

A Sent One: The Apostolic Charge

Val Brinkerhoff 1/18/2018 - 22 pages

Knowledge of God The Greek definition of the word “*apostle*” is to be a “*sent one*,” an authoritative representative of another, such as a messenger sent of a king, an army general, or God Himself. They often carry or bear a “*seal*” or other authoritative symbol with them or upon them, signifying that they are true representatives. Sent ones of God must have “the *seal* of the living God,”¹ in connection with having obtained “*the testimony of Jesus*,” a sure witness of His reality by having seen Him.² In the New Testament an “*apostle*” was *commissioned* or *sent* out to gather *disciples* (committed converts) with *power*. It was the Lord Himself that *empowered* these “*sent ones*.” God alone provides real *power* to those whom He knows and trusts and sends. It is according to His will, way, and timing, not that of man. Because God alone knows the hearts of men and women, it is He alone who empowers His trusted “*sent ones*.” *Power* is tied to *ability*, whereas *authority* is tied to the *right* to use it. Man can wield and give authority, but only God gives His *power* to man.

Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ must be *called*, *chosen*, *empowered*, and *sent* by Him rather than being called by men alone. They must be familiar with Him, as they represent and speak for Him to others. A *sent one* of the Lord must have the “**special**” and sure **witness** of His reality, a witness that comes only by having been in His sacred presence one or more times. This is what occurred in 3 Nephi 11 with 2500 souls. Twelve Apostles were later called from among them. Their calling is detailed in 3 Nephi 12 and later chapters. A “sent one” **knows** His master and “that *He is*” (3 Nephi 12:1), or that Christ the Lord lives, that He is the Creator of heaven and earth, the Father of our salvation through His atonement. It is to have “*the testimony of Jesus*” as given us by the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in section 76:22-23. We read there, “...this is *the testimony*, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For **we saw him**...”

The Apostles in the Lord’s day saw and felt the marks of God’s love for them in His body (Acts 1), as did the 2,500 witnesses at the temple at Bountiful in 3rd Nephi 11. In this chapter, the first thing the Lord did was inform the people who He was, saying, “I am the light and life of the world” (3 Ne. 11:11). Then He invited all those He gathered at Bountiful into His holy presence, to *see* up close and *feel* personally the marks of the atonement in His body, that they might know the reality of His mission, His resurrection, and His existence. These marks are the “*infallible proofs*” of His great love for them, for you and me (see Acts 1:3). They are the real “*signs and tokens*” of this love, which those in the temple symbolically point to. The whole purpose of the instruction of the temple, as taught originally by Joseph Smith, is to part the veil in this life and come to **know** God. He truly desires the fellowship and companionship of His children. His desire to manifest Himself to His people is greater than their desire to see Him. Throughout the book of 3rd Nephi, the Lord continually invites us to “**repent and come unto me**” (3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2; see also 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; D&C 10:67-68, 93:1).

Zeal without Knowledge Paul the Apostle became an important, passionate witness for Christ in his day. Prior to his conversion to the Lord on the road to Damascus, Saul had zealously persecuted the followers of Christ. His former commitment to the religion, law, and false traditions of corrupted Judaism was replaced with truth and a real *knowledge* of the Lord’s reality. He had formerly been zealous in defending what he later came to know was *the deadness of the law* (2 Ne. 25). It was replaced with being *alive* in the living Christ.³ Paul had come to **know** that Christ was Savior of the world - “**the way, the truth, and the life**” (John 14:6).

Before 1835, the Prophet Joseph Smith used the term “*apostle*” to mean those men who were ordained to the high priesthood **who had seen God**. It was at the Morley Farm Conference at Kirtland Ohio in June of 1831 that 23 men were *called* and ordained high priests in June of 1831, but few of them were actually *chosen* to see Christ (and the Father). The June, 1831 revelation to Joseph known now as D&C 95 referred to the School of the Prophets as, “the school of *mine apostles*” (v. 17). The school was “to prepare *mine apostles*” for their missions as *empowered* servants and preachers of God’s word (v. 4). It was up to them to seek the Lord’s face and become *sanctified* and *qualified* before Him. There was thus an expectation that the school members would become “*apostles*” or actual **witnesses** of the Lord over time.

After a later appearance of Christ to members of *the school of the prophets*, Joseph declared: “Brethren now you are prepared to be *the Apostles of Jesus Christ*, for you have **seen** both the Father and the Son, and **know** that They exist, *and that They are two separate personages*” (JS Papers, Documents, Vol. 3. P. 43, footnote 259). It was real *knowledge* of God – **seeing Him** (or them) that originally defined the word “*apostle*” in early LDS church history (and the New Testament). We see this in all notes, minutes, revelations, and preaching before 1835. Today the word “*apostle*” is placed upon 12 men in a quorum who may *or* may not fit this official definition of a “*sent one*” of the Lord - one who has seen God (Jesus and potentially the Father). Like Joseph’s day, however, they are invited to do so. The Lord has informed us of how we can *know His servants*. It is by their “*fruits*” – their actions, including **coming to the Lord**, that we might know “the righteous from the wicked.” In the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood, and other scriptures below, we are taught the following:

“And by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me. For whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin. And whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me. And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked...”(D&C 84:50-53).

“For it shall come to pass, saith *the Father*, that at that day *whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off* from among **my people**, O house of Israel” (3 Ne. 21:20).

“He that **cometh to me** shall *never hunger*; and he that believeth on me shall *never thirst*...**No man can come unto me, except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me**. And this is the will of him who hath sent me, that ye **receive the Son**; for the Father beareth record of him; and he who receiveth the testimony, and doeth the will of him who *sent me*, *I will raise up in the resurrection of the just*. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that **no man can come unto me, except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me**” (JST John 6:35, 44 - 45).

“I have **commanded**...*that ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see*; even so shall ye do unto the world; and *whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation*” (3 Ne. 18:25).

God has encouraged us to judge or discern truth from error in all things, that we might not be deceived. In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith on September 11th of 1831, the Lord said, “For it shall come to pass that the inhabitants of Zion shall *judge* all things pertaining to Zion. And liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them [those of Zion], and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known.”

The Apostolic Charge

The “*Apostolic Charge*” of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in early LDS Church history clearly addresses the need to become an actual witness of Christ. It was and is especially important for those who claim to be sent of the Lord – those twelve who are to bear a “*special*” *witness* of the Lord and His reality. This was the sacred “*charge*” given to them in early church history by both Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Oliver clarified the “charge,” stating:

“It is necessary that you receive a testimony from heaven to yourselves; so that you can bear testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and **that you have seen the face of God**. That is more than the testimony of an angel. When the proper time arrives, you shall be able to bear *this* testimony to the world. When you bear testimony **that you have seen God**, this testimony of God will never suffer to fall, but will bear you out; although many will not give heed, yet others will. You will therefore see **the necessity of getting this testimony from heaven** [the testimony of Jesus, see D&C 76:51, 75, 101; Rev. 19:10]. **Never cease striving until you have seen God face to face**. Strengthen your faith; cast off your doubts, your sins, and all your unbelief; and nothing can prevent you from coming to God. **Your ordination is not full and complete till God has laid his hand upon you**. *We require as much to qualify us as did those who have gone before us; God is the same. If the Savior in former days laid his hands upon his disciples, why not in latter days? . . . The time is coming when you will be perfectly familiar with the things of God. . . . You have our best wishes, you have our most fervent prayers, that you may be able to bear this testimony, that you have seen the face of God. Therefore call upon him in faith in mighty prayer till you prevail*, for it is your **duty and your privilege to bear such a testimony** for yourselves” (History of the Church, 2:192-98).

Lecture of Faith 1:34 nearly demands that we, and certainly our leaders become “**acquainted with him** [God]; and **not only commune with him and behold his glory, but be partakers of his power, and stand in his presence**.” The Lectures on Faith were once a part of the Doctrine and Covenants, a move voted on by the whole church. These same *Lectures on Faith* were later removed in 1921 by a small church committee, led by James E. Talmage (see Removing the Lectures on Faith, by the author www.7witnesses.com). Sadly, the actions of this committee were done *without* the vote of the whole church. Great wisdom remains in them for those who seek it.

Apostolic Duties The Lord called 12 servants to minister among the people in 3 Nephi 12. They are called “*elders*.” Their duty is to become *chosen* to receive “*power and authority to baptize*” (3 Ne. 12:1). They were and are to be *continually traveling missionaries*, “*sent out*” as was Paul the Apostle, not “*standing*” (in one place) *administrators*, sitting in the chief seats like the priests of King Noah. The Lord said that were to be *teaching servants*. Jesus spoke of their need to **baptize** those who believe *in Him*, along with those who will believe in their words about Him (verses 1 & 2). He then said that after baptism in water, that **He** would “*baptize them with fire and the Holy Ghost*” (v. 1). Jesus said, “*blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am*” (v. 1). He then spoke to the Twelve specifically, saying, “And again, more blessed are they who shall *believe in your words* because that ye shall testify that **ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am**. Yea, blessed are they who shall *believe in your words* [see D&C 46,

verses 13 and 14], and come down in the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with *fire and with the Holy Ghost*, and shall receive *a remission of their sins*.”

Thus, the first commandments of the Lord given the Twelve in 3 Nephi 12 is that they **teach** and **baptize in water**, that God might then **baptize** His people. Thereafter the Lord would then baptize them with *fire and the Holy Ghost* (a spiritual event, see 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; JST Mat. 3:38; JST John 1:28; D&C 33:15). The Twelve are thus to be **sent out servants**, bearing their **special witness** among the people that *He is* (or that He lives), for *they have seen Him!* The people will be *blessed* if they believe in their words!

During the later Nauvoo years, Joseph and Hyrum were co-Presidents over the church. Joseph was the *Prophet*, and Hyrum was the *Patriarch* over the church. Both Smith brothers held the *sealing* power, and both were said to be “*prophets, seers, and revelators*” by the Lord (see D&C 107:94 & 125). The Twelve were not given *the sealing power*, nor the gifts of being a “*prophet, seer, or revelator*. They were to be *continually traveling missionaries, sent out as special witnesses* of the Lord’s name, in *proclaiming His gospel*, like the Apostle Paul. They were to *baptize* others and *lay their hands upon them* thereafter, inviting them with power to receive the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, a baptism of the Lord.

Note the following scriptures tied to duties of the Twelve and various key words tied to these duties. Some are the same with the Seventy, who serve with them as “**traveling missionaries**.”

Continually traveling missionaries – proclaim the gospel, send my word (D&C 107:23, 35, 38; 124:127, 139-40)

Sent out – sent ones, open the door (D&C 107:35; 124:127)

Special witnesses of the Lord’s name in all the World (D&C 124:23)

Baptize with water (3 Ne. 12:1, 19:9, 13-14, 20; D&C 20:38-43)

Lay on hands, as an invitation for the Lord to then baptize with fire and the Holy Ghost (Moroni 2:2; D&C 20:38-43)

Ordain others (D&C 20:38-43)

Administer the Sacrament (D&C 20:38-43)

Following the Lord’s instruction to the Twelve, the remainder of the beatitudes in 3 Nephi 12 further documents how one becomes “*blessed*” of the Lord. Verses 1-11 each feature the word “*blessed*,” whereas the summary verse 12 features the words “**great joy**.” Throughout the Book of Mormon and the Bible, the word “*joy*” is tied to coming in the presence of Christ the Lord. Verses 3 and 8 express that the “*blessed*” are those that “**come unto me**” and “**see God**.” The Twelve are first to become “*blessed*” themselves, and then help others whom they teach to also become “*blessed*.” Such is the nature of chapters 11 and 12 of 3 Nephi.

