

Section 132

Historical Background

B.H. Roberts

The date in the heading of the Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, Including the Plurality of Wives, notes the time at which the revelation was committed to writing, not the time at which the principles set forth in the revelation were first made known to the Prophet... There is indisputable evidence that the revelation making known this marriage law was given to the Prophet as early as 1831. In that year, and thence intermittently up to 1833, the Prophet was engaged in a revision of the English Bible text under the inspiration of God, Sidney Rigdon in the main acting as his scribe. As he began his revision with the Old Testament, he would be dealing with the age of the Patriarchs in 1831. He was doubtless struck with the favor in which the Lord held the several Bible Patriarchs of that period, notwithstanding they had a plurality of wives. What more natural than that he should inquire of the Lord at that time, when his mind must have been impressed with the fact-Why, O Lord, didst Thou justify Thy servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; as also Moses, David, and Solomon, in the matter of their having many wives and concubines (see opening paragraph of the Revelation)? In answer to that inquiry came the revelation, though not then committed to writing.

Corroborative evidences of the fact of the revelation having been given thus early in the Prophet's career are to be found in the early charges against the Church about its belief in "polygamy." For example: When the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was presented to the several quorums of the priesthood of the Church for acceptance in the general assembly of that body, the 17th of August, 1835, an article on "Marriage" was presented by W. W. Phelps, which for many years was published in the Doctrine and Covenants. It was not a revelation, nor was it presented as such to the general assembly of the priesthood. It was an article, however, that represented the views of the assembly on the subject of marriage at that time, unenlightened as they were by the revelation already given to the Prophet on the subject. What the Prophet Joseph's connection was with this article cannot be learned. Whether he approved it or not is uncertain, since he was absent from Kirtland at the time of the general assembly of the priesthood which accepted it, on a

visit to the Saints in Michigan (see *History of the Church*, Vol. I, pp. 243-53).

In this article on marriage the following sentence occurs:

"Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again."

From this it is evident that as early at least as 1835 a charge of polygamy was made against the Church. Why was that the case unless the subject of "polygamy" had been mooted within the Church? Is it not evident that some one to whom the Prophet had confided the knowledge of the revelation he had received concerning the rightfulness of plural marriage-under certain circumstances-had unwisely made some statement concerning the matter?

Again, in May, 1836, in Missouri, in a series of questions asked and answered through the Elder's Journal, the following occurs:

"Do the Mormons believe in having more wives than one?"

To which the answer is given:

"No, not at the same time."

This again represents the belief of the Saints at that time, unenlightened as they then were by the revelation received by their Prophet. But again, why this question unless there had been some agitation of the subject? Had some one before the time had come for making known this doctrine to the Church, again unwisely referred to the knowledge which had been revealed to the Prophet some seven years earlier?

All these incidents blend together and make it clearly evident that the revelation on marriage was given long before the 12th of July, 1843. Doubtless as early as 1831.

In addition to these indirect evidences is the direct testimony of the late **Elder Orson Pratt**, of the council of the Twelve Apostles. In 1878, in company with President Joseph F. Smith, Elder Pratt visited several states east of the Mississippi in the capacity of a missionary; and at

Plano, Illinois, at a meeting of the so-called Reorganized Church of the Latter-day Saints, he was invited by the presiding officer, a Mr. Dille, and the meeting, to occupy the time, which he did. In his remarks, according to his own and his companion's report of the meeting-

"Elder Pratt gave a plain, simple narration of his early experience in the Church, relating many interesting incidents connected with its rise; explained the circumstances under which several revelations were received by Joseph, the Prophet, and the manner in which he received them, he being present on several occasions of the kind. Declared [that] at such times Joseph used the Seer-stone when inquiring of the Lord, and receiving revelation, but that he was so thoroughly endowed with the inspiration of the Almighty and the spirit of revelation that he often received them without any instrument, or other means than the operation of the spirit upon his mind. Referred to the testimony which he received of the truth of the great latter-day work while yet a boy. Testified that these things were not matters of belief only with him, but of actual knowledge. He explained the circumstances connected with the coming forth of the revelation on plural marriage. Refuted the statement and belief of those present that Brigham Young was the author of that revelation; showed that Joseph Smith the Prophet had not only commenced the practice himself, and taught it to others, before President Young and the Twelve had returned from their mission in Europe, in 1841, but that Joseph actually received revelations upon that principle as early as 1831. Said 'Lyman Johnson, who was very familiar with Joseph at this early date, Joseph living at his father's house, and who was also very intimate with me, we having traveled on several missions together, told me himself that Joseph had made known to him as early as 1831, that plural marriage was a correct principle. Joseph declared to Lyman that God had revealed it to him, but that the time had not come to teach or practice it in the Church, but that the time would come.' To this statement Elder Pratt bore his testimony. He cited several instances of Joseph having had wives sealed to him, one at least as early as April 5th, 1841, which was some time prior to the return of the Twelve from England. Referred to his own trial in regard to this matter in Nauvoo, and said it was because he got his information from a wicked source, from those disaffected, but as soon as he learned the truth, he was satisfied.

(Signed) "Orson Pratt,
(Signed) "Joseph F. Smith"

(History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951], 5: xxix-xxxii.)

"On the evening of April 5, 1841, Joseph Bates Noble crossed the river from Montrose, Iowa, and met Joseph Smith under an elm tree. Twenty-six-year-old Louisa Beaman, dressed in a man's hat and coat, stood at Joseph's side. With Joseph telling him the words of the ceremony, Noble married his wife's sister to the Mormon prophet.

"The previous fall Joseph had approached Noble, a close friend, confiding in him the 'principle of celestial marriage.'

He said that God had revealed the doctrine to him in Kirtland but that an angel of the Lord had now appeared to him, commanding that he introduce this 'new order of marriage.' That Joseph began teaching plural marriage in Nauvoo to Noble, who was not a member of the ranking councils of the church, is not surprising, since Hyrum Smith and Sidney Rigdon had expressed their distaste for [the doctrine]... and the Twelve were still in England on their missions. Joseph swore Noble to secrecy, saying 'I have placed my life in your hands, therefore do not in an evil hour betray me to my enemies.' Similar statements would accompany Joseph's instructions to others, indicating that he recognized plural marriage would bring upheaval to his people and perhaps result in his own death...

"While Joseph was in Philadelphia early in 1840, **Parley P. Pratt** recalled one of the earliest known accounts of Joseph's teaching eternal marriage. He said Joseph talked about the 'idea of eternal family organization, and the eternal union of the sexes.' Until this time Pratt had believed close affections to be 'something from which the heart must be entirely weaned' before one was prepared for heaven, 'It was from [Joseph] that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and for all eternity;... while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of the heaven, or the sands of the sea shore.' Pratt added one last significant remark: 'Joseph Smith had barely touched a single key; had merely lifted a corner of the veil and given me a single glance into eternity.'

"When Brigham and others of the Twelve returned to Nauvoo from England in July 1841, Joseph began immediately to teach them the new doctrine of marriage. Only this time he brought the concept of plural marriage together with eternal marriage into what would become known as 'celestial' or patriarchal' marriage. The combination did not bring forth the same euphoria that Pratt had experienced a year and a half earlier. In looking back on the occasion, **Brigham Young** said, 'It was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time.' **Heber C. Kimball** begged Joseph 'to remove the requirement' or he would leave the church. And **John Taylor** indicated that the Twelve 'seemed to put off as far as we could, what might be termed the evil day' when they would take plural wives. Despite the reaction, Joseph was so relieved not to carry the burden alone that he reportedly clapped his hands and danced like a child.

"Joseph explained the doctrine to some of the Twelve together, presumably the three above mentioned, and Willard Richards, George A. Smith, and Orson Pratt. He encouraged them not to delay in putting their new knowledge into practice. From July 1841 to April 1842 Joseph and the Twelve began educating themselves and various women to the acceptance of the plural wife doctrine. **Joseph Lee Robinson** commented, 'It could not be expected that they could enter into this new order of things without difficulty and some severe trials for it is calculated in its nature to severely try the women, to nearly tear their heart strings out of them, and also it must severely try the men as well.'

"From 1841 until his death Joseph would continue to take more plural wives. Twentieth-century historians disagree on the number... It was one thing for Joseph to announce to the men that they were now to marry additional women, but it was another for those men to tell their wives... Initial reaction of those who left accounts almost universally described 'shock, horror, disbelief, or general emotional confusion,' followed by a 'period of inner turmoil lasting from several days to several months.' People prayed and fasted, hoping for enlightenment, and often reported 'a compelling personal experience' that brought them to accept plural marriage as a true principle." (LK Newell, VT Avery, *Emma Hale Smith: Mormon Enigma*, [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2nd edition, 1994], 95-99)

No other latter-day saint was more horrified by this doctrine than Emma, the Prophet's wife. She learned of the principle well before the Nauvoo period,

and history has not been able to hide her perpetual hatred of the doctrine. She, like so many other Mormon women then and now, could not reconcile her faith in God with this principle. Joseph prevailed on her at times to acquiesce and live the principle as an example to the saints. She would agree, only to change her mind the next day. This was a great source of turmoil between Joseph and Emma in 1843. A particularly enlightening event occurred when the revelation was committed to writing and presented to Emma.

B.H. Roberts

Relative to committing the revelation to writing on the 12th of July, 1843, that can best be told by the man who wrote the revelation as the Prophet Joseph dictated it to him, William Clayton; and the man who copied it the day following, Joseph Kingsbury; and from which copy the revelation was afterwards printed as it now stands in the current edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. In a sworn statement before John T. Caine, a notary public in Salt Lake City, on February 16th, 1874, **William Clayton** said:

"... On the morning of the 12th of July, 1843; Joseph and Hyrum Smith came into the office in the upper story of the brick store, on the bank of the Mississippi river. They were talking on the subject of plural marriage. Hyrum said to Joseph, 'If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage, I will take it and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.' Joseph smiled and remarked, 'You do not know Emma as well as I do.' Hyrum repeated his opinion, and further remarked, 'The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity and heavenly origin,' or words to that effect. Joseph then said, 'Well, I will write the revelation and we will see.' He then requested me to get paper and prepare to write. Hyrum very urgently requested Joseph to write the revelation by means of the Urim and Thummim, but Joseph in reply, said he did not need to, for he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end.

"Joseph and Hyrum then sat down and Joseph commenced to dictate the revelation on celestial marriage, and I wrote it, sentence by sentence, as he dictated. After the whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through, slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct. He then remarked that there

was much more that he could write on the same subject, but what was written was sufficient for the present.

"Hyrum then took the revelation to read to Emma. Joseph remained with me in the office until Hyrum returned. When he came back, Joseph asked him how he had succeeded. Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger.

"Joseph quietly remarked, 'I told you, you did not know Emma as well as I did.' Joseph then put the revelation in his pocket, and they both left the office.

"The revelation was read to several of the authorities during the day. Towards evening Bishop Newel K. Whitney asked Joseph if he had any objections to his taking a copy of the revelation; Joseph replied that he had not, and handed it to him. It was carefully copied the following day by Joseph C. Kingsbury. Two or three days after the revelation was written Joseph related to me and several others that Emma had so teased, and urgently entreated him for the privilege of destroying it, that he became so weary of her teasing, and to get rid of her annoyance, he told her she might destroy it and she had done so, but he had consented to her wish in this matter to pacify her, realizing that he knew the revelation perfectly, and could rewrite it at any time if necessary." (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951], 5: xxix-xxxiv.)

Introduction

From a historical perspective, section 132 cannot be separated from polygamy. Doctrinally, they are separable but historically, the two are forever married-so to speak. From a doctrinal perspective, the principles taught apply just as well to monogamy. The new and everlasting covenant of marriage includes the doctrine of plural wives but it does not exclude monogamy. In God's earthly kingdom, both historically and doctrinally, monogamy is the rule not the exception. The plural wife doctrine of this revelation may have been binding upon the early saints, but since the Manifesto (see OD 1) the saints are no longer bound to keep it.

