen us, if we strengthen ourselves. He will work according to our faith. ... If we say, in the name of the Lord we will go! and set ourselves about it, he will help us.'

The very day of that prophetic announcement, Charles Shumway, in nearly zero-degree weather, loaded his ox-drawn wagon onto a flatboat and was the first to cross the Mississippi River on the now-famous Mormon trek to the Rocky Mountains. Other Saints courageously rumbled along streets in beautiful Nauvoo with only meager supplies loaded in covered wagons and crossed the river to join Brother Shumway that first day. Flatboats, old barges, and a number of skiffs

formed a makeshift fleet carrying Latter-day Saint exiles from Illinois. 'We must not look back,' wrote Joseph Young, the brother of President Brigham Young, 'but placing our faith in God, we must leave our destiny in His hands.' As one by one the Saints joined in the exodus, they likely reflected upon all they were leaving behind in Nauvoo as well as the uncertainties that lay ahead. Yet they drew upon their faith and courage and moved forward." (Susan Easton Black, "Courage-the Unfailing Beacon," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 51)

M. Russell Ballard

This is our day, brothers and sisters. It is a time that has been foreseen by holy prophets since the world began. It is the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the final scenes of this world's history will be played out. Our latter-day prophets, from Joseph Smith to Gordon B. Hinckley, have warned us of the solemn, sobering obligation that is ours to prepare for "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." That day is steadily moving toward us, and there is still much to be done. We must be prepared to keep pace with our leaders, stride for their every lengthened stride. Perhaps as never before we need to focus our efforts on those things that matter most and avoid spending time on those things of small concern and of little consequence. ("Are We Keeping Pace?" *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 8)

Gordon B. Hinckley

How glorious is the past of this great cause. It is filled with heroism, courage, boldness, and faith. How wondrous is the present as we move forward to bless the lives of people wherever they will hearken to the message of the servants of the Lord. How magnificent will be the future as the Almighty rolls on His glorious work touching for good all who will accept and live His gospel, and even reaching to the eternal blessing of His sons and daughters of all generations through the selfless work of those whose hearts are filled with love for the Redeemer of the world. ("Stay the Course-Keep the Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 72)

DC 128:22 redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "There is a way to release the spirits of the dead; that is by the power and authority of the Priesthood-by binding and loosing on earth" (*History of the Church*, 4:425). And, "God has administrators in the eternal world to release those spirits from Prison, the

ordinances being administered by proxy upon them the law is fulfilled." (*The Words of Joseph Smith*, Ehat and Cook, 371 - 372)

Part of the Savior's mortal mission was "to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isa. 42:7). He did not do this in person, but organized missionary forces among the dead to perform the necessary work (D&C 138:29-34), "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isa. 61:1)

The question is this-how are the prisoners made free? Is it because they are let out of spirit prison and taken into spirit paradise? Or, is it because they are resurrected with the possibility of celestial glory, "after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean" (D&C 138:58)? To restate the question, are they free because they go to spirit paradise or are they freed when they are resurrected? Perhaps it is both.

The reader will forgive my skepticism on the idea that baptism for the dead immediately enables a spirit to enter Spirit Paradise as there is little authoritative information on the doctrine. The scriptures emphasize the resurrection idea. The culture of Mormonism emphasizes the spirit paradise idea. I could not find a more authoritative source for the spirit paradise idea than the quote below:

"The work of the righteous is to preach the gospel to as many as will receive it, so that whosoever receives it unto repentance may leave the spirit prison and enter into paradise when the ordinances have been done vicariously for them on earth. Through the institution of baptism for the dead, the Church is able to open the gate of baptism, which allows the repentant spirits to exit the spirit prison of hell, the state of the wicked in the spirit world. The performance and acceptance of this ordinance lifts the imposed restriction and allows entrance among the righteous spirits." (Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *Alma, the Testimony of the Word* [Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1992], 184)

Professor of ancient scripture, Monte S. Nyman teaches the cultural doctrine. Perhaps it is true, but let's look closely at the implications of the doctrine. If baptism is required to get from spirit prison to spirit paradise, then baptism must be a requirement for spirit paradise. This is never stated in the scriptures. Lazarus the beggar, who was taken to spirit paradise, called "Abraham' bosom," was never baptized. It wasn't baptism which separated Lazarus and the rich man, it was righteousness (Luke 16:19-31).