In addition to **knowing** the Lord and bearing witness of His reality to others as a **traveling missionary** (like the Apostle Paul and others in the New Testament), D&C 20 - verses 38 to 45 reveals additional duties. The Twelve are to “administer bread and wine” (v. 40), to “confirm those who are baptized...by the laying on of hands **for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost**, according to the scriptures” (v. 41), and “**to teach**, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church” (v. 42), and “to confirm the church by the laying on of the hands and *the giving of the Holy Ghost*” (v. 43, see also 3 Ne. 18:36-37; Mor. 2:2; Acts 8:9-22; 19:2-6), and “take the lead of all meetings,” and these elders are to “*conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost*, according to the commandments and revelations of God (v. 45).

Administration over the church and its vast business interests has become the primary role of the Twelve Apostles today, yet 3 Nephi 12 and other scripture points out that the focus of an Apostle or “*sent one*” **of the Lord** is to be a **traveling missionary – a special witness of Him** throughout the world, rather than an administrator sitting in the chief seats. They are to be *servants* of the Lord and of the people. They must not allow the ways of the word and the honors of men to lift themselves up in pride (see D&C 121:34-46).

It was Brigham Young who changed the role of Apostles after the murders of Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel Smith. He lifted up the role of an Apostle into a more *administrative* function (rather than that of a *traveling missionary*) in opposition to the balance of power instruction the Lord gave the Saints in D&C 107 (see endnote 12). There, God taught that four equal quorums were to lead the church, **not one man or one body of men**. These four equal quorums included: (1) the First Presidency, (2) the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, (3) the Seventies Quorum, and (4) the Stake High Councils of the church. The *new order of things* Brigham Young put in place as President of the Twelve, allowed him and the Twelve to take power quickly after the three Smith brothers were murdered. And it allowed polygamy to be practiced in unrestrained fashion thereafter, perhaps a primary motive for the change and the murders (see *Idolatry: Our #1 Sin*, and *Just One Wife*”).

Today, the Twelve retain power as administrators over the church. The last remaining challenge to the power of the Twelve was through the Smith Bloodline. This challenge was removed when Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel Smith were murdered in Nauvoo in 1844, and then later when the official Church Patriarch position (passed down in the Hyrum Smith family) was eliminated by the Twelve and the First Presidency in 1979, the same time Patriarch Eldred G. Smith was put on Emeritus (retired) status. Descendants of Joseph Smith remain in the Community of Christ, whereas descendants of Hyrum Smith remain in the LDS church. Someday the Lord will bring us together again, when a full restoration of all things occurs in fulfillment of scripture.

Another important role of an official Apostle in scripture is to give the Holy Ghost as part of their missionary labors. To do so one must first have access to it by their own *baptism of fire* experience, and be given permission and authorization by the Lord to give it to those the Lord chooses. Scriptures tied to officially sent Apostles giving the Holy Ghost include 3 Ne. 18:36-37; Mor. 2:2 & D&C 18:31-32; 76:52, 56 (Apostles who are sealed).

Many today *assume* that all of the Twelve have the Apostolic witness spoken of by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. A second assumption is that the reason they don't share such a testimony openly with us is that it is "too sacred" to do so. In the Lord's day, Jesus sent out *apostles* as empowered teachers. They had the convincing power of the Holy Ghost with them, as did Lehi and Nephi of Helaman 5:18-19. It is obtained in the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost experience and occurred for the Twelve in the New Testament on the Day of Pentecost (see Luke 24:49; Acts 1-2). In the Book of Mormon, we read of the voice of the Father coming among 300 of the converted Lamanites who experienced the fiery baptism, and "*they were bidden to go forth...and did minister unto the people, declaring throughout all the regions about all the things which they had heard and seen, insomuch that the more part of the Lamanites were convinced of them, because of the greatness of the evidences which they had received*" (Hel. 5:49-50). These "*evidences*" included the dispersing of the darkness, *the voice of the Father* coming multiple times, every soul being encircled about by a *pillar of fire, the Holy Spirit of God coming down and entering into their hearts*, and them speaking forth *marvelous words* (some in tongues). Their experience was **not** so sacred that it could *not* be shared. Paul's experience with the Lord on the road to Damascus was also openly shared, as was the First Vision of Joseph Smith - that others might believe. The "sent ones" of the Lord in the Bible *and* Book of Mormon openly shared the experiences they had *with the Lord* in order to build faith and hope in Christ with and in others, and to provide hope that it is possible for them to do the same.⁴ It is an invitation to us all.

A third *assumption* prevalent today is that all new "Apostles" are selected by revelation from God. According to President Joseph F. Smith, new Apostles today are selected "by their own act" or by "the choice of the body" (of the current apostles). This was the testimony President Joseph F. Smith gave to the United States Congress in 1904, given under oath to them during the Reed Smoot hearings.⁵ These hearings (1904-07) were often centered on the subjects of *revelation* and polygamy. A fourth assumption is that General Authorities cannot teach us false doctrine. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, an Apostle, refuted this, stating, "I do know that *he [God]* permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church and that such teaching is part of the sifting process of mortality"⁶

A fifth assumption made by too many of the Saints, is that nearly all decisions are made by *revelation*, when in fact many of them, like selecting new "Apostles," is done by the other "Apostles" in committee meetings. Speaking under oath to the United States congress over a three-day period in 1904 during the Reed Smoot Hearings (tied to polygamy), President of the LDS church Joseph F. Smith stated, "In the first place [the Apostles in the time of Christ] were chosen by revelation. The council of the apostles [today] *have had a voice ever since in the selection of their successors...[They are] Chosen by the body, the twelve themselves, by and with the consent and approval of the first presidency.*" When asked if there was any revelation in regard to the subsequent ones he replied, "*No, sir; it has been the choice of the body.*" A senator then asked, "Then the apostles are perpetuated in succession *by their own act* and the approval of the first presidency?" President Smith replied, "*That is right.*" Why has this occurred? Why isn't there more revelation? The Book of Mormon provides answers. They include unbelief and idolatry among us, and secret combinations. Those who come to the Lord with a broken heart and contrite spirit, however, receive light from God and may receive Him personally, in time.

Called and Chosen In early church history the Apostolic Charge of Joseph and Oliver was a strong invitation to the Twelve to become "*sent ones*" of the Lord, to come to **know** of His reality, to be not only "*called*" to receive Him, but actually be "**chosen,**" *empowered and "sent"* to do so. Those willing to serve are "*called,*" but very few of them are **chosen**. Such must be **become qualified** by God, and by diligently seeking Him and His will, and doing it. Joseph Smith said, "It is not the multitude of preachers that is to bring about the glorious millennium! But it is those who are "called, and **chosen,** and faithful" (TPJS p. 42). The Lord tells us why so many *called* are **not chosen**.

"Behold, there are many *called*, but few are *chosen*. And why are they *not chosen*. **Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men...**(D&C 121:34-35).

The remaining verses, 36 to 46 are very instructive as well, addressing righteousness, rather the sin, pride, vain ambition, control, dominion, and compulsion many men, because they received a calling - *only*. Verse 46 of D&C 121 addresses having the Holy Ghost to guide one into God's presence. Obtaining two things, (1) "*the mighty change of heart*" in the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, and (2) "*the testimony of Jesus,*" transitions the *called* servant to a **chosen** "*sent one.*"

The "*apostolic charge*" must not be swept under the rug today. Regular members of the church have a right to know if their leaders have a witness of Christ, that they have not just been called, but "**chosen**" of the Lord to represent Him. Chosen ones bear visible *fruit*. Our Lord addresses being "**chosen**" in D&C 95:2-5, 105:33-37, and 121:34-46. God said:

"I design to prepare **mine apostles** to prune my vineyard for the last time, that I may bring to pass my strange act, that I may pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. But behold, verily I say unto you, that *there are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called but few of them are chosen*. They who are *not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noon-day*" (D&C 95:4-6).

Such can have light - Jesus as the Light of the World, if they would seek Him and become "**chosen.**" God added:

"Verily I say unto you, it is expedient in me that the first elders of my church should receive their *endowment from on high in my house*, which I have commanded to be built unto my name in the land of Kirtland. And let those commandments which I have given concerning Zion and her *law* be executed and fulfilled, after her *redemption*. There has been a day of *calling*, but the time has come for a day of **choosing**; and let those be **chosen** that are *worthy*. And it shall be manifest unto *my servant*, by the voice of the Spirit, those that are **chosen**; and they shall be *sanctified*; And inasmuch as they follow the counsel which they receive, they shall have *power* after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion" (D&C 105:33-37).

We do not have Zion today for a number of reasons, one of which may be that too few today are **chosen**" by God to be literal witnesses of Him! Such have purified hearts in the fiery baptism and have made it to the Tree of Life and salvation. Such are **called, chosen, empowered, and sent** servants of the Lord Jesus!

In Moroni 7:31, we read that "**chosen vessels**" of the Lord are to bear witness of Him. They are "*blessed*" individuals who have "*the testimony of Jesus*" (see Rev. 12:17, 19:10; D&C 46:13-14; 76:51, 101 & 88:4, 74-75). Called servants are to rise up into their callings and become actual "*special*" witnesses of Christ. They are to be *called, chosen, empowered, and sent by the Lord, not by other men*. God instructed the Saints that "the duty of the President of the office of the High Priesthood is to preside over the whole Church, and *to be like unto Moses*—Behold, here is wisdom; yea, to be a *seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet*, having **all the gifts** of God which he bestows upon the head of the Church" (D&C 107:91-92). Joseph Smith said, "It is not the multitude of preachers that is to bring about the glorious millennium! But it is those who are "*called, and chosen, and faithful*" (TPJS p. 42).

Apostolic witnesses of the Lord are to share their experience, as moved upon by the Holy Ghost. This builds faith and confidence in others in the authority of those teaching, that they *have been called* of God, and **chosen** by Him to be actual witnesses of His reality. This shared, open testimony also increases the faith of those listening, that they might seek the same witness for themselves, as the Lord has continually invited us to do in His words. He repeatedly has stated, "**repent and come unto me.**" It is five-word invitation to you and I to turn to him and receive Him literally while in the flesh (see 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2; D&C 10:67-68 & 93:1).

Note two statements by Elder George Q. Cannon. He fulfilled the apostolic charge given him. "I know that Jesus lives; for I have seen Him." In a second statement, he said, "I have been greatly favored of the Lord. My mind has been rapt in *vision* and have saw the beauties and Glory of God. I have saw and conversed with the Savior face to face. God will bestow this upon you."⁷ Elder Cannon's witness was openly shared. He was called and chosen to be a witness of the Lord.