"Section 132 can be divided into three parts; revelation on eternal law and its application to celestial marriage (vv. 2-32), revelation concerning the principle of plural marriage (vv. 34-48), and revelation concerning the practice of marriage by Joseph and Emma (vv. 49-66)." (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 4:3244)

DC 132:1 you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon

"It appears that Joseph Smith may have asked the Lord about plural marriage as early as 1831. In that year Joseph felt inspired to revise the Bible wherein he reviewed the accounts of the ancient patriarchs who practiced polygamy. Abraham was married to Sarai (Sara) and had two additional wives: Hagar (Gen. 16:13) and later Keturah (Gen. 25:1) and concubines (Gen. 25:6). Jacob, (renamed Israel by God), had twelve sons by four wives and concubines (Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah). Moses too was a polygamist (Ex. 2:21; Num. 12:1). Early Church member Lyman E. Johnson recalled that 'Joseph had made known to him as early as 1831 that plural marriage was a correct principle.'

"Despite learning about polygamy in the early 1830s, Joseph Smith did not automatically assume that he had authorization to practice it. **George Q. Cannon** described what happened: 'The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph in an early day, some points connected with the doctrine of celestial marriage. He was told that it was to obey God's will that His ancient servants had taken more wives than one; and he probably learned, also, that His servants in these days would be commanded to carry out this principle. The Prophet Joseph, however, took no license from this. He was content to await the pleasure and command of the Lord, knowing that it was... sinful to enter upon the practice of a principle like this before being commanded to do so.'" (Brian Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism*, 1-2)

B.H. Roberts

The doctrine revealed at that [early] time to the Prophet, however, was not to be made known to the world; but Joseph did make known what had been revealed to him to a few trusted friends, among whom were Oliver Cowdery and Lyman E. Johnson, the latter confiding what the

Prophet had taught him to Orson Pratt, his missionary companion. With these and a few other exceptions, perhaps, the knowledge of the truth and righteousness of this principle of the future marriage system of The Church was locked up in the bosom of the Prophet of God. About 1840, however, the Prophet began to be moved upon to make known the doctrine to others. (*The Rise and Fall of Nauvoo* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1900], 115)

DC 132:3 prepare thy heart to receive and obey

"Why was it, the Prophet wanted to know, that prophets, patriarchs, and kings could have many wives and concubines? In the Lord's response, Joseph was told to prepare his heart for the instructions about to be given (v. 3); in this instance the explanation for the ancient phenomenon was to be accompanied by a commandment to institute the practice in modern times. Seeking further light and knowledge had led the Prophet to further and greater obligations; much was about to be given, and much would soon be required (cf. D&C 82:3). Salvation in the highest heaven was at stake." (Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 1: The Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 515 - 516)

DC 132:3-6 all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same

Those to whom the Prophet Joseph Smith revealed this doctrine were morally obligated to live the law. The Twelve understood this all too well-hence Brigham Young's response to the doctrine, "it was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time." (B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church*, 2:103.) **John Taylor** responded as did most of the Twelve, "Joseph Smith told the Twelve-that if this law was not practiced, if they would not enter into this covenant, then the kingdom of God could not go one step further. Now, we did not feel like preventing the kingdom of God from going forward. We professed to be the Apostles of the Lord, and did not feel like putting ourselves in a position to retard the progress of the kingdom of God. The revelation, as you have heard, says that, 'all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.' Now, that is not my word. I did not make it. It was the Prophet of God who revealed that to us in Nauvoo, and I bear witness of this solemn fact before God, that He did reveal this sacred principle to me and others of the Twelve, and in this revelation it is stated that it is the will and law of God that 'all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.'"

(*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 24: 230)

The law, however, was not binding upon all the Nauvoo saints. The revelation was not published openly during the Prophet's lifetime, and was not binding upon church members until it was made public in the 1850's. During the ensuing 4-5 decades, it was not uncommon for the leading Brethren of the Church to approach a monogamous brother and ask him to live the law, sometimes warning the brother that he would be under condemnation if he did not. The following example of Edward T. Ashton is fairly typical.

"In about the year 1883, Ed [Edward T. Ashton] was counseled by Church leaders that he should take another wife and live the law of polygamy. He hesitated, not being fully convinced that this was what he wanted to do. During that time he came down with a case of the mumps, and fearing he might not be able to have more children, he promised the Lord that if he would recover without any ill effects (i.e. sterility), he would enter into polygamy.

"...When he approached [his wife] Effie, she was not at all sure she could accept it. She told the story later. One summer day during the year 1883, she hitched up a horse to the surrey, put up a sandwich, and taking her infant son, Marvin, who was then just a few months old, she headed for the East Millcreek area. She said she was determined not to return home until she could feel good about her husband taking a plural wife.

"During the long ride she mulled it over and over in her mind. Finally she stopped the horse, climbed down from the surrey, and began to pray fervently for an answer to her problem. After several hours she returned home and told Edward she would approve of his marrying... another wife." (*The Edward Ashton and Jane Treharne Ashton Legacy of Faith*, 31)

Fortunately for our generation, the saints are no longer under the obligation to "obey the same."

"Many suppose that we do not have the fulness of the law because we don't practice plural marriage. Indeed, the remaining verses of section 132 (verses 29-66) deal with the plural marriage application of this law. But we would be wise to remember that this law is administered through the living prophet and the Lord directs him as to its current application.

On 6 October 1890, President Wilford Woodruff issued a manifesto declaring the revealed end of the practice of plural marriage in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since that time, the law of celestial marriage has been applied to the marriage of one man and one living woman at a time. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** stated:

"Plural marriage is not essential to salvation or exaltation. Nephi and his people were denied the power to have more than one wife and yet they could gain every blessing in eternity that the Lord ever offered to any people. In our day, the Lord summarized by revelation the whole doctrine of exaltation and predicated it upon the marriage of one man to one woman. (D. & C. 132:1-28.) Thereafter he added the principles relative to plurality of wives with the express stipulation that any such marriages would be valid only if authorized by the President of the Church. (D&C 132:7, 29-66.)" (Leon R. Hartshorn, Dennis A. Wright, and Craig J. Ostler, eds., *The Doctrine and Covenants, a Book of Answers: The 25th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1996], 166)

Cree-L Kofford

Occasionally, someone will want to know why you have to have a temple recommend to get in the temple. The following thoughts may help you answer the question:

...Once you enter the temple, you are expected and required to live the covenants you will make there. If you have any doubt about your willingness or ability to live those covenants, then my counsel is that you wait to go to the temple until you don't have any doubts.

One scripture which deals with this is Doctrine and Covenants 132:3: "Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those *who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same*" (emphasis added).

If you understand that scripture, you begin to understand why the Lord has set sentries at His doors for the protection of those who would unwittingly enter in and become subject to living covenants which they are not prepared to live. Thus, in a real way, the temple recommend is an indication of the Lord's love for His children, a measure to ensure our readiness to attend the temple. The temple recommend interview allows us to evaluate ourselves and determine whether or not we are prepared

to undertake the covenants that we will make. When a recommend is not issued, far from indicating the person has been rejected, it is in reality an expression of caring concern for the unprepared. ("Marriage in the Lord's Way, Part Two," *Ensign*, July 1998, 16)

DC 132:6 he... shall abide the law, or he shall be damned

LeGrand Richards

When the Lord said, referring to the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, 'and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned,' he did not use the term 'damned,' in the sense that it is usually understood by the modern Christian world, for it will be noted that he indicated they 'shall be appointed angels in heaven; which angels are ministering servants; to minister for those who are worthy of a far more and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.' In verse 17 of the above quotation, the Lord stated that they shall 'remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition.' Thus even they will be saved, but not exalted. The use of the word 'damned,' therefore, means that one's progress is stopped (see D&C 131:4); 'they cannot be enlarged' (see D&C 132:17). (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950], 303)

Joseph Fielding Smith

What is damnation? It is being barred, or denied privileges of progression, because of failure to comply with law. All who fail to enter into the celestial kingdom, are damned, or stopped, in their progression, but they will enter into some other glory which they are entitled to receive. (*Improvement Era*, 1916, Vol. Xix. March, 1916 No. 5)

Hugh B. Brown

To deny the possibility of eternal progression is to accept the awful alternative of eventual stagnation which would be damnation. (*Conference Report*, April 1956, Third Day-Morning Meeting 106)

DC 132:7 the conditions of this law

What are the key elements of eternal contracts? This verse says the ordinance must be 1) made, 2) entered into, and 3) sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise by him who is 1) anointed, 2) by revelation, and 3) commandment.

Let's take baptism for example. An individual baptized by a priest who has been properly *anointed* to the Aaronic priesthood, with the decision to proceed with baptism being confirmed by *revelation* (inspiration) at the time of the baptismal interview, and in complete agreement with the *commandment* (D&C 20:37) regarding baptismal requirements. The baptismal ordinance is *made* and *entered into* by the Holy Spirit as it is done with the Spirit and in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The last and final requirement is that the baptism is *sealed* by the Holy Spirit of Promise. This final element depends on whether or not the individual has kept his baptismal covenants. If so, the Holy Spirit of Promise seals the ordinance, which means nothing in heaven or hell can rescind the privilege of entering into the Celestial Kingdom.

If the individual rejects his baptismal covenants, then the Holy Spirit of Promise will not seal the ordinance and that baptism will "have an end when men are dead."

Bruce R. McConkie

Baptism is the gate to the celestial kingdom of heaven, provided it is performed by a legal administrator, one whose administrations will be recognized by God, and provided also that the candidate has made himself worthy and that the ordinance is sealed upon him by the Holy Ghost. (*Conference Report*, April 1949, Afternoon Meeting 92)

Bruce R. McConkie

Every act that we do, if it is to have binding and sealing virtue in eternity, must be justified by the Spirit. In other words, it must be ratified by the Holy Ghost; or in other words, it must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. (*Conference Report*, April 1956, Afternoon Meeting 65)

DC 132:7 all covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows... are of no efficacy, virtue, or force

"We have a unique contribution to an understanding of the new and everlasting covenant. A covenant people is a people holding the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, with the power to bind and the power to loose among both the living and the dead. This power is not understood by the world. Yet it is the heart and core of the whole matter. None of the ordinances that Christians have considered important are of any effect without this sealing by the Holy Spirit of promise. Baptisms and

confirmations, the sacraments, and marriage are mere earthly conveniences without the power and authority to bind in the heavens." (William E. Berrett, "Unique Teachings from the Doctrine and Covenants," *Ensign*, Sept. 1978, 63)

Joseph Smith

Whenever men can find out the will of God and find an administrator legally authorized from God, there is the kingdom of God; but where these are not, the kingdom of God is not. All the ordinances, systems, and administrations on the earth are of no use to the children of men, unless they are ordained and authorized of God; for nothing will save a man but a legal administrator; for none others will be acknowledged either by God or angels. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 274)

DC 132:7 there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred

"The Lord governs his people-and his people help one another-in an orderly way through an organization directed by the Lord himself. There is great peace in knowing that Jesus Christ governs his church. Under his direction, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles provide inspired leadership. What could be more comforting than knowing that a perfect, omnipotent God continually watches over his children in this way? **President Brigham Young** explained: 'The Lord Almighty leads this Church, and he will never suffer you to be led astray if you are found doing your duty. You may go home and sleep as sweetly as a babe in its mother's arms, as to any danger of your leaders leading you astray, for if they should try to do so the Lord would quickly sweep them from the earth' (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 138).

"**President Gordon B. Hinckley** reaffirmed: 'God is at the helm. Never doubt it. ... The truth is in this church. The authority is in this priesthood. The leadership is in this great body of priesthood at every level of governance' ("God Is at the Helm," *Ensign*, May 1994, 59)." ("A House of Order, a House of God," *Ensign*, Apr. 1998, 57)

DC 132:8 mine house is a house of order

One of the grand purposes of the priesthood and the sealing ordinances is to organize the Lord's kingdom according to His will. On the earth, all is

confusion; in heaven, all is perfectly ordered. This principle is taught in the interesting dream that Brigham Young had after he was left in charge of the saints.