What of Paul's rhetorical question, "If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:29) Paul is emphasizing the resurrection idea, not the cultural doctrine. The cultural doctrine says to Paul, "we are performing baptisms for the dead to get the spirits from spirit prison to spirit paradise, regardless of whether there is a resurrection or not." Paul's point is this, "If there is no resurrection, there is no point to performing baptisms for the dead." This idea is supported in D&C 138:

For the dead had looked upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage.

These the Lord taught, and gave them power to come forth, after his resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father's kingdom, there to be crowned with immortality and eternal life. (D&C 138:50-51)

These are the righteous who hear the news they have been waiting for, "That thou mayest say to the prisoners go forth" (Isa 49:9). A glorious resurrection frees them from the bondage of the spirit world. **Joseph F. Smith** saw that the hope of the dead, whether righteous or wicked, was that "their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided." (D&C 138:17) For the righteous, this would mean a fullness of joy in the celestial kingdom of God. For those who lived righteously, accepting the gospel in the Spirit World, it would mean a fullness of joy in the celestial kingdom of God (D&C 137:5-9). However, the wicked who try to repent in the spirit world, whether baptism for the dead is performed for them or not, may not be worthy of celestial glory, but may be heirs of salvation in a lower kingdom. While the gospel will allow them to "live according to God in the spirit," they still must "be judged according to men in the flesh" (1 Peter 4:6).

DC 128:24 he shall purify the sons of Levi...that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness

To Joseph Smith was given a dispensation of the priesthood of God. With that responsibility, he was to insure that the priesthood ordinances were properly performed and recorded. Previous dispensations had the same responsibility. Weighing on the Prophet's mind is his responsibility to get things right. "What if we don't fulfill our responsibility to our dead?" "What if the Lord doesn't accept our offering?" These are crucial questions.

Has there ever been a dispensation or group of priesthood holders which has failed? The answer is yes. The sons of Levi did not fill the measure of their responsibility.

I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

My covenant was with him of life and peace...

For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? (Mal. 2:5-10)

The failure of the sons of Levi must be corrected by the Lord. They must be purified and offer an acceptable offering. Joseph Smith doesn't want his dispensation to make the same mistake. Hence, the reference to the sons of Levi near the conclusion of this letter is completely appropriate and understandable. If our dispensation were to fail in its responsibility it must be purified by the Lord just as the sons of Levi were.

The sons of Levi *will* eventually offer an offering to the Lord in righteousness. This they will do during the Millennium when the temples are established in Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem.

And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity.

Yet (during the Millennium) they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them (in righteousness). Because (anciently) they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.

And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a (high) priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. (Ezek. 44:10-14)

DC 128:24 let us present... a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance

"Since these temple records are of such supreme importance in the eternal plan for the exaltation of God's children, it is no cause for wonderment that in dedicatory prayers should be appeals for the accuracy of the temple records. Note this paragraph from the prayer at Manti by **President Snow**:

We dedicate to thee the records which are and shall be kept of all the ordinances administered here in this Temple. May the recorders who shall have the care and labor of making and keeping them be abundantly blessed with wisdom and knowledge, that the same may be *truthfully and faithfully kept and be found worthy of all acceptance*, that thy people may be righteously judged according to all that shall be written therein. We earnestly pray that they may be preserved most holy unto thee from all violence and desecration, until they shall have accomplished the full object and purpose of their creation.

"Similarly at the Salt Lake Temple, by **President Woodruff**:

Bless the recorders and copyists, *that the records of the Temple may be kept perfect, and without omissions and errors*, and that they may also be accepted of thee.

"And at the Idaho Falls Temple, by **President Smith**:

Bless all those who shall be workers in this Temple, whether they be officers, ordinance workers or caretakers. May they fulfill the functions of their respective callings in accordance with the spirit and purpose of it. May all ordinances to be performed in this House, including baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, sealings, endowments, and all that is done, be acceptable unto thee. Bless, we pray thee, those who shall make and copy records *that their work may be accurate and acceptable unto thee.*" (Archibald F. Bennett, *Saviors on Mount Zion* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1950], 170 - 171)

"It will take the Millennium to achieve that culmination and make it 'worthy of all acceptation,' for how can the Lord accept it until all of his children who will receive salvation and eternal life have been provided with the opportunity?

"...Without that offering, the whole earth would be wasted at the Lord's coming.

"How appropriate that the offering we are to place on the altars of the temple is a book. It is a fair exchange for the wonderful book our Father in Heaven has placed on those same altars as his offering and gift to us." (S. Michael Wilcox, *House of Glory: Finding Personal Meaning in the Temple* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 116)

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