Definitions for an Apostle Besides changes made by Brigham Young (from traveling missionary to administrator), historian D. Michael Quinn has pointed out that around 1890 the definition of an "*apostle*" changed even more in the LDS church. He states that a witness of the Spirit or the Holy Ghost became the new qualification, rather than coming into the presence of the Lord. Quinn believes that the Twelve today have abandoned the charge by Joseph and Oliver to come to **know** the Lord. He states that their new qualification is an inward prompting by the Holy Ghost. He believes this is their "*special witness*" of the Lord, rather than an actual audience with Christ. Quinn and others suggest that it was simply too difficult for many of the Apostles, like Reed Smoot or Heber J. Grant to do so, or that it was not a priority for them. Thus changes were made. Pres. Heber J. Grant's own words, as well as those who knew him best, reveal that he was more

concerned with business administration in the church rather than seeing or knowing the Lord.⁸ Quinn stated, “repeatedly, the message of the twentieth-century LDS church is that inward conviction rather than outward *vision* is the basis for being a *special witness* of Christ” (see Michael D. Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, Signature Books, pps. 4-5). Nevertheless, the Lord continues to invite the Twelve and us to come to know Him.

Ascent Vision Receiving this kind of revelation is often referred to as an “*ascent vision*” experience (see the author’s paper, *Visions and How to Have Them*). All of us, and especially the twelve “special witnesses” are to seek the Lord’s face, and literally “**come unto Christ.**” Brigham Young said, “What a pity it would be if we were led by one man [or men – the arm of flesh] to utter destruction! Are you afraid of this? I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire of themselves of God **whether they are led by Him.** I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, *trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders* with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation, and weaken that influence they could give to their leaders, did they **know for themselves**, by the revelations of Jesus, *that they are led in the right way.* Let every man and woman know, by the whispering of the Spirit of God to themselves, whether their leaders are walking in the path that the Lord dictates, or not. This has been my exhortation continually” (Journal of Discourses, vol. 9, pps. 149-50).

God’s Use of the Word “Apostle” versus “Disciple” According to Quinn, statements by various leaders from 1890 onward (including those hereafter) reveal that the term “*apostle*” may have been redefined today. Early on, Joseph Smith used the term “*apostle*” to mean those who had seen the Lord, or at least those were *called* and “*charged*” to do so, that they might actually then be “*chosen*” eventually to do so. It appears that the Lord Himself reserved the word “*apostle*” for those special twelve witnesses for Him in Jerusalem (at least in the Book of Mormon). They saw Him personally there and had opportunity to see and feel the marks of the Atonement in His body *after* His resurrection. He did not appear to use the word “*apostle*” for the twelve “*disciples*” or “*ministers*” He chose in the Book of Mormon, as both groups of twelve men were on the earth at the same time. Note too that he did not use the word “*apostle*” in the early 1831 *Book of Commandments* to identify the twelve that were chosen first in early LDS church history. In both cases, he chose to use the word “*disciples*” for the Twelve. In 1st Nephi we learn that the twelve *Apostles* in Jerusalem will judge the twelve *disciples* of the Book of Mormon, suggesting an important hierarchy among both groups.

The Lord’s use of the word “*apostles*” versus “*disciples*” was addressed by David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He pointed out that changes were made in the Lord’s words, from those in the 1831 Book of Commandments, to the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. In the later, the original word *disciple*, as used by the Lord to describe the twelve sought out by Whitmer and Cowdery in early church history, was later changed in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants to “*apostle.*”⁹

The words of six modern leaders called “apostles” by the Saints today are presented hereafter. Unlike Joseph’s and Oliver’s Apostolic Charge in early church history, their statements subordinate the original *charge* or *need* to gain a literal witness of Christ in the life. It is one God continually invites **all of us** to obtain in His five-word invitation - to “**repent and come unto me.**” Chosen and sent “apostles” (like all of us) are “*called*” to receive Him, but they must also be “*chosen*” by the Lord Himself to do so. Only He knows our heart. They and we must have the *faith* of the brother of Jared to part the veil to our Lord (see Ether 3:13 and chapter 12).

Pres. Heber J. Grant Pres. Grant was a practical-minded businessman that felt *fidelity to church leaders* was more important than seeking and obtaining a sure witness of the Lord. This attitude continues today, and reflects a form of idolatry, placing men before God. It is well documented that Pres. Grant was more interested in the business matters of the church than developing spirituality in his own life and that of the Saints. Eight years after being ordained an apostle, Elder Grant stated, “I am greatly deficient in spiritual gifts” (*The Diaries of Heber J. Grant*, 1880-1945, p. 5). Nine years after that, he expressed guilt over his obsessive business interests, stating, “I felt that I had been neglectful too much of my time to business affairs” (diary entry, Nov. 4, 1889). Pres. Grant’s own mother informed him of his reputation among the Saints. He recorded in his diary, “Mother called this morning and we had a long talk. I learned that it was the opinion of a great many of the latter day saints that I was filled with pride and that there was nothing in this [life] that I cared about so much as I did about making money. It was the opinion of some that the Lord should remove me out of my place as I was so worldly minded and so full of pride. I had no respect for the poor among the people” (diary entry, July 19, 1889). The secretary of the First Presidency (John Nuttal) felt the same. “[F]inancial matters have more weight with...Heber J. Grant than the things of the Kingdom” (In the President’s Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttal, 1879-1892. Edited by Jedediah Rogers, Signature Books, p. 268). Pres. Grant freely admitted that, “*I have never prayed to see the Savior*” (*The Diaries of Heber J. Grant*, p. 468).

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith On three different occasions, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith stated that the witness of the Holy Ghost was sufficient for Apostles and other leaders to bare testimony of Christ (see The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, Improvement Era, Nov. 1966, p 979; Doctrines of Salvation 3:153; Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. and John J. Stewart, The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith, pps. 387-88). After years of having members of the church ask him and other general authorities if they had seen Christ, Joseph Fielding Smith appears to have changed the “apostolic charge” doctrine, thus no longer requiring leaders to have a witness of Christ in order to say they had the apostolic testimony. He stated, “Every member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles should have, and I feel sure have had, the *knowledge of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This does not have to come by direct visitation of the Savior, but it does come from the testimony of the Holy Ghost. ... The testimony of the Holy Ghost is the strongest testimony that can be given. It is better than a person visit*” (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:153). This witness does not separate a modern apostle as being any more “special” as a witness than others among the Saints who also bear testimony of Christ via the Holy Ghost.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie Statement #1 “I shall expound the doctrine of the Church relative to what our relationship should be to all members of the Godhead and do so in plainness and simplicity so that none need misunderstand or be led astray by other voices. I shall express the view of the Brethren, of the prophets and apostles of old, and of all those who understand the scriptures and are in tune with the Holy Spirit. These matters lie at the very foundation of revealed religion...There are yet others who have an excessive zeal which causes them to go beyond the mark. Their desire for excellence is inordinate. In an effort to be truer than true they devote themselves to gaining a special, personal relationship with Christ that is both improper and perilous...Now I know that some may be offended at the counsel that they should not strive for a special and personal relationship with Christ...You have never heard one of the First Presidency or the Twelve [today], who hold the keys of the kingdom, and who are appointed to see that we are not “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14) – you have never heard one of them advocate this excessive zeal that calls for gaining a so-called special and personal relationship with Christ” (Bruce R. McConkie, “Our Relationship with the Lord,” BYU Devotional, 2 March 1982). That is true today, but it was not true of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in their “Apostolic charge.”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie Statement #2 In a radio interview in 1995, David Whitmer (not the man by the same name in early LDS history) bore his personal testimony of Christ. He stated, “I went and talked to [Elder] Bruce R. McConkie three times and I asked him all three times, ‘Have you ever met the Lord Jesus Christ?’ and he said No. I said, ‘Do you know anybody that has?’ And he said No. I said, ‘How can you be a special witness of Christ?’ And he said, ‘In a Telestial church, on a telestial level, if the Holy Ghost testifies to me that Jesus is the Christ, then I can testify on a telestial level about Jesus. **I can’t testify that I know him but I can testify that he lives.**’ And he says, ‘Look how many books I’ve written on the Messiah.’ But he says, ‘I can’t preach anything more than faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism and receive the Holy Ghost because everything else, you need to get from the Holy Ghost. That’s the path to Jesus. Then Jesus is the path to the Father.’ That’s what he told me” (David Whitmer, typed transcript from radio interview, KSTAR, Dec. 13, 1995).

During this same talk show interview, a woman called in, stating that Mr. Whitmer was deceived (referring to his experience in seeing the Lord personally). She did not believe the testimony of his experience, a testimony the Father told him to bear in this particular radio interview. She did not have or exercise spiritual gift #2 - *faith to believe in the words of others who have seen Christ*, as provided in our Lord’s listing of the 13 gifts of the Spirit in D&C 46. Sadly, many today are discouraged from seeking an audience with God. Instead many are encouraged to “follow the Prophet” or the Brethren, We must be careful not to lift them up as our light.¹⁰ The Lord Jesus said, “I am the light which ye are shall hold up – that which ye have seen me do” (3 Ne. 18:24).

Elder Boyd K. Packer Pres. Boyd K. Packer of the Twelve stated, “President McKay explained that one of the responsibilities of an Assistant to the Twelve was to stand with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as a special witness and to bear testimony that Jesus is the Christ. What he said next overwhelmed me: “Before we proceed to set you apart, I ask you to bear your testimony to us. We want to know if you have that witness.” I did the best I could. I bore my testimony *the same as I might have in a fast and testimony meeting in my ward. To my surprise, the Brethren of the Presidency seemed pleased and proceeded to confer the office upon me.* That puzzled me greatly, for *I had supposed that someone called to such an office would have an unusual, different, and greatly enlarged testimony and spiritual power.* It puzzled me for a long time until finally I could see that I already had what was required: *an abiding testimony in my heart* of the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith, that we have a Heavenly Father, and that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer...Some years ago, I was with President Marion G. Romney....He told them that 50 years before, as a missionary boy in Australia, late one afternoon he had gone to a library to study. When he walked out, it was night. He looked up into the starry sky, and it happened. The Spirit touched him, and a certain witness was born in his soul. He told those mission presidents that he did not know *any more surely than as a member of the First Presidency* that God the Father lives; that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father; and that the fulness of the gospel had been restored

than he did as a missionary boy 50 years before in Australia. He said that his testimony had changed in that it was much easier to get an answer from the Lord. The Lord's presence was nearer, and he knew the Lord much better than he had 50 years before. There is the natural tendency to look at those who are sustained to presiding positions, to consider them to be higher and of more value in the Church or to their families than an ordinary member. Somehow we feel they are worth more to the Lord than are we. *It just does not work that way!* ("The Weak and the Simple of the Church," Oct. 2007 General Conference.)

Elder Dieter Uchtdorf Elder Dieter Uchtdorf of the First Presidency stated, "You do not need to see the Savior, as the [ancient] Apostles did, to experience the same transformation" (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Grateful in Any Circumstance," General Conference, 6 April 2014).