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 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. Joseph again said, "Tell the people to be sure to keep the Spirit of the Lord, and to follow it, and it will lead them just right." ("The Prophet and Brigham Young" by Susa Young Gates, *Improvement Era*, 1919, Vol. Xxiii. December, 1919. No. 2)

Heber C. Kimball

[Just prior to his death, Brother Jedediah M. Grant] said to me, brother Heber, I have been into the spirit world two nights in succession, and, of all the dreads that ever came across me, the worst was to have to again return to my body, though I had to do it. But O, says he, the order and government that were there! When in the spirit world, I saw the order of righteous men and women; beheld them organized in their several grades, and there appeared to be no obstruction to my vision; I could

see every man and woman in their grade and order. I looked to see whether there was any disorder there, but there was none; neither could I see any death nor any darkness, disorder or confusion. He said that the people he there saw were organized in family capacities; and when he looked at them he saw grade after grade, and all were organized and in perfect harmony. (Russell M. Nelson, *The Gateway We Call Death* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 102)

DC 132:9 Will I accept of an offering...that is not made in my name?

Would you go see a doctor who never graduated from medical school? Would the state license a lawyer who never passed the bar? Would the U.S. Army promote to general an individual who had never been to Westpoint?

The answer is obvious, but some people get really upset when the same principle is applied to religion. Modern Christianity balks at the idea of God setting up any membership criteria for his kingdom other than a cursory declaration of belief in Christ. They mock Mormonism's claim of authority and ordinances performed by those in authority. They say, "Your doctrine is unfair. It isn't fair to say that only those who receive a 'Mormon baptism' can go to the celestial kingdom!" The Lord asks them, "Will I accept an offering that is not made in my name?" Their answer seems to be "yes." They expect God to acknowledge the organizations of men, the doctrines of men, the ordinances of men, and the authority of men. They would never go see a doctor who had never met the necessary requirements to be a doctor, but they expect an entirely different system when it applies to their salvation.

"Many have professed the right to speak for God and to perform ordinances in his name. Many of these profess the Bible as their source of authority. If the powers of heaven can be obtained in such a manner, what of civil authority? Would reverence for Blackstone's book of laws grant one the right to enter into treaties with other nations or empower one with the authority to bestow citizenship or, better still, to impose taxes?... In it all, we are left to wonder why people recognize the necessity of authority at all levels of society and in all kingdoms save only the kingdom of God, which announces itself to be a house of order." (Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Here We Stand* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 12)

Orson Pratt

The Kingdom of God is an order of government established by divine authority. It is the only legal government that can exist in any part of the

universe. All other governments are illegal and unauthorized. God, having made all beings and worlds, has the supreme right to govern them by His own laws, and by officers of His own appointment. Any people attempting to govern themselves by laws of their own making, and by officers of their own appointment, are in direct rebellion against the Kingdom of God. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Progress of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964], 428 - 429)

Joseph F. Smith

We acknowledge nothing that is not ordained of God himself; and that He has not commanded; we do not acknowledge the authority of man, nor the right and power of man to administer in the ordinances of the house of God or in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, except as they are ordained of God and appointed by him through his voice, or through the voice of his angels or ministering spirits which are sent to the children of men, and from them through those who are ordained of God under the hands of angels descended from the throne of Almighty God to administer in the house of the Lord and to proclaim the Gospel of life and salvation unto the children of men. (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 5, July 26, 1896)

DC 132:13 everything that is in the world... that are not by me or by my word... shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead

Spencer W. Kimball

How final! Since we know well that mortal death does not terminate our existence, since we know that we live on and on, how devastating to realize that marriage and family life, so sweet and happy in so many homes, will end with death [if] we fail to follow God's instructions or because we reject his word when we understand it!

...How conclusive! How bounded! How limiting! And we come to realize again as it bears heavily upon us that this time, this life, this mortality is the time to prepare to meet God. ("Temples and Eternal Marriage," *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 45)

DC 132:15-16 if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word... when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage

"Criticism from Christians of other faiths is at times pointed toward Latter-day Saints because of our doctrine on eternal marriage. Reference to the Sadducees' question concerning the woman sequentially married to six brothers of her first husband and the Savior's subsequent response that 'in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven' is their primary argument against such a doctrine (Matt. 22:30; see also Matt. 22:23-33). Fortunately, the Doctrine and Covenants suggests the context for the Savior's response.

"In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord discussed three types of marriage, the last of which was the only one that endures beyond the grave. In the first type of marriage, Jesus taught that when 'a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, ... their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead' (D&C 132:15). Of them, He said, they 'are appointed angels in heaven, ... to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory' (D&C 132:16). This text perfectly parallels the answer Christ gave the Sadducees yet gives the larger context. In the specific New Testament case presented by the Sadducees, no priesthood covenant or sealing accompanied these multiple marriages, thereby making them void at death." (Ray L. Huntington and Camille Fronk, "Latter-day Clarity on Christ's Life and Teachings," *Ensign*, Jan. 1999, 27)

Brigham Young

There is not a young man in our community who would not be willing to travel from here to England to be married right, if he understood things as they are; there is not a young woman in our community, who loves the Gospel and wishes its blessings, that would be married in any other way; they would live unmarried until they could be married as they should be, if they lived until they were as old as Sarah before she had Isaac born to her. Many of our brethren have married off their children without taking this into consideration, and thinking it a matter of little importance. I wish we all understood this in the light that heaven understands it.

How is it with you sisters? Do you distinguish between a man of God and a man of the world? It is one of the strangest things that happens in my existence, to think that any man or woman can love a being that will

not receive the truth of heaven. ("Presidents of the Church Speak on Temple Marriage," *New Era*, June 1971, 7-8)

Heber J. Grant

I believe that no worthy young Latter-day Saint man or woman should spare any reasonable effort to come to a house of the Lord to begin life together. The marriage vows taken in these hallowed places and the sacred covenants entered into for time and all eternity are proof against many of the temptations of life that tend to break homes and destroy happiness.

The blessings and promises that come from beginning life together, for time and eternity, in a temple of the Lord, cannot be obtained in any other way and worthy young Latter-day Saint men and women who so begin life together find that their eternal partnership under the everlasting covenant becomes the foundation upon which are built peace, happiness, virtue, love, and all of the other eternal verities of life, here and hereafter. ("Presidents of the Church Speak on Temple Marriage," *New Era*, June 1971, 8)

David O. McKay

To look upon marriage as a mere contract that may be entered into at pleasure in response to a romantic whim or for selfish purposes and severed at the first difficulty or misunderstanding that may arise, is an evil meriting severe condemnation.

Young men and young women who would live the happiest lives would do well to prepare themselves to be worthy of that form of marriage which God has ordained—the union of a man and woman worthy to have their marriage ... in the temple of the Most High. ("Presidents of the Church Speak on Temple Marriage," *New Era*, June 1971, 8)

DC 132:17 they... remain separately and singly, without exaltation

Eldred G. Smith

How can a person understand that promise and take such a chance? So to procrastinate is the greatest gamble on earth. You gamble with death. Each day spent is a day closer to death and the day of judgment. A man is judged by the knowledge given him. Where much is given,

much is expected. To those who have been given the knowledge and the opportunity of temple marriage and then procrastinate, they are gambling the eternal blessings of godhood for a few earthly pleasures. There just isn't any sympathy for a man who knows he has had his chance and has deliberately forfeited it. (*Conference Report*, October 1953, Afternoon Meeting 32)

Spencer W. Kimball

How conclusive! How bounded! How limiting! And we come to realize again as it bears heavily upon us that this time, this life, this mortality is the time to prepare to meet God. How lonely and barren will be the so-called single blessedness throughout eternity! How sad to be separate and single and apart through countless ages when one could by meeting requirements, have happy marriage for eternity in the temple by proper authority and continue on in ever-increasing joy and happiness, growth and development toward Godhood..

Brothers and sisters and friends, are you willing to jeopardize your eternities, your great continuing happiness... are you willing to forego these great blessings and privileges? Are you willing to make yourself a widow for eternity or a widower for endless ages-a single, separate individual to live alone and serve others? Are you willing to give up your children when they die or when you expire, and make them orphans? Are you willing to go through eternity alone and solitary when all of the greatest joys you have ever experienced in life could be "added upon" and accentuated, multiplied, and eternalized? Are you willing, with the Sadducees, to ignore and reject these great truths? I sincerely pray you stop today and weigh and measure and then prayerfully proceed to make your happy marriage an eternal one. (*Conference Report*, October 1964, Afternoon Meeting 29)

Dean L. Larsen

We understand that all worthy Saints will eventually have the opportunity to make the covenants of eternal marriage, whether or not that privilege becomes a reality in mortal life. This tenet of our faith should not, however, be understood to mean that those who willfully procrastinate or knowingly avoid the responsibilities of celestial marriage will forever have that opportunity open to them. The Lord will not be mocked in this matter. He sets the requirements and the conditions; we do not. We are free to follow our own wills in this and

other equally important matters, but we are not free to determine the ultimate consequences of these choices.

The Lord has said, "And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God." (D&C 132:13.)

Therefore, couples who continue to fail to meet the requirements to qualify for temple marriage, and single members who are of marriageable age and full accountability who are not actively seeking, within the limits imposed upon them by their societies, cultures, or circumstances, to enter into the covenant of eternal marriage with a worthy companion, are as unwise as if they avoided the covenants of baptism or of the priesthood. It matters not that they may have been endowed or that they regularly attend the temple and fulfill other responsibilities in the Church. All of these things are simply preparatory and preliminary to the ordinance of celestial marriage. ("Marriage and the Patriarchal Order," *Ensign*, Sept. 1982, 6)

Rudger Clawson

This, then, is the new and everlasting covenant [of marriage] which God has revealed to His people, in our day, a covenant that binds men and women in marriage to all eternity. We are confronted with two covenants, the new and everlasting covenant and the covenant which is made by man. These two covenants are before us-and every Latter-day Saint who contemplates marriage has the choice of two covenants, but strange to say that while very many of the Latter-day Saints choose the everlasting covenant of the Lord, there are others who appear to be satisfied with the lesser covenant, which is only temporary in its character.

Brethren and sisters, this question is not determined by love alone. Because a man falls in love with a woman, and a woman with the man, and they agree to join hands and become united in marriage, it does not follow that the marriage will continue and be of force in the eternal worlds, and it will not be unless it is solemnized for those worlds. People have said to me: "Look at that couple; look at that man and woman; what a beautiful picture it is! Don't you see that the man loves the

woman; that the woman loves the man; that they are truly husband and wife; and that they have a family of beautiful children? Surely, when death comes God will not separate that couple, God will not part the husband and wife from each other and from their children, although they were united by an earthly covenant." We should take the right point of view. We cannot, surely we cannot attribute it to the Lord if they are separated. The Lord is not responsible. The Lord says, "My house is a house of order." This is the law. If you obey the law you will receive the blessing. If you reject the law you will be damned. Then, if people reject the law, though they may love one another, if people reject the law, though they may be married one to another; if people reject the law, though they may have had children in that marriage, they cannot blame the Lord. If in the resurrection they are separated from each other, from their loved ones, it is their own fault. They had their choice. We have our choice. We must remember always that the Lord governs by law, and we must give obedience to His word and to His law, else we lose the blessing.

Now, brethren and sisters, I greatly rejoice in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I rejoice exceedingly in, this everlasting covenant that God has given to His people. In it there is beauty, there is power, there is glory, there is exaltation and eternal life. (*Conference Report*, April 1914, Afternoon Session. 24.)

DC 132:19 if... it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise

Robert D. Hales

As taught in this scripture, an eternal bond doesn't just happen as a result of sealing covenants we make in the temple. How we conduct ourselves in this life will determine what we will be in all the eternities to come. To receive the blessings of the sealing that our Heavenly Father has given to us, we have to keep the commandments and conduct ourselves in such a way that our families will want to live with us in the eternities. The family relationships we have here on this earth are important, but they are much more important for their effect on our families for generations in mortality and throughout all eternity.

By divine commandment, spouses are required to love each other above all others. The Lord clearly declares, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else" (D&C 42:22). The proclamation states: "By divine design, fathers are to preside over

their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families [see D&C 83:2-4; 1 Tim. 5:8]. [By divine design,] mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children." By divine design, husband and wife are equal partners in their marriage and parental responsibilities. By direct commandment of God, "parents have a sacred duty ... to teach [their children] to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens [in the countries where they reside]" (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102; emphasis added; see D&C 68:25-28; Mosiah 4:14-15).

Because of the importance of the family to the eternal plan of happiness, Satan makes a major effort to destroy the sanctity of the family, demean the importance of the role of men and women, encourage moral uncleanness and violations of the sacred law of chastity, and to discourage parents from placing the bearing and rearing of children as one of their highest priorities. ("The Eternal Family," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65)

DC 132:19 [their marriage] shall be of full force when they are out of the world

B.H. Roberts

The Prophet's... main inquiry was why God justified the ancient patriarchs in having many wives. The answer went far beyond the inquiry, and there was given to the Prophet a new marriage law, so far transcending the conceptions of men concerning marriage, as the thoughts of God transcend the thoughts of men on all subjects. The marriage covenant must be an eternal one, not marriage "until death [do] you part." The marriage relation will exist in heaven. Procreation within the marriage covenant of man is to be an eternal, creative power... It is to be of the things that shall not pass away, but a means of perpetuating the lives and all their purifying, and uplifting relationships. And the power to establish these relationships is in the Priesthood of God, the keys of which were restored through Joseph Smith. (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951], 5: xxxvii.)

DC 132:20 they shall be gods, because they have no end

Henry B. Eyring

We [understand] that the commandment to be chaste, to employ the powers of procreation only as husband and wife, is not limiting but, rather, expanding and exalting. Children are the inheritance of the Lord to us in this life and also in eternity. Eternal life is not only to have forever our descendants from this life. It is also to have eternal increase. This is the description of what awaits those of us married as husband and wife in the temple by a servant of God with authority to offer us the sacred sealing ordinances. Here are the words of the Lord: (quotes D&C 132:19-20).

Now you can see why our Father in Heaven puts such a high standard before us in using procreative powers, whose continuation is at the heart of eternal life. The Lord Jesus Christ has told us what eternal life is worth: "If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7).

We can understand why our Heavenly Father commands us to reverence life and to cherish the powers that produce it as sacred. If we do not have those reverential feelings in this life, how could our Father give them to us in the eternities? Family life here is the schoolroom in which we prepare for family life there. And to give us the opportunity for family life there was and is the purpose of creation. That is why the coming of Elijah was described this way: "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-H 1:39).

For some of us, the test in the schoolroom of mortality will be to want marriage and children in this life with all our hearts but to have them delayed or denied. Even such sorrow can be turned into a blessing by a just and loving Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. No one who strives with full faith and heart for the blessings of eternal life will be denied. And how great will be the joy and how much deeper the appreciation then after enduring in patience and faith now. ("The Family," *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, 15)

DC 132:20 they shall be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue

Here we learn the definition of the phrase, "from everlasting to everlasting." God is "from everlasting to everlasting." "There is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, *from everlasting to everlasting* the same unchangeable

God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them" (D&C 20:17) Some might ask, "How could God ever have been like man" if he is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting? The answer, by definition, lies in the perpetuity of his fatherhood, the continuation of the seeds, the eternal nature of exaltation itself.

Lorenzo Snow

When two Latter-day Saints are united together in marriage, promises are made to them concerning their offspring that reach from eternity to eternity. They are promised that they shall have the power and the right to govern and control and administer salvation and exaltation and glory to their offspring worlds without end. And what offspring they do not have here, undoubtedly there will be opportunities to have them hereafter. What else could man wish? A man and a woman in the other life, having celestial bodies, free from sickness and disease, glorified and beautified beyond description, standing in the midst of their posterity, governing and controlling them, administering life, exaltation and glory worlds without end! (Spencer W. Kimball, "The Importance of Celestial Marriage," *Ensign*, Oct. 1979, 6)

DC 132:20 then shall they be gods, because they have all power

The author has had the singular experience of watching the anti-Mormon movie, "The God Makers" in the presence of a curious American minister. We discussed the movie. We talked about its purpose. We talked about the distortions presented. Yet underlying it all is the paramount complaint against the Mormon Church-the belief that man can become as God. Only in D&C 132, is the doctrine openly stated, "then shall they be gods." The Bible suggests the doctrine, the Book of Mormon has another focus, the Pearl of Great Price sets the stage declaring the work and glory of God "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), but only in the Doctrine and Covenants, does the scripture go so far as to state it in plain English, "they shall be gods!"

Scholar Hugh Nibley remarked, "That movie called 'The God Makers'... just shows how offensively out of line our teachings are with conventional Christianity which wants to play it safe." (*Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe [n.p., n.d.], 12.)

"Much of the LDS concept of godhood is expressed in a frequently cited aphorism written in 1840 by Lorenzo Snow, fifth President of the

Church. At the time, Snow was twenty-six years old, having been baptized four years earlier. He recorded in his journal that he attended a meeting in which Elder H. G. Sherwood explained the parable of the Savior regarding the husbandman who hired servants and sent them forth at different hours of the day to labor for him in his vineyard. Snow continued, as recorded in his sister's biography of him: 'The Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon me-the eyes of my understanding were opened, and I saw as clear as the sun at noonday, with wonder and astonishment, the pathway of God and man. I formed the following couplet which expresses the revelation, as it was shown me.... **As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be**' (Eliza R. Snow, p. 46)." (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 555)

Joseph Smith

God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens. That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible,-I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form-like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instructions from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 345-346.)

B.H. Roberts

I know of no teachings outside those of the Prophet Joseph Smith so bold and lofty as these in regard to man and the possibilities that are his in the course of God's eternities; and these doctrines shatter the old time notion of man being merely a groveling worm in the presence of God; who, if he were such a thing as the theologians of a hundred years ago describe, could certainly only excite the contempt of God.

In the teachings of the Prophet Joseph man is regarded as the offspring of Deity, and as possessing in embryo, all the attributes of his Father, which only need development in order to bring him to the plain on which his Father stands; and this doctrine so boldly taught by the "Mormon Prophet" has both directly and indirectly affected the faith of the

Christian world, as his doctrine in relation to the reality and nearness of God has affected that subject.

It was left for this great Prophet of the nineteenth century to change the views of men also in respect to heaven. He it was who brought heaven from beyond the bounds of time and space, by teaching that it was the destiny of our earth to pass through such changes as would ultimately result in its becoming a glorified, celestial sphere, to be inhabited by those who lived in accordance with the laws of celestial worlds; that here on this earth in its perfected state, would be the heaven of such men as would be worthy of the celestial glory; here they would receive the visitation of God, the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; and live in harmony with the laws and in communication with the inhabitants of all worlds that had been brought into the same state of perfection; that here, on this earth, when so perfected and glorified, men would build and inhabit, live and associate eternally with their loved ones in all the fond endearments that those relationships bring and which have tended so much to the uplifting of man in this life. (The Leaven of the Gospel. by B. H. Roberts., *Improvement Era*, 1899, Vol. li. May, 1899. No. 7)

The question remains, "are the LDS the only Christians who believe in the divine potential of man?"

"No other teaching of the Restoration has been more repugnant to normative Christianity than the belief that man can attain to God's glory. And yet it is richly attested in earliest Christianity. Christ taught his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (Matthew 5:48). 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,' Paul wrote to the Romans, 'that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together' (Romans 8:16-17). Irenaeus (d. A.D. 180) wrote, 'For we cast blame upon Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods.' In the view of Clement of Alexandria, who died in A.D. 215, 'By thus receiving the Lord's power, the soul studies to be God.' The idea of deification is vital to Athanasius. According to the German Protestant church historian Ernst Benz:

"One can think what one wants of this doctrine of progressive deification, but one thing is certain: with this anthropology Joseph Smith is closer to the view of man held by the Ancient Church

than the precursors of the Augustinian doctrine of original sin were, who considered the thought of such a substantial connection between God and man as the heresy, par excellence." (Susan Easton Black, ed., *Expressions of Faith: Testimonies of Latter-day Saint Scholars* [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1996], 178)

"Deification (Greek *theosis*) is for Orthodoxy the goal of every Christian. Man, according to the Bible, is 'made in the image and likeness of God'.... It is possible for man to become like God, to become deified, to become god by grace. This doctrine is based on many passages of both OT and NT (e.g. Ps. 82:1-6; 2 Pet. 1.2-4) and it is essentially the teaching both of St Paul, though he tends to use the language of filial adoption (cf. Rom. 8.9-17; Gal. 4.5-7 and the John 17.21-23).

"The language of II Peter is taken up by St Irenaeus, in his famous phrase, 'if the Word has been made man, it is so that men may be made gods' (Adv. Haer V, Pref.), and becomes the standard in Greek theology. In the fourth century St Athanasius repeats Irenaeus almost word for word, and in the fifth century St Cyril of Alexandria says that we shall become sons 'by participation' (Greek *methexis*). Deification is the central idea in the spirituality of St Maximus the Confessor, for whom the doctrine is the corollary of the Incarnation: 'Deification, briefly, is the encompassing and fulfilment of all times and ages',... and St Symeon the New Theologian at the end of the tenth century writes, 'He who is God by nature converses with those whom he has made gods by grace, as a friend converses with his friends, face to face.' ...

"Finally, it should be noted that deification does not mean absorption into God, since the deified creature remains itself and distinct. It is the whole human being, body and soul, who is transfigured in the Spirit into the likeness of the divine nature, and deification is the goal of every Christian." (Stephen E. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christians?* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991], 62)

Charles W. Penrose

Mormonism does not tend to debase God to the level of man, but to exalt man to the perfection of God. (Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel through the Ages* [Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, Inc., 1945], 107)

Joseph Smith

Every man who reigns in celestial Glory is a god to his dominions... They who obtain a glorious resurrection from the dead, are exalted far above principalities, powers, thrones, dominions and angels, and are expressly declared to be heirs of God and Joint heirs with Jesus Christ, all having eternal power. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 374)

DC 132:21 **except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory**

Spencer W. Kimball

This is the word of the Lord. It is very, very serious, and there is nobody who should argue with the Lord. He made the earth; he made the people. He knows the conditions. He set the program, and we are not intelligent enough or smart enough to be able to argue him out of these important things. He knows what is right and true.

We ask each Latter-day Saint to think of these things. Be sure that your marriage is right. Be sure that your life is right. Be sure that your part of the marriage is carried forward properly.

Now I ask the Lord to bless you. These things worry us considerably because there are too many divorces and they are increasing. It has come to be a common thing to talk about divorce. The minute there is a little crisis or a little argument in the family, we talk about divorce, and we rush to see an attorney. This is not the way of the Lord. We should go back and adjust our problems and make our marriage compatible and sweet and blessed. (*Marriage and Divorce: An Address* [Salt Lake City: Desert Book Co., 1976], 30 - 31)

Gordon B. Hinckley

You men who are husbands of wives, how great is your responsibility to be good men, to be good husbands! Never abuse your wives. Never abuse your children. But gather them in your arms and make them feel of your love and your appreciation and your respect. Be good husbands. Be good fathers. Don't you ever forget that if you ever go to the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom, you will go hand in hand with your wife. You will not go alone. If you go, you will go together. She is a daughter of God, just as you are a son of God, and deserves the very

best that you can give. Love, appreciate, and be true to the one you married. ("Inspirational Thoughts," *Ensign*, June 1999, 2)

DC 132:22 strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives

Joseph Smith

How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called but few are chosen. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 331)

DC 132:24 this is eternal lives-to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent

In order to know God-to really know the only wise and true God-we must dwell with Him. We must associate with him. We must converse with Him. We must know him personally. This very real and personal knowledge, however, is not the only element of eternal increase. John 17: 3 is translated, "This is life eternal..." While D&C 132 has it, "this is eternal lives," the latter hinting at the additional element of the continuation of lives in the celestial kingdom. By and large, LDS doctrine refers to eternal life speaking of the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, those whose marriage covenants continue into the eternities under the umbrella of the Abrahamic Covenant. These are they who know not just the Son but the Father; these are they whose posterity continues for eternity.