Elder Dallin Oaks Confronted by one individual with the claim that, "current apostles have no right to run the affairs of the church since they do not meet the New Testament standard of Apostles because *they do not testify of having seen Christ,*" Elder Dallin Oaks responded by saying, "The first answer to this claim is that modern apostles are *called* to be witnesses *of the name* of Christ in all the world, Doctrine and Covenants 107:23. *This is not to witness of a personal manifestation.* To witness of the name is to witness of *the plan, the work, or mission* such as the atonement and the authority or priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which an apostle who holds the keys is uniquely responsible to do (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Boise, Idaho, June 17, 2105). Elder Oaks revealed that, in his view, what is special about his witness is *his assignment* within the church, *not* his experience with God.

Today, a "calling" and "keys" are sufficient to give one the right to be *called* an "apostle." Men call and choose other men to be an "apostle" via this new definition (see endnote 5). Joseph, Oliver, and scripture, on the other hand, each state that a sure "apostolic" witness of Christ only comes from face to face contact, and feeling the marks of the Atonement in the Lord's body. The early Apostles in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon had this witness. Other later Apostles were to called to receive this witness, that they too, might be "**chosen**" and "sent" of the Lord Himself! Such a witness requires real faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are all encouraged to have this faith in Christ, as did the brother of Jared (see Ether 3:13-17, 4:7-8; 12:8 & 12). We can all have a sure witness of His reality.

Knowing God – Being Called, Chosen, Empowered, and Sent The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that we must each come to "**know**" Christ to receive real *salvation* at His hands, that *salvation* tied to exaltation in the Celestial kingdom of God. It is our *calling* to receive the Lord as our Savior and be a witness for Him to all around us. Who will be "*chosen*" and "*sent*" to do so? Those who do not focus on Christ as their Savior, but look to men for salvation are deceived or "blinded" by the craftiness of men (see D&C 76:75; 123:16). It is a modern form of idolatry. Note again – now in more detail - what the Lord Himself said about why many are *called*, but so few **chosen**.

"Behold, there are many *called*, but few are *chosen*. And why are they not *chosen*? **Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men,** that they do not learn this one lesson— That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled *only* upon the principles of *righteousness*. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to *cover our sins*, or to *gratify our pride*, our *vain ambition*, or to *exercise control or dominion or compulsion* upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience that *it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.* Hence, many are *called*, but few are **chosen**. *No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned*" (D&C 121:34-42).

The Lord Himself repeatedly invites us to receive Him personally *and* literally in the flesh in His five word summary of what He calls "**my doctrine, my gospel, and my church**" in the Book of Mormon, saying, "*repent and come unto me*" (D&C 10:67-68; 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; D&C 93:1; 76:75; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2). This is the whole message of scripture and especially the Book of Mormon. And note that the Lord said that those who do **not** come to Him are under "**the bondage of sin**" in the following insightful scriptures (D&C 84:50-53; 3 Ne. 18:25, 21:20; JST John 6:35, 44 – 45).

Coming to **know** the Lord is the reward of the five "**wise virgins**," those allowed to enter into the bridal chamber in JST Matthew 25:10-11 (see also JST Matt. 7:33). The unwise virgins had no oil in their lamps. The Lord declared that they had

not come to “*know*” Him, thus they did not “enter in” to the bridal chamber with Him. These “*virgins*” were not “*wise*.” This is apparent in the JST version of this verse. It reads:

“Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he [the Lord] answered and said, Verily I say unto you, **Ye know me not**” (JST Matthew 25:10-11).

This is the great gift of entering our Lord’s “**rest**,” His glorious presence. Many of those receiving Him as “the heavenly gift” (Ether 12:8) are empowered to bear witness of Him and do His work as He directs. They are “*chosen*,” “*sent*,” and “*empowered*” to do so. Do our “*apostles*” know the Lord? Do you “*know* the Lord”? According to Joseph Smith, **if you have not the “the testimony of Jesus” then you have little assurance of salvation or eternal life in this world** (see Rev. 12:17, 19:10; D&C 46:13-14; 76:51, 101 and 88:4, 74-75).

The Way of Salvation Administration of the extensive for-profit business interests owned by the LDS Church today takes much time and effort for church leaders, as opposed to *ministering* to the Saints and their spiritual needs - something also demanding significant effort (see 1 Nephi 22:23 as opposed to D&C 10:67-68). The employees of these for-profit church-owned businesses are church employees. All receive salaries, including the General Authorities.¹¹ The Twelve and others oversee these business interests. The Quorum of the Twelve came to power in Nauvoo and thereafter following the murder of the three Smith brothers, and under the direction of Brigham Young. They later became the primary governing council over the whole church. The Lord in D&C 107 directed that the church be led by a *balance* of power in four governing councils, not one. They are the First Presidency, The Quorum of the Twelve, the Seventies Quorum, and the High Councils of the Stakes of Zion. Their rise to power is very insightful.¹²

It is critical that the Saints be taught **the way** of salvation (how to receive **redemption** or be saved – “born again” in Christ). Ultimately, however, it is our responsibility as individuals to seek out God and His holy word and come to the truth of all things. The doctrine of Christ in the Book of Mormon reveals that “**the way**” of salvation includes: (1) *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, (2) *repentance*, (3) *baptism by water*, (4) *baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost*, and (5) *receiving the Lord personally* – all in this life. Those who search the word of God and feast upon it will be directed to find these doctrines and experience the reality of what they point to. For more on **the way** of salvation, see the paper, *Repent and Come Unto Me*, www.7witnesses.com

Summary

Today the definition of an “Apostle” has been modified from what it was in the days of Paul the Apostle and the Prophet Joseph Smith. The scriptural definition of a “*sent one*” or “Apostle,” **chosen** of the Lord, is one who travels the world as a **special missionary**, preaching **Christ and His gospel** as a “**special witness**” of His reality - and by *one who has actually seen Him*. This is what makes him a “*special witness*.” Such a one is to be a traveling missionary that also provides the gift and power of the Holy Ghost to others. These two primary duties have been replaced with administrative duties, managing business interests, writing books, etc. Preaching Christ the Lord by *knowing* Him, however, is as important today as it was when Joseph Smith defined salvation, early on. Our leaders and all the Saints are *called* or invited to receive the Lord personally, to **know** Him. Apostles and we as Saints can only be **chosen** by Him to become such a witness if we are humble, repentant, and seek His face with our whole heart. He and His will must be our priority and focus, not the chief seats, the honors of men, or the things of the world (see D&C 121:34-46; 1 Nephi 22:23).

Why have so few today not become **chosen** to receive the Lord? The simplest answer is our unbelief, idolatry, and sin. Though the Lord withdrew His Spirit from us collectively upon rejecting His greater fulness at Kirtland and later Nauvoo again, the promise of D&C 93:1 remains available to all individuals. If we seek the Lord Jesus with all our heart, and in His way, we will receive Him (Jer. 29:13). This is true of all, both in and outside of the LDS church. It is a promise He is fulfilling all around the world. It begins with our love of God and our desire to know Him. This leads to repentance, and the purity necessary to receive Him according to His will and timing. I pray that all, from leaders to everyday Saints will take the Lord’s invitation seriously, an invitation where He has repeatedly said, “**repent and come unto me**” (see D&C 10:67-68; 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:31-32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; Ether 4:7-19; Mor. 7:34; D&C 93:1; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2). These five simple words define Christ’s *doctrine, gospel, and church*. Let us take them literally.

Elder David Bednar quoted JST Matthew 7 and 25 in his October 2016 General Conference address, urging us all to seek the Lord’s face and be “wise” virgins in doing so. Speaking of the unwise “virgins” who went to buy oil when they heard that the Bridegroom had come, the Lord said:

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage and the

door was shut. Afterward came also the *other virgins*, saying Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, **Ye know me not**" (JST Mat. 25:9-11, the non-JST verse says, "*I know you not*").

The Book of Mormon prophets Mormon and Moroni saw our day, chastising us for our *unbelief* and *vanity*. Too many speak in the Lord's name without *qualification, permission, or authority*. Those who come to **know** the Lord can do so with less vanity. Speaking of the time of coming trouble and judgment in our near future, the Lord spoke of many who speak in His name *vainly*. He stated:

"And many will say unto me *in that day*, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful *works*? And then will I say, **Ye never knew me**; depart from me ye that work iniquity (JST Mat. 7:22-23, the non JST verse states, "*I never knew you...*").

It is my hope that all of us as believers will *awake* to the invitation and need to seek the face of the Lord and do what is necessary to *arise* into His Holy presence. We can then be sealed His (Mos. 5:15). There is *no other way* to heaven or salvation but to *know* the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus employs no servant at this gate. "**He is the way, the truth, and the life**" (John 14:6), "**the light and life of the world**" (3 Nephi 11:11). **There is no other way!**

End Notes

¹ **The Seal of the Living God** "The seal of the living God" appears to be an invisible mark placed in the forehead of the

² **The Testimony OF Jesus versus a Testimony ABOUT Jesus** There is a great difference in "*the testimony OF Jesus*" as defined by the Lord and His prophets in scripture (see D&C 76:51, 75, 101; 88:4, 74-75; D&C 46:13-14; Rev. 12:17, 19:10), and a testimony **ABOUT** Jesus. For greatest simplicity, it can be defined by those inheriting the three degrees of glory, as given us in the vision of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. For a more detailed explanation, see the author's paper, "*The Testimony of Jesus*" www.7witnesses.com

1. The Celestial Kingdom is comprised of those who have "received the Testimony OF Jesus, and *believed on his name*" (D&C 76:51). This is the category of the elect, "*the wise virgins*" among the House of Israel. Jesus has testified to the Father of this person's worthiness to enter into the Father's Kingdom.

2. Those in the Terrestrial Kingdom "*received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it...honorably men...blinded by the craftiness of men [deception]...they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness [being] not valiant in the testimony of Jesus*" (D&C 76:74-76, 79). This is the category of most of the Saints today.

3. Telestial heirs "*received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus*" (D&C 76:82). They are wicked, unbelievers.

The Lord said, "My people are destroyed for lack of *knowledge* [of me]: because thou hast rejected *knowledge* [me], I will also reject thee..." (Hosea 4:6). Jeremiah 2:13 states, "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (man is a broken, imperfect cistern). We must not worship the arm of flesh or we shall be cursed (2 Ne. 4:34; Psalm 118:8).