Bruce R. McConkie

It is one thing to know about God and another to know him. We know about him when we learn that he is a personal being in whose image man is created; when we learn that the Son is in the express image of his Father's person; when we learn that both the Father and the Son possess certain specified attributes and powers. But we know them, in the sense of gaining eternal life, when we enjoy and experience the same things they do. To know God is to think what he thinks, to feel what he feels, to have the power he possesses, to comprehend the truths he understands, and to do what he does. Those who know God become like him, and have his kind of life, which is eternal life. (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 1: 762)

Bruce R. McConkie

What is the fulness of the everlasting gospel?

...It is eternal marriage and eternal lives and eternal exaltation. It is to be one with the Father and the Son and to reign with them forever on their throne... And, finally, it is to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the holy prophets, in the kingdom of God to go no more out. ("This Final Glorious Gospel Dispensation," *Ensign*, Apr. 1980, 21)

DC 132:26 if... he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant

You're not likely to hear this verse quoted frequently in Relief Society and Priesthood meetings. Perhaps most people who read their scriptures gloss over this verse without really understanding it. The doctrine here presented is as true as any teaching of the church but it is a difficult doctrine for some. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** declared:

This is perhaps the most deep, difficult, and little known doctrine in the Church, one that is wholly unknown in the world. From latter-day revelation we learn that following celestial marriage, a man may make his calling and election sure; that is, he may progress in righteousness until he is sealed up unto eternal life and his exaltation is guaranteed. (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 2: 335)

The message is that a latter-day saint can reach a level of righteousness so great as to prompt the Holy Spirit of promise to seal their temple ordinances. Thereby they are guaranteed to receive all the blessings pertaining to the ordinance of baptism, of the endowment, and of temple marriage. When this holy ratification by the Holy Spirit of promise occurs is anyone's guess. It may occur without the couple's knowledge. Their names may be written in the Lamb's Book of Life under the "Exalted" section. It may be that the Lord reveals it to them; it may be that He does not. Whether or not they receive the promise in mortality, it is just a matter of time before they receive the promised reward. They are very literally sealed by the power of the priesthood unto their exaltation. With only two exceptions (murder and blasphemy against the Holy Ghost), they will be resurrected as an exalted being to receive all the promised blessings.

Well, your instincts are not going to like such a guarantee of exaltation. Somehow it just doesn't seem fair. Do they get to commit whatever sin they want as long as it isn't murder or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? What happened to working out your salvation in "fear and trembling" (Phillip 2:12)? The answer is that these souls have proven their faithfulness-their salvation, indeed their exaltation, has been worked out. In essence, they have kept their second estate prior to completing it.

But what if they commit some great sin? Will they still be exalted? The answer is yes, as long as they do not commit murder or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. The problem is that they may have to personally pay for grave or willful sin once sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. As the Lord warned, they may be smitten "by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore-how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not." (D&C 19:15) That sounds like they have to go to hell or spirit prison to suffer for their sins prior to their resurrection! Are they then redeemed and resurrected to a celestial glory? Is that possible? The answer is yes. We always imagine the righteous going to spirit paradise before being resurrected to celestial glory, but there is another path. It *is possible* to suffer in hell for sins and then be resurrected to an eternal glory. Remember the promises to the wayward children who fall under the priesthood power of their parents' sealing. Speaking of these wayward children, **Orson F. Whitney** taught, "They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God." (*Ensign*, May 1992, 68) We haven't seen the salvation of God quite yet. He has more mercy and miracles than we can imagine. He has more contingencies within the covenant than we know about. This doctrine is one of them.

What does it mean to be "destroyed in the flesh and delivered unto the buffetings of Satan"? Such a soul, one who commits grave sin after being sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, may suffer for that sin in this life, in the next, or both. Consider a soul like Oliver Cowdery. For 10 years (1838 - 1848), he suffered the buffetings of Satan in the flesh as an apostate before returning to the church, like the penitent prodigal, declaring, "I now desire to come back.... I seek no station. I only wish to be identified with you." (Susan Easton Black, *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 76)

Again, Elder McConkie's instructions are helpful, "This matter of being destroyed in the flesh and delivered over to the buffetings of Satan until the day of redemption is the doctrine of blood atonement, whereunder those here involved are not cleansed by the blood of Christ, but must pay the penalty for their own sins." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 3: 345)

"All men are subject to temptation and mortal weaknesses and therefore commit some sin, even those whose callings and elections have been made sure (see D&C 20:32-34; D&C 124:124). Though the disposition to commit grievous sin would certainly be less among such individuals, yet the principles of repentance and forgiveness are as highly treasured by these as by any of our Father's children. At the same time, where much is given, much is expected and required. **Joseph Smith** taught: 'If men sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.' In the words of a modern apostle (i.e. Elder McConkie): 'Suppose such persons become disaffected and the spirit of repentance leaves them-which is a seldom and almost unheard of eventuality-still, what then? The answer is-and the revelations and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith so recite!-they must then pay the penalty of their own sins, for the blood of Christ will not cleanse them.'

"When one is guilty of serious transgression and loses the right to the Spirit and the protective blessings of the priesthood, he is essentially 'delivered unto the buffetings of Satan' (D&C 132:26), such that 'Lucifer is free to torment, persecute, and afflict such a person without let or hindrance. When the bars are down, the cuffs and curses of Satan, both in this world and in the world to come, bring indescribable anguish typified by burning fire and brimstone'." (Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 1: The Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 520)

Delbert L. Stapley

To be turned over to the buffetings of Satan unto the day of one's redemption is an awful condition to contemplate. Such confinement, to satisfy the demands of justice, could extend over a long period of time. The only way to escape such a penalty with its torments and sorrows is to serve the Lord faithfully and keep his commandments from youth until life's course here on earth is finished. (*Conference Report*, April 1963, Afternoon Meeting 38)

Brigham Young

There is not a man or woman, who [willfully] violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it; and the judgments of the Almighty will come, sooner or later, and every man and woman will have to atone for breaking their covenants. To what degree? Will they have to go to hell? They are in hell enough now. I do not wish them in a greater hell, when their consciences condemn them all the time. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 3: 247)

DC 132:27 Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost... wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death

A member once told me that Judas Iscariot did not have sufficient knowledge to commit blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. The problem with his misguided mercy for Judas is that the Savior specifically referred to him as a "son of perdition" (John 17:12). His misunderstanding also underscores another pertinent point-the definition of this terrible sin also includes committing "murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death." On that point, Judas Iscariot certainly qualifies. Indeed, he becomes the poster child for perdition. In other words, one can deny the Holy Ghost *or assent unto the death of the Savior* in order to commit this sin.

Joseph Smith

When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil-*the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life*-the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 358, emphasis added)

Joseph Smith

What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when

the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 358)

DC 132:30 from whose loins ye are, namely, my servant Joseph

Joseph Smith was a direct descendant of Abraham through two tribes-Joseph and Judah (see 2 Ne. 3:6 and commentary for D&C 113:4-6).

Brigham Young

It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he, Joseph Smith, should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fullness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eyes upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father's father, and upon their progenitors clear back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, from the flood to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man. He was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 108)

DC 132:31 This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham

Bruce R. McConkie

These are the promises made to the fathers. Is not it a marvelous thing that God himself said to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and then to Joseph Smith, that in them and their seed all generations should be blessed? This is the promise of eternal increase. Would we suppose that there is anyone else in the world in addition to Joseph Smith in our day who ever received that promise? What would we think if I indicated that the President of the Church today received the same promise that Abraham and Joseph Smith received? What would we think if I proposed that every member of the Council of the Twelve had received the same promise that Abraham and Joseph Smith received? Let us catch the vision of what is involved here. The Lord does not give blessings to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the President of the Church, that are not available to every faithful elder and sister. It does

not make one particle of difference what one's position is. Everything comes on the basis of personal righteousness: everyone in the Church who has been married in the temple has received exactly the same promise that God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Everyone who is married in the temple and who keeps the covenant has the assurance that he or she will have eternal increase, that his posterity will be like the dust of the earth and the stars of heaven in number. (Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet, eds., *Studies in Scripture*, Vol. 3: Genesis to 2 Samuel [Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985], 60)

Russell M. Nelson

We are also children of the covenant. We have received, as did they of old, the holy priesthood and the everlasting gospel. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are our ancestors. We are of Israel. We have the right to receive the gospel, blessings of the priesthood, and eternal life. Nations of the earth will be blessed by our efforts and by the labors of our posterity. The literal seed of Abraham and those who are gathered into his family by adoption receive these promised blessings-predicated upon acceptance of the Lord and obedience to his commandments. ("Children of the Covenant," *Ensign*, May 1995, 33)

Bruce R. McConkie

In the full sense this promise is fulfilled for those only who enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage and thereby gain a continuation of the family unit in eternity. Abraham's seed is promised eternal life, and eternal life comes to those who live everlastingly in the same kind of a family unit as does the great Elohim... By doing the works of Abraham they inherit for themselves the same blessings he received. (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 38)

DC 132:32 Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham

What did Abraham do that is worth emulating?

- He rejected the idolatry of his generation
- He sought the one, true God
- He sought for the blessings of the priesthood
- He sought greater knowledge and righteousness
- He obeyed the command to leave his home for a land of promise

- He taught the gospel, performing extensive missionary work
- He raised his family in righteousness
- He got along with his neighbors
- He paid his tithing
- He kept the law of sacrifice
- He received revelation
- He put God first
- He believed even when Sarah was too old to have children
- He believed even when commanded to kill Isaac

Hugh Nibley

We are commanded to do the works of Abraham, and told that there is *no other way for us to go*.

To begin with, Abraham was in the world, a wicked world very much like our own. From childhood to the grave, he was a stranger in his society because he insisted on living by the principles of the gospel and preaching them to others wherever he went, even if it meant getting into trouble. Those principles, teachings, covenants, ordinances, and promises were alien to the world, which was bitterly hostile to them. So Abraham's whole life, as is often stated, was a series of trials or tests, and by example and precept he tells us how to come through victorious. His object? Not to conquer or impress, but to bless all with whom he comes into contact, ultimately shedding the blessing that God gave to him upon the whole human race. For that he is first of all the magnanimous, the greathearted, the ever-hospitable Abraham, who always does the fair and compassionate thing no matter how badly others may behave toward him; he is the friend of God because he is the friend of man, pleading on his knees for Sodom and Gomorrah. That is the moral pattern for all men to follow. (*Abraham in Egypt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 249)

Spencer W. Kimball

Abraham was true with God in all respects. Oft cited is the instance when Abraham gave to God "tithes of all." Do you think it was any easier for Abraham to be righteous than it is for you? Do you inwardly suspect that Abraham was given a little extra help by the Lord so that he could become a great and righteous man, or do you feel that we can all become as Abraham if we will learn to put God first in our lives? I testify to you that we can become as Abraham, who now, as a result of his

valiance, "hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne." (D&C 132:29.) Is such exaltation a blessing reserved only for General Authorities, or stake presidents, or quorum presidents, or bishops? It is not. It is a blessing reserved for all who will prepare themselves by forsaking their sins, by truly receiving the Holy Ghost into their lives, and by following the example Abraham has set.

If members of the Church could only have such integrity, such obedience, such revelation, such faith, such service as Abraham had! If parents would seek the blessings Abraham sought, they could also receive such revelation, covenants, promises, and eternal rewards as Abraham received.

"Fathers, what is your report concerning your family? Will you be able to report that you created an environment in your home to build faith in a living God, to encourage learning, to teach order, obedience, and sacrifice? That you often shared your testimony of the reality of your Father in heaven, of the truthfulness of the restored gospel with your wife and children? Will you be able to report that you followed the living prophets? That your home was where your tender children could feel protected and safe, and where they felt the love and acceptance and warmth of you and their mother?" (Excerpt taken from "Father, Consider Your Ways.")

...Here then, is the challenge the Lord gives every returned missionary, every single man and woman, every father and mother in the Church: "Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham." (D&C 132:32.)

As we follow Abraham's example, we will grow from grace to grace, we will find greater happiness and peace and rest, we will find favor with God and with man. As we follow his example, we will confirm upon ourselves and our families joy and fulfillment in this life and for all eternity. ("The Example of Abraham," *Ensign*, June 1975, 7)

DC 132:36 Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac; nevertheless, it was written: Thou shalt not kill

Nephi was constrained by the Spirit to kill Laban, nevertheless, it is written: Thou shalt not kill (1 Ne. 4:10-18). Nephi and Abraham were both placed in the same predicament. They understood that murder was a heinous sin-but

God commanded them to kill! Does that make God unrighteous? Did God break his own law?

Joseph Smith

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. If we seek first the kingdom of God, all good things will be added. So with Solomon: first he asked wisdom, and God gave it him, and with it every desire of his heart, even things (i.e. many wives and concubines) which might be considered abominable to all who understand the order of heaven only in part, but which in reality were right because God gave and sanctioned by special revelation. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 256)

DC 132:37 Abraham... abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob

Charles W. Penrose

I am afraid that a great many of our good Christian friends who are so terribly shocked about this feature of our faith, when they get to the door and look in and see Abraham and Sarah and Hagar and Keturah, and those concubines given of the Lord to Abraham-when they see them in the eternal kingdom they will want to turn away and go to more congenial company, which they are at perfect liberty to do. If Abraham was on the earth to-day, these same good people would put him in the penitentiary, and yet they call Abraham "the father of the faithful, the friend of God," and want to go to his bosom when they die! If Jacob were here with his four wives, through whom he "did build the house of Israel," the names of whose twelve sons are to be inscribed upon the gates of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, that is to come down from God out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband-I say if Jacob were on the earth to-day, they would put him in jail! Well, this is the consistency of some people who profess to believe in the Bible. Men come here to try and sell the Latter-day Saints the Bible. Why, bless your souls, there are no people on the earth who believe as much in the

Bible as the "Mormons." (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 25: 228 - 229.)

DC 132:37 they have entered into their exaltation...and are not angels but are gods

On occasion, those somewhat embarrassed by our doctrine that man can approach the divine will explain that it will take eons of time after the resurrection for anyone to become a god. This notion, that we have eons of time to learn what we need to learn, is incorrect. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have already been resurrected (*Millennial Messiah*, 632), and they have already entered into their exaltation! It is probably fair to say that once resurrected, the training period is over-either you're ready or you're not.

"As members of the Church we are the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the inheritors of the Abrahamic covenant. What is the Abrahamic covenant to the righteous if it is not candidacy for exaltation?" (Andrew C. Skinner, "Jacob: Keeper of Covenants," *Ensign*, Mar. 1998, 56)

Brigham Young

Abraham has had his body long ago, and dwells with the Father and the Son, among all the Prophets and faithful Saints who received their resurrected bodies immediately after the resurrection of the Saviour. They were then prepared to enter into the Father's rest and be crowned with glory and eternal lives; but they were not prepared before [the resurrection]. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 6: 294)

Bruce R. McConkie

What we say for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob we say also for Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, the wives who stood at their sides and who with them were true and faithful in all things. Men are not saved alone, and women do not gain an eternal fullness except in and through the continuation of the family unit in eternity. Salvation is a family affair. ("Mothers in Israel and Daughters of Zion," *New Era*, May 1978, 37)

Joseph Smith

Here, then, is eternal life-to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. And I want you to know that God, in the last days... is not trifling with you or me. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 346-347)

DC 132:38 David... received many wives and concubines

In the Old Testament, we find at least 10 named wives of king David (1 Sam. 25:43; 2 Sam. 3:3-5; 2 Sam. 11; 1 Kgs 1), but he took more wives and concubines when he moved from Hebron to Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:13). This is in contrast to Solomon who had 700 wives and 300 concubines.

George A. Smith

Did David sin in taking so many wives? No. In what, then, did his sin consist? It was because he took the wife of Uriah, the Hittite-that is, violated the law of God in taking her. The Lord had given him the wives of Saul and would have given him many more; but he had no right to take one who belonged to another. When he did so the curse of adultery fell upon his head, and his wives were taken from him and given to another. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 13: 42)

Joseph Fielding Smith

There is no contradiction between Jacob and the Doctrine and Covenants. Jacob, in the Book of Mormon, declared that the Lord prevented the Nephites from practicing plural marriage and called attention to the fact that David and Solomon sinned in taking wives that the Lord did not give them, which is true. However, the key to the situation may be found by reading further the account in Jacob. The Lord said:

For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things. (Jacob 2:30.)

Is it not strange that the Lord did not condemn Abraham and Jacob (Israel) upon whom he founded the House of Israel; nor did he condemn the parents of Samuel, the great prophet, nor others who had plural wives; nor did he condemn others who had plural families. He did not condemn Solomon and David for having wives which the Lord gave them.

Now turn to 2 Samuel, 12:7-8, and you will find that the Lord gave David wives. In your reading of the Old Testament you will also find that Solomon was blessed and the Lord appeared to him and gave him visions and great blessings when he had plural wives, but later in his life, he took wives that the Lord did not give him. For evidence of this, turn to Kings 11, and read it. You can tell these people that the whole house of Israel was built on the twelve sons of Jacob who had four wives-mothers of the House of Israel. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957-1966], 4: 214)

DC 132:38 in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me

Solomon had 300 wives. What is he thinking? He also had 700 concubines (1 Kgs. 11:3). That makes 1000 unsatisfied women! While those numbers, in and of themselves, are revolting to the modern mind, the Lord saw this coming and warned that the king of Israel should not, "multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." (Deut 17:17) There is certainly some irony, in this regard, that the great wisdom of Solomon was not enough. He himself would warn:

...keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

Lust not after her beauty in thine heart....

Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

(Prov. 6:24-25; 7:25-27)

The great sin of David and Solomon was that they took women he should not have. The children of Israel were specifically commanded not to take wives from the neighboring Gentiles lest they begin to worship their gods (Deut. 7:1-4). This is exactly what Solomon did.

For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.

Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. (1 Kgs. 11:4-8)

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not make this mistake and have entered into their exaltation. David and Solomon brought condemnation

upon themselves by not living within the strict requirements of this law.

"David's adulterous actions with Bathsheba were unauthorized and condemned (2 Samuel 11-12). Solomon's marriage to 'strange wives,' to foreign women who turned his heart away from the everlasting covenant and the worship of the Lord Jehovah, was unauthorized and condemned (1 Kings 11)." (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987-1992], 2: 20)

John Taylor

During the golden days of Israel, [was] a man who was considered the wisest man that ever lived-King Solomon. His heart, we are told in the Scriptures, was turned aside from the Lord our God, because he took to himself strange wives, women of the nations with whom God had commanded Israel not to marry, and because of this he was led as he grew in years into idolatry. He built in the groves where the strange nations performed their idolatrous rites, places of worship, and to gratify these wives he went and worshipped with them; and God in His anger, because of this, said that the nation should be rent asunder; and in

fulfillment of this word the greater portion of the kingdom was taken from the house of David, and given to another. Ten tribes rebelled, and there was left to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, only the tribe of Judah for his inheritance, this kindness to the dynasty in leaving to it the tribe of Judah as an inheritance, was not because of favors to Solomon, but because his father had served God all his days with a perfect heart, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite. God raised up enemies to Solomon, and at his death as I have said, rent the ten tribes from his son Rehoboam and gave them to Jeroboam. This was in consequence of the violation of this command of God respecting the intermarriage of His people with strange women. In every instance on record in the Bible, it will be found that the violation of this law resulted in destruction, not only to those who made these marriages, but to their posterity after them. The history of the kings of Israel and Judah illustrates this." (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 25: 362 - 363)

DC 132:39 in nothing did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife... therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation

David's righteousness needs adequate mention. When Saul, the king, sought to kill David, David's response was to reverence the king, not taking his life when he easily could have, "for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" (1 Sam 26:9) Every decision of king David's reign was an example of his great integrity and love for the Lord. His court was serenaded by beautiful music and inspired psalms. David himself, wrote, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want..." (Ps. 23) As a prophet-king he was more descriptive of the crucifixion than any other Old Testament prophet, "They pierced my hands and my feet... They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture... They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink... My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?... Into thine hand I commit my spirit... He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken... The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner..." (Ps. 22:1-18; Ps31:5; 34:20; 118:22)

Incredible righteousness most of the time apparently doesn't compensate for incredible wickedness some of the time. The history of Bathsheba and Uriah is useful to review at this point. You remember that David saw Bathsheba bathing; you likely remember that he committed adultery with her. But do you remember what David did to cover up his sin? When David found out Bathsheba was pregnant, he had her husband, Uriah, given military leave so he could come home, sleep with his wife, and therefore cover up his

adulterous paternity. What did Uriah do? He slept outside the king's house declaring, "shall I go in unto my wife while the rest of the host fights the enemy? God forbid." This left David in a mess. Like a million sinners before and since, he was having trouble covering his tracks. Therefore, he commanded his captains to place Uriah in the front of the battle then retreat leaving him alone to fight the enemy. This plan would surely kill him-and it did. (2 Sam. 11)

Doesn't that make David a murderer? The Lord apparently thought so. The Old Testament record is an understatement, "the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." (2 Sam 11:27) While it would have been possible for David to receive forgiveness for the sin of adultery and even for the sin of trying to cover his wickedness, there is no forgiveness for shedding the innocent blood of Uriah. That sin was both inexcusable and unforgivable.

Mark E. Petersen

David, the beloved of the Lord; David, the man after God's own heart; David, who offended the Lord in only one frightful instance, "hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion."

What a tragedy! Its extent is beyond our mortal comprehension. When we consider for a moment what exaltation means, that through it we may become like God himself, and then think of losing that mighty blessing, we come to some understanding of the necessity of obeying the laws of God in complete detail.

Throughout David's career the Lord helped and prospered him, and he was able to accomplish the mission to which he was assigned. He conquered the enemies of the people of God, completing the work originally started by Joshua. He extended the kingdom and became Israel's greatest warrior-king. He made ready for the building of the temple of the Lord. He wrote scores of inspiring psalms. "And in none of these things did he sin."

But then there was the case of Uriah and his wife. That made the whole tragic difference. That turned day into night, and reversed the king's ascent toward exaltation.

The Lord is just and he is merciful, but he does not allow mercy to rob justice. Where there is proper repentance, he forgives all but two sins: murder, wherein innocent blood is shed, and sin against the Holy Ghost.

It was here that David's bark struck the deadly shoals. Even with David, beloved as he was, the Lord was no respecter of persons. (*Three Kings of Israel* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980], 99)

Joseph Smith

A murderer, for instance, one that sheds innocent blood, cannot have forgiveness. David sought repentance at the hand of God carefully with tears, for the murder of Uriah; but he could only get it through hell: he got a promise that his soul should not be left in hell.

Although David was a king, he never did obtain the spirit and power of Elijah and the fullness of the Priesthood; and the Priesthood that he received, and the throne and kingdom of David is to be taken from him and given to another by the name of David in the last days, raised up out of his lineage. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 339)

DC 132:39 I gave them unto another

"Is it 'just' that faithful Abigail (one of David's wives) should be given to one man (Nabal), and then to another (David), and then to another again (in the eternities)? Legalities aside, are human feelings so flexible and so resilient? Is this a rescue, or a wrench?