³ **Zeal without Knowledge** Among some who love God and are forced to leave the LDS Church today (excommunication) are those who sincerely seek the face of the Lord, in obedience to scripture and God's revealed word to them personally. Some have been disciplined by those who often have "*zeal without knowledge*," as Hugh Nibley put it in his book *Approaching Zion* – or "zeal" for the church and its programs rather than real *knowledge* of God and His will for us. There is often too much zeal to protect the status quo rather than obtaining truth from our source of light - God. The *knowledge* spoken of by Nibley is real **knowledge of and from God** - in a face-to-face encounter with Him, and *knowledge* of things as they really are. Early on Saul, before he became the Apostle Paul, a *sent one* for Christ, was zealous to protect the Jewish law and tradition he was first part of. He later did a total about face after being in the presence of the Lord on the road to Damascus. He became fully converted to the Master. In his prior persecution of Christians, Saul thought he was doing God a favor by zealously imprisoning and even stoning Christians for the sake of traditional Jewish law and religious teachings. The *deadness* of the law in comparison to being *alive* in Christ is discussed clearly in 2 Nephi 25:25-27. Being "*alive in Christ*" abandons focus on the law and false traditions. Such do not fear man and what he can do (see Mor. 8:7 & 16; D&C 37, 30:11, 50:41, 60:2, and 67:3). Moroni said, "Perfect love casteth out all fear" (Moroni 8:16). Paul was later persecuted by those he once served with. They later attempted to kill him. The marks of persecution and torture on his body became a source of pride for him, a sign of his great love for the Savior. In 2 Cor. 11:24-25, Paul revealed that he was scourged 5 times, stoned once, beaten with rods, and was in 3 shipwrecks, all because of his love for the *living* God and the higher truths he then embraced and shared, rather than the lesser things of the law and many false traditions. Christ the Lord

was now his focus and his zeal. His enthusiasm for the Lord was now based on real *knowledge* of Him, gained on the road to Damascus. It was based on Paul's personal relationship with God, not a religious one.

Disciplining using God's Word Three sets of scripture reveal God's method of disciplining or casting out those in His Church. They are (1) Moroni 6:7, where we read that *three witnesses* are required to condemn an individual "*before the elders*" for committing iniquity; (2) 3 Nephi 18, where six times in five verses the Lord tells us to **avoid casting out** individuals from His fold. They are verses 22, 23, 25, 30 and 32. Such are to be prayed for unto the Father in Christ's name (v. 23). They are also to be ministered to where possible (v. 30, 32); And (3) D&C 102 reveals the Lord's pattern of justice. *The accuser* (witnesses), *the accused*, and the Stake Presidency and 12 High Councilors, are all present to hear both sides of the case brought against an individual. Six high councilors are selected to *defend* the accused, and six to *prosecute* him or her, all selected by lot (see additional procedures in D&C 102:12-23). The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "If you do not accuse each other, God will not accuse you. If you have no accuser you will enter heaven. . . . What many people call sin is not sin; I do many things to break down superstition, and I will break it down" (*History of the Church*, 4:445-446).

Courts of discipline are to be courts of love. We should be careful in excommunicating faithful people who seek the Lord zealously like Paul the Apostle, those who seek the knowledge he obtained.

⁴ **Witnesses of Christ in the Book of Mormon** Many said they saw the Lord and came to know Him in the Book of Mormon. Lehi did so in 1 Nephi 1:9, Nephi in 2 Nephi 11:2, Jacob in 2 Nephi 2:4; 11:3, Lamoni in Alma 19:13, Alma the younger in Alma 27:28 & Alma 36:22, Mormon in Mormon 1:15, the brother of Jared in Ether 3:14, and Moroni in Ether 12:39, along with the multitude and the Lord's disciples in 3 Nephi. Others like King Benjamin, Amulek, and Samuel the Lamanite said they saw an "angel of the Lord" (Mosiah 4:1 & 27:11; Alma 10:7; Helaman 13:7). This may be a euphemism for seeing the Lord as the difference between the "angel of the Lord" and Jehovah in various Bible verses as is difficult to discern (see Gen. 16:7-11; 22:11-15; Ex. 3:2; and Judges 2:1-4). These testimonies have been given us to encourage us to do the same, providing hope that we too may have the blessings of an empowering relationship with Jesus the Christ. This is why He is known throughout scripture as the Bridegroom. We as the Bride of Christ and we are to come to know Him, or there can be no marriage. Relationship and the heart is what our Lord desires, not outward religion.

⁵ **Pres. Joseph F. Smith Statements About Revelation** Speaking under oath to the United States congress over a three-day period in 1904 during the Reed Smoot Hearings (tied to polygamy), President of the LDS church Joseph F. Smith stated, "In the first place [the Apostles in the time of Christ] were chosen by revelation. The *council of the apostles* [today] *have had a voice ever since in the selection of their successors...*[They are] *Chosen by the body, the twelve themselves, by and with the consent and approval of the first presidency.*" Men do the calling and choosing today. When asked if there was any revelation in regard to the subsequent ones he replied, "*No, sir; it has been the choice of the body.*" A senator then asked, "Then the apostles are perpetuated in succession *by their own act* and the approval of the first presidency?" President Smith replied, "*That is right.*" Pres. Smith and other church leaders and members were then living with polygamous wives at the time of this testimony. Eleven children were born to him since 1890, the year the Manifesto was officially issued.

Kimball Decision Another common assumption tied to revelation is that of the lifting on the ban of blacks to hold the priesthood by Pres. Kimball and other leaders in 1978 was because there was a revelation to Pres. Kimball on it. In reading his own words, we see that Pres. Kimball and other leaders simply made a decision to lift the ban (there was great pressure around the country to do so), asking God to *intervene with a revelation if they were wrong in doing so*. We read in a 2008 BYU Studies article, "He had reached a decision after great struggle, and he wanted the Lord's confirmation, *if it would come*. They surrounded the altar in a prayer circle. President Kimball told the Lord at length that if extending the priesthood was not right, if the Lord did not want this change to come in the Church, he would fight the world's opposition" (*Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on the Priesthood*, BYU Studies 47:2, pps. 54-56).

Pres. Hinckley Statement In a 1997 interview, Pres. Gordon Hinckley stated, Let me say first that we have a great body of revelation, the vast majority of which came from the Prophet Joseph Smith. *We don't need much revelation. We need to pay more attention to the revelation we've already received*" (Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Sunday Interview – Musings of the Main Mormon," Don Lattin, Chronicle Religion Writer, April 13, 1997).

⁶ **False Teachings Do Occur, Leaders Err as they are Mortal** Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated, "I do not know all of the providences of the Lord, but I do know that *he [God] permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church and that such teaching is part of the sifting process of mortality...* as Joseph Smith so pointedly taught, a prophet is not always a prophet, only when he is acting as such. *Prophets are men and they make mistakes*. Sometimes they err in doctrine. *This is one of the reasons the Lord has given us the Standard Works. They become the standards and rules that govern where doctrine and philosophy are concerned. If this were not so, we would believe one thing when one man was president of the Church and another thing in the days of his successors*. Truth is eternal and does not vary. Sometimes even wise and good men fall short in the accurate presentation of what is truth. *Sometimes a prophet gives personal views which are not endorsed and approved by the Lord*.

“...President Young did teach that Adam was the father of our spirits [Adam-God theory], and all the related things that the cultists ascribe to him. *This, however, is not true. He expressed views that are out of harmony with the gospel.* But, be it known, Brigham Young also taught accurately and correctly, the status and position of Adam in the eternal scheme of things. What I am saying is that Brigham Young, contradicted Brigham Young, and *the issue becomes one of which Brigham Young we will believe. The answer is we will believe the expressions that accord with the teachings in the Standard Works...*We are all mortal. We are all fallible. We all make mistakes. No single individual all the time is in tune with the Holy Spirit...Wise gospel students do not build their philosophies of life on quotations of individuals, *even though those quotations come from presidents of the Church. Wise people [the wise virgins of JST Matt. 25:10-11] anchor their doctrine on the Standard Works...we have the gift of the Holy Ghost; we have the Standards Works and it is our responsibility to get in tune and understand properly what the Lord has revealed and has had us canonize...*the head of the Church [and others] have the obligation to teach that which is in harmony with the Standard Works. *If they err then be silent on the point and leave the event in the hands of the Lord “ (Letter from Elder Bruce R. McConkie to BYU Professor Eugene England, February 19, 1981).*”

⁷ ***The Apostolic Witness of George Q. Cannon***

Elder George Q. Cannon saw the Lord and spoke of it publically to the Saints as a way of encouraging them to come to this same knowledge. See George Q. Cannon, “Supporting Church Leaders,” 6 October 1896, reported in *The Deseret Weekly* 53:610, 31 October 1896. For the second witness, see George Q. Cannon, *Collected Discourses*, 3:285. Both references are cited in Robert Smith’s chapter on Witnesses in, *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, p. 362. A free PDF download of this revealing book is available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6t-rQr3iLAsekRiMW05QUVvRIU/view>

⁸ ***Pres. Grant Statements & Actions***

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle and ordinance of the gospel of Christ. It is strong faith in Christ that parts the veil to Him, as witnessed by the Brother of Jared in the book of Ether in the Book of Mormon (see chapters 3, 4 and 12, and the Lectures on Faith chapters 3-6). The Lord commanded Joseph Smith to organize the School of the Prophets in December of 1832, one month after the Lord formally condemned the church in November, doing so in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood (see this condemnation in D&C 84:22-28, 58-70). The seven *faith*-based lectures in the Lectures on Faith were said to be the *doctrine* portion of the Doctrine and Covenants. They reveal the importance of the doctrine of *faith* needed to remove our condemnation today - for not valuing the Book of Mormon and its message, which is to believe, trust, love, and faith in the Lord Jesus, and to **repent** and **come to Christ**, literally. Those who ignore and reject this invitation, after receiving the covenant of the gospel of Christ, are condemned and cursed (see the following important scriptures to understand this important condemnation, still resting upon the Saints today; D&C 84:23-27; JST Exodus 34:12; Hebrews chapters 3 and 4; Jacob 1:6-8; Mosiah 13:13-14, 25-35; 2 Nephi 2:3-11, 15-16, 27-28; Moroni 6:4).

It was in the fall of 1898, that Pres. Heber J. Grant asked James E. Talmage to *rewrite* the Lectures on Faith (Pres. Grant turned the church into a corporation in 1923, see <http://mormondisclosures.blogspot.com/2012/09/boogie-on-down-corporation-with-sole.html>). In the process, Elder Talmage reconstructed the doctrine of the lectures to bring them in line with current thinking. He then wrote a book entitled *The Articles of Faith* that sold well, effectively replacing the doctrine given us by Joseph Smith in *The Lectures on Faith*. By January 1915, Apostle Charles W. Penrose had also completed a revision of Parley P. Pratt's *Key to the Science of Theology*, further *modifying* these and other doctrines. Even with the modifications, *The Lectures on Faith* were eventually removed from the Doctrine and Covenants in 1921 by a committee consisting of six men: James E. Talmage (chair), George F. Richards, Anthony W. Ivins, Melvin J. Ballard, John A. Widstoe, and Joseph Fielding Smith. The committee provided the following reason for their suggested removal. “Certain lessons entitled *The Lectures on Faith* which were bound with Doctrine and Covenants in some of its former issues, are not included in this edition. Those lessons were prepared for use in the School of Elders. But they were *never* presented or accepted by the Church as other than theological lessons or lectures.” This statement is inaccurate. Individual quorums of the priesthood each accepted them as **doctrine**, and voted on them as such to be placed into our canon of scriptures.

The Lectures on Faith were greatly respected, and were considered the “*doctrine*” portion of the 1833 Book of Commandments and the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, whereas God’s revelations to Joseph Smith were considered the *covenants*. No revelation from God was cited as given to committee members for their decision to remove them, nor to Pres. Grant, though there was clearly a vote by the general body of the Saints (and individual priesthood quorums) to approve them being placed in our canon of scripture early on. Not having a vote for their removal went against the Lord’s **law** in D&C 26:2, which requires “all things shall be done by **common consent** in the church.”