"Though we may be comforted that the Lord's interest in righteous, prudent living and his intention to bless just and faithful lives are genuine and secure, we might note that he has seemed less interested in romance. What looks like indifference, however, may be simply his firm, omniscient opinion that any persons who actually inherit eternal life in the celestial kingdom of God will find each other interesting and adequate. In particular, any man and woman who have determinedly loved and served the Lord, who have deserved and gratefully accepted his blessing, and who present themselves together at the gate of the New Jerusalem, are going to recognize in each other, as in all of that present company, the embodiment of everything they love best and desire most. They could have no objection to each other. It is perhaps a 'hard saying' rather than a romantic notion." (*Sperry Symposium Voices of Old Testament Prophets: The 26th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 155 - 156)

DC 132:41 if she be with another man... she hath committed adultery and shall be destroyed

John Taylor

A certain Bishop wrote to me to know what should be done in the following case: A man had been away from home on a mission, and during his absence his wife had committed adultery. I replied that the woman would have to be severed from the Church; but requested that the aggrieved husband should call upon me. He did so, bringing with him his delinquent wife and three beautiful little boys—three as beautiful little boys as I ever saw. He also brought with him the villain who had done the damage. But I told him to take him away, I would have no communication with such a contemptible wretch. The husband explained that he wished to talk with me in the presence of his wife, if it was agreeable. He wanted to know what was to be done in the case. I told him I should be under the necessity of confirming the Bishop's decision in the case (presumably excommunication), but I will... read to you what the law says upon the subject... "If a man receiveth a wife in the new and everlasting covenant, and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery and shall be destroyed." And in another place it says, "they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God." Now, said I, I did not make that law. I find it in the word of God. It is not my province to change it. I cannot make any change. I am sorry for these little children. I am sorry for the shame and infamy that has been brought upon them; but I cannot reverse the law of God. I did not commit this crime; I am not responsible for it; I cannot take upon myself, the responsibility of other peoples' acts. Well, it made my heart ache. The husband wept like a child, so did the woman; but I could not help that. I speak of this for the purpose of bringing up other things, and of presenting them before the people. And the principle I desire to impress upon their minds is, that we have no right, any of us, to violate the laws of God. (*Journal of Discourses, 26 vols.* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 24: 232 - 233)

Harold B. Lee

Doctrine and Covenants 42:24 says: "Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out." This quotation defines the action that is to be taken in cases of adultery. One who is guilty of adultery and does not repent shall be excommunicated, which means "be cast out." If one has committed adultery and repents with all his heart and "doeth it no more," he shall

be forgiven (D&C 42:25). (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 225)

DC 132:43 And if her husband be with another woman

John Taylor

Here is a principle-and the same principle applies to the man-that if a man commits adultery, he also shall be destroyed. Can I change that? I did not make the law. Have I the right to change it? "But," says one, "does it not say that what you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?" Yes; but I have to know if it is the mind and will of God that it shall be so. The law says, "they shall be destroyed." What else? "And shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption." That is the law. Can I change it? Can you? I speak now to Presidents of Stakes and Bishops. We are told that we are not to be partakers of other men's sins. Now, you send men with recommends to me to have me pass upon them. I trust to you. I suppose you are acquainted with these things. I suppose you act intelligently and understandingly. But if people do not fulfill the requirements of the Gospel, you have no right to recommend them to the house of the Lord. They do not belong there. People who do not observe the laws of the Gospel and live their religion, should not receive recommends, and if you do recommend such you will be held responsible, for I will not. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 24: 270)

Joseph Fielding Smith

We have been taught that adultery is a crime second only to the shedding of innocent blood. We cannot treat it lightly. For a man to destroy another man's home is too serious an offense to be readily forgiven. Such a man should not be permitted to come back in the Church, under any circumstances, at least until years have elapsed. He should be placed on probation for that length of time to see if he can, or will, remain clean. Even then I confess I do not know what disposition the Lord will make of him. To permit him to come back within a short time has a very evil effect upon other members of the Church who begin to think that this enormous crime is not so serious after all. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 94)

DC 132:46 whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth...

The President of the Church holds the keys of the new and everlasting covenant. He may authorize temple workers to perform marriages for the living and the dead, but the participants must meet the conditions he has set forth. This is especially true when it comes to cancelling a sealing. The bishop has no power to cancel a temple sealing, neither does the Stake President. Anytime a marriage sealing has to be cancelled, the matter is taken up directly with the First Presidency. The Bishop must send letters to the First Presidency because only they have the power to *unseal* on earth and therefore *unseal* in the heavens. "Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

Gordon B. Hinckley

The most burdensome responsibility I have is to make judgments on applications for cancellation of temple sealings following civil divorce. Each case is considered on its individual merits. I pray for wisdom, for the direction of the Lord in dealing with sacred covenants made in the most hallowed surroundings and of an eternal nature.

The circumstances behind the divorce and behind the request for cancellation of a temple sealing contain a litany of selfishness, of greed, of behavior at times even sadistic in its nature, of abuse and heartache and tragedy. ("A Conversation with Single Adults," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 58)

Gordon B. Hinckley

I constantly deal with those cases of members of the Church who have been married in the temple and who later divorce and then apply for a cancellation of their temple sealing. When first married, they are full of great expectations, with a wonderful spirit of happiness. But the flower of love fades in an atmosphere of criticism and carping, of mean words and uncontrolled anger. Love flies out the window as contention enters. I repeat, my brethren, if any of you young men have trouble controlling your temper, I plead with you to begin the work of making that correction now. Otherwise you will bring only tears and sorrow into the homes which you will someday establish. Jacob, in the Book of Mormon, condemns his people for their wickedness in marriage. Says he: "Behold, ye have done greater iniquities than the Lamanites, our

brethren. Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you. And because of the strictness of the word of God, which cometh down against you, many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds" (Jacob 2:35). ("Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry," *Ensign*, May 1998, 50)

DC 132:48 my servant Joseph.... Whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give any one on earth... it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings

Joseph Smith

The doctrine or sealing power of Elijah is as follows:-If you have power to seal on earth and in heaven, then we should be wise. The first thing you do, go and seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, and yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory, and go ahead, and not go back, but use a little wisdom, and seal all you can, and when you get to heaven tell your Father that what you seal on earth should be sealed in heaven, according to his promise. I will walk through the gate of heaven and claim what I seal, and those that follow me and my counsel. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 340)

DC 132:49 I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father

Marion G. Romney

I should think that every faithful Latter-day Saint "...would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God." (DHC, 5, 388.)

As I read the sacred records, I find recorded experiences of men in all dispensations who have had this sure anchor to their souls, this peace in their hearts...

To Alma the Lord said: "Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life; . . ." (Mosiah 26:20.)

To his twelve Nephite disciples the Master said:

What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father? And they all spake, save it were three, saying: We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom.

And he said unto them: Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me; therefore, after that Ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom; and with me ye shall find rest. (3 Nephi 28:1-3.)

As Moroni labored in solitude abridging the Jaredite record, he received from the Lord this comforting assurance: ". . . thou hast been faithful, wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father." (Ether 12:37.)

Paul in his second epistle to Timothy wrote:

I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day (2 Tim. 4:6-8.)

In this dispensation many have received like assurances. In the spring of 1839, while the Prophet Joseph and his associates were languishing in Liberty Jail, **Heber C. Kimball** labored against great odds caring for the Saints and striving to free the brethren. On the 6th of April he wrote:

"My family having been gone about two months, during which time I heard nothing from them; our brethren being in prison; death and destruction following us everywhere we went; I felt very sorrowful and lonely. The following words came to my mind, and the Spirit said unto me, 'write,' which I did by taking a piece of paper and writing on my knee as follows..."

This is what he wrote as dictated by the Lord:

"Verily I say unto my servant Heber, thou art my son, in whom I am well pleased; for thou art careful to hearken to my words, and not transgress my law, nor rebel against my servant Joseph Smith, for thou hast a respect to the words of mine anointed, even from the least to the greatest of them; therefore thy name is written in heaven, no more to be blotted out for ever. . . ." (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 1888 ed., p. 253. Italics added.)

To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said: ". . . I am the Lord thy God and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father with Abraham your father." (D&C 132:49. Italics added.)

Now in conclusion, I give you my own witness. I know that God our Father lives, that we are as Paul said his offspring. I know that we dwelt in his presence in pre-earth life and that we shall continue to live beyond the grave. I know that we may return into his presence, if we meet his terms. I know that while we are here in mortality there is a means of communication between him and us. I know it is possible for men to so live that they may hear his voice and know his words and that to receive "the Holy Spirit of promise" while here in mortality is possible. And so, in the words of the Prophet Joseph, ". . . I . . . exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until [by the more sure word of prophecy] you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, . . ." (DHC, 5, 389.) (*Conference Report*, October 1965, First Day-Morning Meeting 23)

DC 132:50 Behold, I have seen your sacrifices, and will forgive all your sins

Marion G. Romney

Explaining to the Prophet Joseph Smith the reason why his exaltation was sealed upon him, the Lord said:

Behold, I have seen your sacrifices and will forgive all your sins; I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you. (D. & C. 132:50.)

A half-hearted performance is not enough. We cannot obtain these blessings and be like the rich young man who protested that he had kept the commandments from his youth up but who went away

sorrowful when, in answer to the question, "What lack I yet?" Jesus said unto him,

If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come and follow me. (Matt. 19:21.)

Evidently he could live everything but the welfare program.

There can be no such reservation. We must be willing to sacrifice everything. Through self-discipline and devotion we must demonstrate to the Lord that we are willing to serve him under all circumstances. When we have done this, we shall receive an assurance that we shall have eternal life in the world to come. Then we shall have peace in this world.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** made this perfectly clear. He said,

After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost (by the laying on of hands)....then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure. (D. H. C. 3:380.)

Now may the Lord bless us, my brethren and sisters, with an understanding of his great gospel. And may we press forward with diligence and energy to perfect and qualify ourselves to receive and enjoy the full fruits thereof, for they are of all things the most joyous to the soul. Let us each day in solemn honesty confront ourselves with the rich man's question, "What lack I yet?" And thus, with utter frankness, discovering our own limitations, let us conquer them one by one until we obtain peace in this world through an assurance that we shall have eternal life in the world to come. (*Conference Report*, October 1949, Afternoon Meeting 44 - 45)

DC 132:52 let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph

You almost have to be married to understand the depth of the marital conflict which existed between Emma and Joseph in 1843-at the time this revelation was committed to writing. Emma had known about the doctrine since the Kirtland period and all evidence suggests that she hated it. Joseph had been visited by an angel and commanded to practice polygamy or be destroyed. He began to have women sealed to him. The only reason why the Prophet would take wives without Emma knowing is because he knew how she would react. In doing so, Joseph keeps the command of God but does so covertly to avoid estranging his faithful wife. **Elder B. H. Roberts** explains:

"The date in the heading of the Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, Including the Plurality of Wives, notes the time at which the revelation was committed to writing, not the time at which the principles set forth in the revelation were first made known to the Prophet. This is evident from the written revelation itself which discloses the fact that *Joseph Smith was already in the relationship of plural marriage*, as the following passage witnesses:

"And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me." (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 5: xxix, emphasis added)

Another problem was that Joseph wanted Emma to receive her endowments in the unfinished Nauvoo temple. For her to be an example to the church would require her to join the inner circle of Joseph's trusted saints-to accept the principle she hated so much.

"Nearly a year had passed since Joseph had introduced a select group of men into a ceremony first called 'the holy order' and later referred to as the 'endowment.'... Emma had heard Joseph and Heber C. Kimball address the Relief Society and allude to a time when women would participate in the endowment. After being involved in the construction and design of the garments, the building of the temple, and hearing about their place in the endowment in the Relief Society, why had women not yet been admitted to the Endowment Council?... Joseph taught that a man must obey God to be worthy of the endowment and that a wife must obey a righteous husband to merit the same reward. Until Emma could be obedient to Joseph and give him plural wives, she could not participate in the endowment ceremonies, yet he taught her that the endowment was essential for exaltation... Joseph wanted

Emma to serve as the example, the Elect Lady, the 'disseminator of the endowment blessing,' to other women...

"Within the same few weeks, in the spring of 1843, both Hyrum Smith and Emma would accept plural marriage... Joseph had apparently been relentless in his efforts to convince her. He was not master in his own home so long as Emma opposed him, and since Emma had discovered his relationship with Eliza Snow, the subterfuge and deception in their lives loomed larger. He wanted Emma to practice plural marriage and to lead forth as the *example*. It was this setting the example for other women to follow that was the most difficult.

"When Emma refused to accept plural marriage with the same faith shown by some of the other wives, Joseph apparently tried a variety of stratagems. William Carter Staines, a carpenter on the temple saw Joseph and Emma standing in the doorway of their house on a spring day in 1843. As another man approached, 'riding a very fine sorrel horse,' Staines overheard Emma comment favorably on it.

'Would you like to have it?' Joseph asked.

'Oh yes, I should.'

'Well, I will buy it for you on one condition,' Joseph offered.

'What is it?'

'That you will never mention the words *spiritual wife* to me any more as long as you live-' (*Spiritual wife* was the derogatory term used in Nauvoo to describe the rumored practice of polygamy)

"Emma agreed, 'I will gladly do that.' Staines added that Joseph purchased the horse for a hundred and fifty dollars.

"For two months, from March to May, Joseph appears to have talked with Emma about plural marriage. He apparently used their rides together to teach her the necessity of the endowment and sealing. There is no evidence that she ever opposed him on any doctrine but plural marriage. Convinced that it was necessary for her salvation and essential to their continued relationship, she may have decided to compromise with Joseph. In May 1843 she finally agreed to give Joseph other wives if she could choose them... Emma chose the two sets of sisters then living in her house, Emily and Eliza Partridge and Sarah and Mariah Lawrence.

"Joseph had finally converted Emma to plural marriage, but not so fully that he dared tell her he had married the partridge sisters two months earlier. Emily said that 'to save family trouble Brother Joseph thought it best to have another ceremony performed... [Emma] had her feelings, and so we thought there was no use in saying anything about it so long as she had chosen us herself.' Emily also remembered that Emma 'helped explain the principles to us.'

"...On May 23, 1843, Emma watched Judge James Adams, a high priest in the church who was visiting from Springfield, marry Joseph to Emily and Eliza Partridge in her home. Emily wrote, 'We did not make much trouble, but were sealed in her presence.' She noted 'Emma was present. She gave her free and full consent.'

"Emma had made the sacrifice; and within five days she had her reward. On a cold rainy day, May 28, 1843, Emma was sealed to Joseph for 'time and all eternity.' On this same day she was the first woman admitted to the Prayer Circle. Joseph would initiate her into the endowment sometime before the early autumn of that year.

"Emma's capitulation, however, was only momentary... Neither of the Lawrence sisters left any account of their marriages to Joseph, but their experiences were probably similar to those of the Partridge sisters. For almost a year the four young women would live with the Smiths, but the situation was most difficult. Emily wrote that Emma 'said some very hard things' about the plural marriages and her 'interviews were quite common.'... Emma vacillated between reluctant acceptance and determined opposition to the marriages." (LK Newell, VT Avery, *Emma Hale Smith: Mormon Enigma*, [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2nd edition, 1994], 139-145)

"By this time Emma had completed most of what had been asked of her in the revelation contained in section 25. Now more was being asked, and she struggled. Her soul was tried, but she surmounted the obstacle, at least briefly. By that fall she had become reconciled to the new instructions, and Joseph initiated her into the endowment, making her the first woman to receive that sacred ordinance. Then she vacillated. Before Joseph's death, she again opposed the practice of plural marriage. Yet, significantly, this was the only doctrine Joseph taught that she could not accept, and she never cast aspersions on her husband's divine calling, never denied her testimony of the restoration of the gospel or the origin of the Book of Mormon. Even years later, still

uncomfortable with polygamy, she would attest to Joseph as a prophet and to the Book of Mormon as divine in origin." (Jerrie W. Hurd, *Our Sisters in the Latter-day Scriptures* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 83-85)

DC 132:54 I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else

"Emma Smith is remembered as the woman who faithfully stood by her husband during his life. Emma was a woman of great faith and courage whom the Lord addressed in Doctrine and Covenants, D&C section 25, and again in D&C section 132. D&C Section 25 begins, 'Hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, while I speak unto you, Emma Smith, my daughter.' This section is personal for Emma, yet latter-day prophets have used it as counsel for daughters of God and wives in Israel. (D&C 25:16.)

"Emma is told by the Lord, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art an elect lady, whom I have called.' (D&C 25:3.) The terminology of elect was defined by Joseph Smith on 17 March 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois, when he told the sisters that 'elect meant to be elected to a certain work . . . and that the revelation was then fulfilled by Sister Emma's election to the Presidency of the [Relief] Society.'

"Her calling was to be the wife of a prophet. In this role she was told that 'the office of thy calling shall be for a comfort unto my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., thy husband.' (D&C 25:5.) She was to use 'consoling words, in the spirit of meekness' with him. (D&C 25:5.) Emma was to cleave to Joseph and to 'go with him at the time of his going, and be unto him for a scribe.' (D&C 25:6.) She was promised that for faithfully fulfilling her calling as a wife, her 'husband shall support thee in the church.' (D&C 25:9.)

"In addition to these responsibilities as an elect lady and a called wife, Emma was to develop her talents. Emma's talents included expounding the scriptures, exhorting the Church, writing, learning, and selecting sacred hymns. (D&C 25:7-8, 11.) She was told that while fulfilling these responsibilities, she was not to murmur but was to 'lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better.' (D&C 25:4, 10.) She was also admonished to beware of pride. (D&C 25:14.) If Emma proved faithful, she was to receive 'a crown of righteousness.' (D&C 25:15.)

"Joseph Smith loved Emma, for she did comfort him, she increased her talents, and she heeded the Lord's admonitions. In his love for her, Joseph pleaded with the Lord on her behalf, 'Have mercy, O Lord, upon [my] wife . . . , that [she] may be exalted in thy presence, and preserved by thy fostering hand.' (D&C 109:69.)

"Following Joseph's pleading, Emma again became the subject of the Lord's revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 132. Emma is told 'to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else.' (D&C 132:54.) She is also told to 'forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses . . . ; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice.' (D&C 132:56.)

"Emma is warned that despite her position as an 'elect lady' and a called wife, she must endure faithfully to the end or risk losing all, for unless she does endure, 'where I am you cannot come.' (D&C 25:15.) 'She shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law.' (D&C 132:54.)

"Throughout her life as a wife to the Prophet Joseph Smith, she experienced persecution and Abrahamic tests. Despite the persecution and the severe tests, Emma was admonished to beware of pride and told to let her soul delight in her husband. Emma's responsibilities were many, and by comparison her weaknesses were perhaps few... The lessons from the Lord's revelation to Emma are clear: a wife is to cleave to her husband and comfort him, serve in the Lord's kingdom, and endure faithfully to the end." (Susan Easton Black et al., *Doctrines for Exaltation: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 5-6)

DC 132:55 I will bless him [with] an hundredfold... of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children

After receiving educational training in the East, my young family moved back to Utah. We had planned to visit some church history sites on the way back. While driving the moving truck, my wife and I read a book about the Nauvoo period. This was the first time that either of us realized that Joseph Smith was taking plural wives and practicing polygamy. We were astonished to find out that he had to do this in secret. We were astonished to find out that there was a time when he practiced this prior to receiving Emma's consent. For me, the history was fascinating and helped give color and understanding to the

struggles Joseph Smith faced in his own family. It also clarified the undercurrent and conflict in Nauvoo.

For my wife, the information was a real challenge to her testimony. The female response is understandably different than the male response. To this day, she struggles with the history, the doctrine, the practice, and the implications. Perhaps the reader has had to face the same problem.

While I rarely include personal experiences in this commentary, this particular verse reminds me of the answer to prayer I received at this trying time. I had been in the Church my entire life. I thought I was well informed on Mormon History. Yet, I had to face the reality that Joseph Smith took many wives, and he did so covertly. Was this going to affect my testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith? I prayed for understanding and was referred by the Spirit to Matthew 19:29, "every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

This was my answer. Had not Joseph Smith sacrificed? Had he not forsaken houses, brethren, family, and lands for the Lord's sake? If any prophet ever deserved to receive an hundredfold in the next life, was it not Joseph Smith? Could I judge him harshly? Could I find fault with the Lord or his Prophet? Not after receiving direct revelation from the Lord that Joseph Smith had been faithful and was worthy of the reward promised by Jesus as recorded in Matthew. The fulfillment of scripture is very literal, for in section 132 the Prophet was promised to receive an hundredfold of "wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds." To avoid falling under condemnation from the Lord, perhaps we should remember the Lord's counsel, "Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him... he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else." (verse 60-61)

DC 132:61-65 if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent... then is he justified

"The first wife's right to give or withhold consent was the right to be considered and consulted by her husband in taking a second wife. It was also the right to express her judgment about whether her husband had been faithful to his covenant with her, was a true father according to the standard required by the gospel, and conformed to the law of God in the way he was taking another wife. If he did not adequately meet these

requirements, his first wife's refusal to give her consent could prevent him from taking another wife.

"But a wife could not use this right to prevent her husband from taking a second wife if he was fulfilling his obligations to her and his family, and if he proceeded to take another companion according to the law of God. Her failure to give consent under these circumstances released him from the obligation to act with her approbation. Here was a delicate, but important, reconciliation of authority and consent in the affairs of the home. Orson Pratt explained:

"When a man who has a wife, teaches her the law of God, as revealed to the ancient patriarchs, and as manifested by new revelation, and she refuses to give her consent for him to marry another according to that law, then it becomes necessary for her to state before the President the reasons why she withholds her consent: if her reasons are sufficient and justifiable, and the husband is found in the fault or in transgression, then he is not permitted to take any step in regard to obtaining another. But if the wife can show no good reason why she refuses to comply with the law which was given unto Sarah of old, then it is lawful for her husband, if permitted by revelation through the Prophet, to be married to others without her consent, and he will be justified, and she will be condemned, because she did not give them unto him, as Sarah gave Hagar unto Abraham, and as Rachel and Leah gave Billhah and Zilpah to their husband, Jacob." (*Doctrines of the Kingdom* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973], 465)

DC 132:63 that they may bear the souls of men

Howard W. Hunter

A man who holds the priesthood has reverence for motherhood. Mothers are given a sacred privilege to "bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of [the] Father continued, that he may be glorified" (D&C 132:63).

The First Presidency has said: "Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind." (In James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75], 6:178.) The priesthood cannot work out its destiny, nor can God's purposes be fulfilled, without our helpmates. Mothers perform a labor the priesthood cannot do. For this gift of life, the

priesthood should have love unbounded for the mothers of their children. (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 152)

DC 132:65 the law of Sarah

"Concubines were common during this time, and I find it remarkable that neither Sarai nor Abram had resorted to such means of having children before they did. It was ten years after they left Haran before Abram took Hagar to wife-ten years since he had first received the promise. There is no indication that he ever reproached Sarai for her barrenness, though as the years passed, the flocks and herds increased, but Abram didn't.

"Because in the scriptures years of history are condensed into a few words, it sometimes seems that biblical characters lived charmed lives. This brevity can lead to the misconception that favored servants of God were spared day-to-day frustrations, that they were immune to crushed hopes and human emotions. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yet only once did Abram betray his grief. In secret, he chided the Lord, saying that he from whom a great nation was to spring had only a servant for an heir. The Lord responded with a reiteration of his promise.

"Acting under the 'law of Sarah' (see D&C 132:65), Sarai suggested that Abram accept Hagar as his concubine. They hoped that in his doing so, the promise might be fulfilled. Hagar was an Egyptian, given to Sarai by Pharaoh and taken by Abram and Sarai out of Egypt to a foreign land and a strange way of life. Likely she was young, a favorite of her mistress, and likely she had no say in the matter. She was considered property and was so subservient that the thought of her consorting with Abram gave Sarai the least possible pang. Her child, if she had one, was to be raised by Sarai as her own. The arrangement was an expedient, physical adjustment, with Hagar providing a fertile womb, nothing more." (Jerrie W. Hurd, *Our Sisters in the Bible* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 9 - 10)

"Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham in accordance with law. It is known that, according to the Code of Hammurabi, which, in many respects, resembles the later Mosaic law, if a man's wife was childless, he was allowed to take a concubine and bring her into his house, though he was not to place her upon an equal footing with his first wife. This was

the law in the country from which Abraham came. A concubine was a wife of inferior social rank.' (SS, 831.)

"The 'law of Sarah' seems to be the approval given by the first wife for the husband to take additional wives, in order to 'raise up seed' unto the Lord (D&C 132:61, 64-65). Even though God commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife, Sarah, as the first wife, gave her approval (D&C 132:34). It appears that if the first wife will not give her approval, however, after having been properly taught the priesthood propriety of such action, she is under condemnation and the husband is exempt from this 'law of permission.'

"A caution should be issued in relation to this law. Currently this law and all principles pertaining to the practice of plural marriage have been officially suspended by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since 1890, this has been the position proclaimed by the prophets of God." (Hoyt W. Brewster, Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 317)

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