The underlying purpose for their removal may have been centered on two things; (1) The focus of the lectures was on getting an audience with God via strong *faith* – the first principle and ordinance of the gospel. As this paper has shown, that doctrine has been diminished and made “unnecessary”; And (2) The definitions for God the Father and the Holy Ghost in the lectures (see no. 2 below) did not square with the changed definition of them at that time. Academics were consulted for

direction in the new doctrines (not revelation) by scholarly men like James Talmage (an academic before he became an “apostle” and John A. Widstoe. The first reason for removing the Lectures on Faith from the D&C appears to be:

I. Diminishing Christ Satan hates the Lord Jesus. A war is going on here on earth, the domain of Satan. He has found a way to introduce idolatry among us by raising up men as our light, while diminishing Christ. The Lectures on Faith were removed during the administration of Pres. Heber J. Grant. He was a dedicated businessman who stated on several occasions that he felt uneasy with spiritual matters. **A clear focus of the seven lectures was and is developing necessary faith to part the veil and enter the Lord’s presence in this life**, that one might receive “*the Heavenly Gift*” (Ether 12:8, Jesus Christ), and thus acquire “*the testimony of Jesus*” in this life. **This is consistent with “the apostolic charge”** of both Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. As addressed earlier (p. 3), Pres. Grant was a practical-minded businessman that felt **faith to church leaders** and keeping the church *financially solvent* was more important than seeking and obtaining a sure witness of the Lord – an “apostolic” witness! We remain in this mindset today, where “fidelity to church leaders” – the brethren – is more important than coming to know God. Pres. Grant stated, “I have never prayed to see the Savior” (*The Diaries of Heber J. Grant*, p. 468). Note the important role of faith in Christ sufficient to part the veil of unbelief, as discussed in Lectures 6 and 7 of *The Lectures on Faith* hereafter.

“...we next proceed...to the **knowledge** which persons must have, that the course of life which they pursue is according to the will of God, in order that they may be enabled to exercise *faith* in him unto *life* and *salvation*. This *knowledge* supplies an important place in revealed religion; for it was by reason of it that the ancients were enabled to *endure as seeing him* who is invisible...Such was, and always will be, the situation of the saints of God, that unless they have an *actual knowledge* that the course they are pursuing is according to the will of God they will grow weary in their minds, and faint...Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require *the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary* unto *life* and *salvation*...It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God...and that he has not, nor will not *seek his face* in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the *faith* necessary for him to lay hold on *eternal life*. It is vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice...unless they in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the *knowledge* that they are accepted of him...And in the last days, before the Lord comes, he is to gather together his saints who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice...where doubt and uncertainty are there faith is not...For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time...where faith is weak the persons will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations, and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary *in their minds*, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them” (Lecture 5, points 1 & 2).

“When a man works by *faith* he works by **mental exertion** instead of physical force...faith is truly the first principle in The science of THEOLOGY...Without *faith* it is impossible to please God...Because without faith it is impossible for men to be saved...When men begin to live by faith they begin to draw near to God; and when faith is perfected they are like him; and because he is saved they are saved also; for they will be in the same situation he is in, because they have *come to him*; and when he appears they shall be like him, for they will see him as he is...what is the difference between a saved man and one who is not saved...*they must be persons who can work by faith*...Where shall we find a prototype...a saved being...it is Christ...the prototype or standard of salvation...he proposed to make them [the human family] like unto himself...nothing was withheld from him when his faith was sufficient to receive it...By their faith they could obtain heavenly visions, the ministering of angels, have knowledge of the spirits of just men made perfect, of the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, of God the judge of all, of Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and become familiar with the third heavens...how were they to obtain the knowledge of God...through faith...for when faith comes it brings its train of attendants with it – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, gifts, wisdom, knowledge, miracles healings, tongues, interpretation of tongues, etc. All these appear when faith appears on the earth, and disappear when it disappears from the earth; for these are the effects of faith...For when faith is, there will the knowledge of God be also, with all things which pertain thereto – revelations, visions, and dreams, as well as every necessary thing, in order that the possessors of faith may be perfected, and obtain salvation...” (portions of Lecture 6 & 7).

Summation of Changes It was during Pres. Grant’s administration (1918-45) that many administrative changes were made in the church. We see that, (1) The Lectures on Faith were removed from our canon scriptures (the D&C) in 1921, further diminishing the faith required to part the veil to God, and the “apostolic charge” to Apostles and others. Though put in by a vote of the whole church, they were later removed by a committee without a vote; (2) Wine was

removed from the Sacrament ordinance in 1906, *kneeling* was also no longer required (3 Ne. 19:6). The Savior set the example for us, instituting the Sacrament using *wine* among three groups at the Last Supper in Jerusalem (Mat. 26:26-29), at Bountiful in 3rd Nephi (3 Ne. 18 & 19), and in Joseph Smith's Restoration (D&C 20, 27 and 89, see also Mor. 4 & 5). The Lord said, "And this shall ye *always* observe to do, *even as I have done*, even as *I have broken bread and blessed it* and given it unto you" (3 Ne. 18:6); (3) The LDS church was incorporated in 1923, the Twelve and others then oversaw many for-profit businesses (see <http://mormondisclosures.blogspot.com/2012/09/boogie-on-down-corporation-with-sole.html>); (4) Adherence to the word of wisdom became a requirement to enter the temple (1933) via a "recommend" from leaders (5) Full payment of tithing became a requirement to enter the temple; (6) Business interests of the church took on a more central role than ministering to the Saints; (7) Administration and committee recommendations took on a greater role than revelation. God said *revelation* from Him is the "**rock**" that keeps "*the gates of hell*" from prevailing against the kingdom of God (see JST Matt. 16:16-18); And (8) For some 22 years of Pres. Grant's administration, ordinations did not confer priesthood. Men were ordained to offices in the church *without conferral of priesthood first*. Revelation was not cited for these eight changes.

2. Definition of the Godhead A second reason for removing *The Lectures on Faith* from the D&C appears to be changed doctrine of the Godhead. Good research in the Joseph Smith Papers Project reveals that our current doctrine of the Godhead is partly based on an erroneous statement by Apostle Orson Hyde used in D&C 130:22. Joseph Smith felt at least a portion of it was in error. Verse 22 is *believed* to be instruction given by the Lord to Joseph Smith and the Saints. Section 130 was added to our canon of scripture in 1876, 35 years after Joseph Smith placed the doctrines of *The Lectures on Faith* in the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 130 does feature instruction by the Prophet Joseph, but verse 22 cites Joseph's instruction inaccurately, according to Joseph Smith's own journal (kept by Willard Richards), where he noted a mistake in Elder Orson Hyde's definition of the Father *and* the Holy Ghost. The Joseph Smith Papers project reveals that verse 22 represents *instruction* given by Elder Orson Hyde, not Joseph, and that Hyde's statement has a mistake in it, according to Joseph. Writing for Joseph, Willard Richards wrote, "again revertd to *Elders Hyde mistake*. &c [meaning etc. - *following*] the Father has a body of flesh & bones as tangible as mans, the Son also, but the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit" (see <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1842-june-1844-book-2-10-march-1843-14-july-1843/50>).

Though now representing *current* LDS "doctrine" of the Godhead, this definition differs from that given us by the Prophet Joseph Smith as presented in *The Lectures on Faith*. Compare Elder Hyde's instruction hereafter, to that given in Lecture 5 of the Lectures on Faith.

"*The Father has a body of flesh and bone as tangible as man's*; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a *personage of Spirit*. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us" (Hyde, D&C 130:22).

"There are *two personages* who constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things... They are the Father and the Son: The Father being a *personage of spirit*, glory and power: possessing all perfection and fulness: The Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a *personage of tabernacle*, made, or fashioned like unto man, or being in the form and likeness of man... And he being the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and having overcome, received a fulness of the glory of the Father—possessing the same mind with the Father, which *mind is the Holy Spirit*... being filled with the fulness of the Mind of the Father, or, in other words, the Spirit of the Father: which Spirit is shed forth upon all who believe on his name and keep his commandments: and all those who keep his commandments shall grow up from grace to grace, and become heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and *joint heirs with Jesus Christ*; **possessing the same mind**, being transformed into the same image or likeness, even the express image of him who fills all in all: being filled with the fulness of his glory, and *become one in him, even as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one*" (portion of Lecture 5, *The Lectures on Faith*).

Though the Father does have a body, it is *not* tangible in the same way as mans, or we would not read that the Son differs from Him being a "*personage of tabernacle*." The Father's body is much more refined - a purer form of matter with great intensity of light and power, so much so that we would be destroyed in His presence if we were not first transfigured by Him to endure His fiery presence. Elder Hyde's instruction on the Holy Ghost is more problematic. He and others have suggested that the Holy Ghost is an individual - a *male personage* (like the Father and Son), but without a body, that He might dwell in us. The 5th Lecture on Faith informs us **what** the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit **is**. It is simply the gift or *endowment* of having **access to the mind and will of God**, rather than a separate, male personage.

Both of Elder Hyde's teachings, as presented in D&C 130:22 have now become modern LDS church doctrine in opposition to the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith and other scripture. The doctrine and definition of an "Apostle" as "*sent one*" of the Lord, empowered by the sure witness of having seen and conversed with Him, also reflects the diminished role of not only *The Lectures on Faith*, but faith in general as the first principle and ordinance of the gospel of Christ. As we *reject* (1 Sam. 8:7; 2 Ne. 1:10-11; Jacob 4:15-17; Psalm 118:22; Hosea 4:6), *deny* (2 Ne. 28:32), and *forsake* the Lord

Jesus (Jer. 2:13), there is *provocation* and then *condemnation* (see JST Exodus 34:1-2; Hebrews chapters 3 & 4; D&C 84:23-27, 47-57; Jacob 1:6-8; Mosiah 13:13-14, 25-35; 2 Nephi 2:3-11, 15-16, 27-28; Moroni 6:4).

⁹ ***Disciples Versus Apostles*** Changes made in the new “official” church, as recognized by the laws of New York State - created on April 6th of 1830, along with Joseph Smith’s increasing power within it later on, were causes for concern in David Whitmer, an important early leader of the church. These concerns eventually led to his separation from the church by 1838 (along with others in the Twelve). Whitmer provided the comparison of “*apostles*” in the Old World to “*disciples*” in the New World to support his claim that changes were being made to early revelations that he [David] had received *with* Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery together.

In an 1887 final testimony, Whitmer noted that the early Twelve were called “*disciples*” by the Lord, **not** “*apostles*” in the 1831 Book of Commandments. Later, in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord’s word, “*disciples*” was changed to “*apostles*.” Whitmer stated, “The twelve at Jerusalem are called in the written word “*Apostles*.” They are *apostles* because they were *special witnesses* to the sufferings of Christ, His death, burial and resurrection [at Jerusalem in the meridian of time]: but the twelve which Christ chose on this land [both at Bountiful in the Book of Mormon, and during David Whitmer’s time in early church history] are called *disciples* or elders, and are not once called *apostles* in the Book of Mormon [by the Lord]. In the revelation which came through the stone in June, 1 1829 [which the Book of Mormon also came through], to Oliver Cowdery and myself **to search out the twelve**, they are also called *disciples*, and not *apostles*; and the revelation says “*disciples*” in the Book of Commandments to-day. But it has been changed in the [later 1835 edition, now called the] Doctrine and Covenants to read “*apostles*.” The heading to this revelation in the Book of Commandments says: “Making known the calling of twelve ‘*Disciples*’ in these last days.” In the [later] Doctrine and Covenants it reads: “Making known the calling of twelve ‘*Apostles*’ in these last days.”

Was the term “*disciples*” used by the Lord because they were located one by one by Whitmer and Cowdery, rather than the Lord Himself, and thus they were not “*sent ones*” of Him, or was it because these twelve servants had not yet gained a witness of the Lord personally, by being in His presence?

Whitmer added, “When Christ was teaching *the twelve* on this land, in giving them instructions - He refers to the way His twelve *apostles* did at Jerusalem in the laying on of hands, saying to them: ‘For thus do mine *apostles*’ [Moroni 2:2]. In 1 Cor. xii:28, it says: ‘And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets,’ etc. He did so, placing the twelve apostles first, which he chose at Jerusalem: they are to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, and they are to judge the twelve *disciples* whom Christ chose on this land among the Nephites. Therefore, we see from the written word that there is only **one twelve who are called apostles**, and that they are placed **first**” (David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, 1887, chap. 5, pps. 45-48, <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/address1.htm>).

Whitmer added, “As I have stated, I am called to bear testimony that the Bible, as well as the Book of Mormon, is true: and no one should place the one book ahead of the other; they are one! The Book of Mormon tells us that many plain things have been taken from the Bible, so that the Gentiles *stumble* and *contend* about the true points of Christ’s doctrine. It says that the Book of Mormon has been kept **pure**, and come forth **pure** so as to make plain the doctrine of Christ; that we might know of the true points of his doctrine” (p. 49, chap. 6).

In June, 1829, for example, Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, received the following commandment through *the seer stone* of Joseph Smith, “Behold, I give unto you a commandment, that you **rely upon the things which are written**, for in them are all things written concerning **my** church, **my** gospel, and **my** rock” (Chap. 15, Book of Commandments). The “things that were” *already “written”* include the Book of Mormon, the Bible, and the early 1831 revelations that were part of the Book of Commandments, given through Joseph’s seer stone, many of them to Oliver, Whitmer, and Joseph collectively, up to June, 1829.

Trusting in the Arm of Flesh Whitmer added, “We had all confidence in Brother Joseph [the arm of flesh, rather than God], thinking that as God had given him so great a gift as to translate the Book of Mormon, that everything he would do must be right. That is what I thought about it. You see how we trusted too much in man instead of going to God in humility, and to his written word, to see if we were proceeding rightly. It grieves me much to think that I was not more careful, and did not rely upon the teachings of Christ in the written word. But we were then young in years, and all of us were mere babes in Christ. Brother Joseph and myself were only twenty-five years of age” (David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, 1887, chap. 4, pps. 33-34).

Addressing the need for personal revelation via the Holy Ghost (after receiving the Baptism of water *and* fire), Whitmer stated, “In the Church of Christ at Jerusalem, and upon this land, the members all received the revealed will of God for themselves, through the various gifts of the Holy Ghost; by dreams, visions, the visitation of Angels, the gift of prophecy, through themselves or any brother; and the Holy Ghost that was in them always discerning whether the revelation was of God or not. They had no Prophet Seer and Revelator to go to when they desired to know the will of the Lord concerning them; they went to the Lord themselves; sometimes alone, and sometimes several of them together in fasting and prayer. Of course I believe that God reveals his will to his servants in these last days, just as in days of old, but I believe in it according to the scriptures of divine truth.”

“In the Church upon the Eastern continent, after Christ had ascended to His Father's throne and left the work with his disciples to carry on, they went to God for themselves, each and all of them receiving the will of God by the various gifts of the Holy Ghost. Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Philip and others went here and there preaching, every one receiving revelations from God for themselves, by dreams, visions, the gift of prophecy, etc. They had no head of the Church on earth to go to. Christ told them that the Holy Ghost — the Comforter — that would abide with them and with all his disciples, would guide them and lead them into all truth and show them things to come. If any man lacks wisdom, and desires to know the will of the Lord concerning himself, *let him ask of God* for himself, not ask of the Prophet Seer and Revelator to inquire of the Lord for him” (Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, p. 47).

Cursing or Blessing Imperfect mortal men have agency or choice and can lead us astray. Satan was in a position of high power in heaven and fell. His former name Lucifer means “Light Bearer.” He is now Satan, the father of lies and deception. He desires to corrupt all truth, especially in churches where we should be focusing on God (see D&C 93:39). “Follow the prophet” and “follow the brethren” are well-meaning, but can lead to cursing, according to the Book of Mormon, the founding document of our faith and other scripture (see 2 Ne. 4:34; 28:31; Jer. 2:13; Psalm 118:8). We are to have oil (the spirit of revelation) in our individual lamps, giving us ability to discern truth from error and receive communication from the Lord directly. It is essential for our salvation.

The five unwise virgins did not have this oil. They relied on others for their oil, and then when it was too late they sought oil from others. They were thus shut out of the Lord's presence when he opened the door to the bridal chamber (see JST Matt. 25:10-11). Each of us are to follow “the way” of salvation personally, as presented us by Lehi and Nephi of the Book of Mormon in their Tree of Life visions. Though our leaders are often good men, they are flesh, and are not God (Isa. 31:3). Becoming dependent upon any man takes away our responsibility to get through the gate and onto “*the way*” of salvation individually – and receive the promise of eternal life from our Lord. We do so by, (1) Turning (repenting) to Christ, by having faith in Him (not man). It is the first principle and ordinance of the gospel of Christ; (2) We must be “*baptized unto repentance*” by water; (3) We must be “*born again*,” receiving the baptism of fire and Holy Ghost (where we get the Holy Ghost); And then (4) We must hold tightly to the rod of iron – which is personal revelation from God (and the Holy Ghost), *in connection with His written word* in scripture - that we might continue on the way, until we finally (5) partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life personally - the great *glory, presence, and rest* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is no other way to salvation and exaltation (Mos. 3:17; 7:19; 16:13, 15). Christ “employs no servant [man] there” at the gate (2 Ne. 9:41). He alone is the Gate, the Door, the “fountain of livings waters” (Jer. 2:13), and the “light and life of the world” (3 Ne. 11:11). There is no other way (2 Ne. 25:20; 31:21; Mos. 4:8; 5:8; Alma 21:9; 38:9).

The founding document of the church is the Book of Mormon, and in it we are repeatedly taught that to rely on the arm of flesh is to invite curses (see 2 Ne. 4:34; 28:31; Jer. 2:13; Psalm 118:8). Throughout history, including our own, we see men depending upon other men for their salvation, which brings only trouble, rather than the blessings of eternal life. Let us be “wise virgins” instead and come to know the Lord individually (JST Matt. 25:10-11).

We must get the Holy Ghost to help us discern truth from error. We support and uphold those that serve us, while always testing what they say against the Spirit and God's written word. Most importantly, we are to heed Christ's invitation throughout 3rd Nephi, which is to “repent and come unto me,” rather than relying on leaders like Joseph, Brigham, or Paul, or any man for our salvation. Only those with “*the testimony of Jesus*” will be saved and exalted in the Celestial Kingdom. Those following “*crafty*” men are often *deceived* and receive lesser glory (see D&C 76:75 and 99-102).

Who is David Whitmer? David Whitmer's final testimony, given in 1887 provides insights available nowhere else. It has been cited in this paper, not because he left the church in 1838, but because he knew Joseph Smith well and had a strong testimony of the restored gospel through the Book of Mormon. God chose him to be one of the Three [special] Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, along with Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdery. These three men saw the gold plates and the angel who showed the book to them on June 28, 1829 (8 more witnesses saw the plates, but not the angel, later on). Two Book of Mormon scriptures prophetically address these men from a future perspective (2 Ne. 27:12-13 & Ether 5:2-5).

Second, like Joseph Smith, David Whitmer held important leadership positions, including Stake President, Assistant President of the Church, President of the High Council in Zion, and President of the Church in Zion (Missouri). For a time, he was second in command of the new church. Hyrum Andrus (former Dean of the BYU Religion Dept., and Assistant Church Historian), stated, “Joseph Smith ordained David Whitmer to be the President of the church in Missouri *and his own successor* should Smith ‘not live to God.’ This was on July 7 of 1834.

Andrus added, “By virtue of his position as President of the High Council in Zion, David Whitmer was sustained as ‘the president of the church in Zion,’ not merely as a Stake President. Since the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Quorum of the Seventy had not yet been organized, this meant that there was a short period of time—from July 3, 1834, until February 14, 1835—when the High Council in Zion stood in an administrative position next to the First Presidency. It also meant that from July 3, 1834, until December 5, 1834, at which time Oliver Cowdery was made the Associate President of the Church, David Whitmer, as President of the High Council in Zion, was the Prophet's rightful successor” (see Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrines of the Kingdom*, Bookcraft, 1973, p. 195).

Joseph, Oliver, and David were all baptized in the same month they were shown the gold plates (June, 1829), receiving their fiery baptism and the Holy Ghost as their guides immediately. No official organized “church” had been put in place prior to that time (see D&C 10:67). It came a year later on April 6 of 1830, when Whitmer was baptized a second time, along with Joseph and Oliver, as part of being officially recognized as a church - *according to the laws of men* - in New York State. Whitmer was the third person baptized into the new “official” church, now set up according to men’s laws in New York. It was organized to provide legitimacy among men, as the early proselyting “Elders” were accused of having “no right to officiate in the ordinance of marriage, hold church property, etc.,” at that time in New York State.

I do not agree with all of Whitmer's words, but I do include some of them here to provide greater insights into this topic. For Whitmer’s complete, revealing testimony about these and other topics of historical note, see David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, 1887, <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/address1.htm>

¹⁰ ***Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing*** The Lord spoke to hypocritical Pharisees in His day as those who outwardly kept the law, those who spoke eloquently of God, but had hearts far from him. This sentiment was addressed to Joseph Smith in the First Vision as well, “those who teach for doctrines the commandments of men” instead of His. Such are like wolves among the sheep that seek to control them for the sake of **gain** (see 1 Nephi 22:23). The Master said to them:

“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Matt. 23:13).

“Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge, *the fullness of the scriptures*; ye enter not in yourselves *into the kingdom*; and *those who* were entering in, ye hindered” (JST Luke 11:53).

“Hear the word of Jehovah, *you who are vigilant for his word*; your **brethren** who *abhor you, and exclude you because of my name*, say, Let Jehovah manifest his glory, that we may see cause for your joy! But it is they who shall suffer shame” (Isa. 66:5).

Gileadi provides commentary on this third verse, stating, “Jehovah’s servants – “who are of a humble and contrite spirit and who are vigilant for **my word**” (v. 2) – *come under censure by ecclesiastical authorities who feel threatened by their zeal for Jehovah. Such self-righteous “brethren” “abhor” or “hate” their zealous counterparts and “exclude” or “thrust” [them] out” from among them*, humiliating them [see also Mormon 8:28]. In the end, however – after it has served Jehovah’s purpose of refining his servants and *testing their loyalties* – their momentary shame (Isa. 61:7) turns into their persecutors’ everlasting shame (Isa. 41:11; 65:15). The descent phase of those who are *ostracized by abusive authorities* thus resembles that of Jehovah’s servant, who they similarly “abhor” and accuse (Isa. 49:7; 50:8-9). Both, moreover, follow the pattern of Jehovah himself, who descent phase includes *prosecution by unrighteous authorities* (Isa. 53:7-9; see Avraham Gileadi, *Apocalyptic Commentary of the Book of Isaiah*, Hebraeus Press, pps. 422-23).

Modern Idolatry Christ said “**come follow me**” (Matt. 4:19). Many today say “follow me,” “follow the Prophet,” and “we will not and cannot lead you astray.” Mortal man is the weak “arm of flesh.” Many scriptures inform us that we are cursed when we trust in “the arm of flesh” (2 Ne. 4:34; 28:31; Jer. 2:13; Psalm 118:8). Nephi’s vision experience in 1 Nephi 8 reveals this in a subtle way. In it, Nephi is invited to follow a “**man**” *dressed in white*. He said he “bade me *follow him*.” It led to darkness, rather than God’s light. “...for behold, methought I saw in my dream, *a dark and dreary wilderness*. And it came to pass that I saw a **man**, and he was *dressed in a white robe*; and he came and stood before me. And it came to pass that he spake unto me, and *bade me follow him*. And it came to pass that as *I followed him* I beheld myself that *I was in a dark and dreary waste*. And after *I had traveled for the space of many hours in darkness*, **I began to pray unto the Lord that he would have mercy on me**, according to the multitude of his tender mercies. And it came to pass **after I had prayed unto the Lord I beheld a large and spacious field. And it came to pass that I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy**” (1 Ne. 8:4-10). For more on our modern idolatry, see *Idolatry: Our #1 Sin*.

Secret Combinations Take Power Prior to Destruction Just before the destruction occurred in 3 Nephi 8-10, followed by the Lord’s appearance, we read of the power of secret combinations among the once righteous Nephites. In only six years they descended into darkness after a period of light and success in Christ’s church. This church began to be “*broken up*” because of pride, riches, and learning. Class distinctions became widespread with, “have’s” and “have not’s.” Only a few in it stood firm and steadfast, as they *were fully converted* unto **the true faith** (3 Ne. 6:14). They were *the Lamanites*. The cause of the breakup was Satan’s great power to stir the people up into greater *pride*. They had sought for *power, authority, and riches* - “*the vain things of the world*” (v. 15, 1 Ne. 22:23). The fully converted Lamanites were tempted less by these worldly things. Those in power used the *secrecy* of ancient blood oaths to hold power, get more of it, and practice all manner of wickedness (see Moses 5). They turned things *upside-down* (2 Ne. 27:27). The wicked sought for the six things listed by our Lord in 1 Nephi 22:23, all for “**gain**” (praise of men, money, control, etc.) They thus became part of “*the great and abominable church*.” It is the whore of all the Earth, led by Satan.

Verse 20 of 3 Nephi 6 tells us that God sent “*men inspired from heaven*” to preach and testify boldly of Christ and the sins and iniquities of the people, especially to those leading the people. One of these prophets was the brother of Nephi who was stoned by those then in power, *the chief judges, lawyers, and the high priests* (v. 21). He was later raised from the dead by Nephi, now thought to be one of the three translated disciples (Timothy, along with Nephi and Isaiah). The wicked leaders were angry with these prophets sent to call them to repentance. With their oaths they had the prophets and others murdered *secretly* (v. 23). Those in power also “had many friends.” This group made up “*almost all the lawyers and the high priests.*” They did gather together with the *judges* “and made that covenant which was given of old . . . administered by the devil” (Moses 5:18-57), “to combine against all righteousness . . . against the people of the Lord, and *did enter into a covenant to destroy them*” and deliver the wicked from justice (verses 27-29). The *liberty* of their land was thus destroyed. The survival of the righteous was then at stake. God intervened via the natural destructions upon the land.

We are very close to this same “*awful situation*” spoken of by the Book of Mormon prophets – where secret combinations rule the land, threatening believing Christians. Our decline is further characterized by continuing moral perversions, evident in increasing abortions, and more gay, lesbian, and transgender laws forced upon us by those leading a corrupt government. Even churches are embracing these things.

The ten-step decline found on the next page may have connection with the ten plagues or “wos” Moses pronounced upon the Egyptians. In addition to the great evil of our *judges, lawyers, and high priests*, the general membership of the Saints today remain under the condemnation of D&C 84. There we read that it is because of our *vanity and unbelief*, our taking lightly the Book of Mormon message - to *repent and come unto Christ*. It is a rejection of “*the fulness*” – the Lord’s invitation to enter His “*rest*” – “*the fulness of His glory*” (see D&C 84:24, 23-62). The ten plagues may return upon us in this land. Our only hope is to “turn” to Christ and “repent.”

In 3rd Nephi Christ said that “*what has been shall be*” in reference to the prophecies of Isaiah (3 Ne. 23:1-3; Eccl. 1:9-11). The events of Isaiah, Revelation, and Daniel will occur again in our day. The Bible reveals the humbling scourge upon the ancient covenant people for their sins - by the Assyrians, then the Babylonians, and finally the Egyptians.

Moroni, holding the keys of the Book of Mormon (D&C 27:5), placed revealing patterns in it for our use today. There we see three sets of ten “wo’s” pronounced upon the ungodly by those with the sealing power in the Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 9 & 28, and Helaman chapters 7-15). The number 10 symbolizes *completeness* in scripture, or a “fulness.” Here it is a fulness of wickedness. Moses pronounced *ten plagues* upon ancient Egypt using his sealing power (Ex. 7-14). We read in verses 35-62 of the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood of a “scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion” if they don’t **repent** (verse 59) This pattern is found in the *ten signs* the Lord lists as a curse for rejecting **Him** (the “fulness”) in the Bible story of Moses and people at the base of Sinai (D&C 84:19-27 & JST Ex. 34:1-2), along with those of the Book of Mormon in 3 Nephi 16:10. They, Isaiah, and other scriptures provide evidence of being fully “ripe,” with invasion, captivity, and destruction eminent in step #10 hereafter. We are very near step 10.

1. The People Wax Strong in Pride	Helaman 11:37
2. The Voice of the People Choose Evil (immorality)	Mosiah 29:27
3. The People Corrupt the Laws of Jesus Christ	Helaman 5:2
4. The People Cast Out the Righteous	Helaman 13:13-14
5. Murder, Fornication & Wickedness are pervasive	Helaman 8:26
6. Judges Murder the Inspired Men of Jesus Christ	3 Nephi 6:21,23
7. The Wicked Seek to Establish their King of Lies	3 Nephi 6:30
8. The Wicked Enter A Covenant with the Devil	3 Nephi 6:28
9. Secret Combinations Manage the Government	Helaman 6:38-40
10. The Government is Destroyed	3 Nephi 7:6

The first of the ten “woe’s” pronounced upon those to whom “the law” and “the commandments” have been given in 2 Nephi 9, may be likened” unto us. **Wo** unto them that (1) “*transgresseth them [the laws and commandments] and that wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state!*” (verse 27). The next verse addresses man’s *vainness, frailties and foolishness* along with his *pride and learning*. The remaining nine “wos” are directed towards; (2) the *rich*, (3) the *deaf*, (4) the *blind*, (5) the *uncircumcised of heart*, (6) the *liar*, (7) the *murderer* (8) they who commit *whoredoms*, (9) those who worship *idols* (all things or people substituted for God), and (10) those who don’t repent - “*all those who die in their sins.*” for they shall *stand* in Christ’s presence at the resurrection “*and behold his face, and remain in their sins*” (verse 38). The only hope is found in verse 41. He is Christ, “the keeper of the gate,” “the Holy One of Israel,” the only “way” to salvation!

Light Upon the Darkness A similar discussion of secret combinations is addressed in Alma 37:21-33, 3 Ne. 6:10-30, and Mormon 8:27-41. Of special note is God’s promise that in the last-days when secret combinations return, “when the wrath of God is poured out upon the mother of harlots, which is the great and abominable church . . . at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel” (1 Ne. 14:17). Nephi then addresses John the Revelator, who wrote of our day. His words

are “sealed up to come forth in their purity . . . in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel” (v. 26). The words of John the Baptist will also come to the righteous (see D&C 93).

Note Alma 37:23. There one with the special name-title *Gazelem* will use a stone to reveal the secret acts of darkness among us today, those among our “brethren” who have turned to the dark side and secret combinations. They will be revealed unto the Lord’s servants. See also Ether 1:1-4.

¹¹ **Professional Preaching & the Spirit** Though we often claim to have an unpaid ministry in the LDS Church, this claim applies only to regular members with callings, Bishops, Stake Presidents, and a few others. Our top leaders (General Authorities) are paid for their preaching, teaching and other service via tithing of the Saints. This includes the First Presidency, the Twelve, and the Seventy. It also includes most Mission Presidents who are also “taken care of” via these same funds (see <http://puremormonism.blogspot.com/2014/02/bare-necessities-how-to-calculate-what.html>). Up until 1995, General Authorities were paid to sit on the boards of various church-owned for-profit businesses in addition to their church duties. This no longer occurs. In addition, paying tithing is now required to enter the temple, a requirement not present in Joseph Smith’s day. It is also applied differently today than in the early days of the Church (see the two requirements of D&C 119, “a standing law forever” according to the Lord).

Most Saints are unaware that of the estimated seven billion dollars paid in tithing each year by faithful members to the LDS Church, only 3/4 of 1 percent of it goes to humanitarian aid. According to Smith, “approximately 29% of tithing goes to CES, 21% in ecclesiastic and administrative salaries, 14% to temple construction and operation, 11% to chapel construction and maintenance, 0.76% to humanitarian aid.” See Robert Smith, *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, pps. 72-121 (in the chapter entitled “No Poor Among Them”). Free PDF download at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6t-rQr3iLAsekRiMW05QUVvR1U/view?pref=2&pli=1>

Scripture tells us that God’s **grace** and **Spirit** are poured out upon priests and others who *sacrifice* in their service. King Benjamin and Alma the *High Priest* over the Church are two good examples. They did not depend upon the people for their support and spoke out against priests living off of the Church. With God’s grace, these men and we today can “*wax strong in the Spirit, having the knowledge of God, that they might teach with power and authority from God*” (Mosiah 18:26; see also Alma 30:32-35). God’s word in scripture provides significant enlightenment on non-payment for preaching. See 2 Nephi 26:20, 25, 27, 29-31; Jacob 2:13-19; Mosiah 2:14, 18:24-26, 27:5; Alma 1: 3, 30:32; Hel. 13:28-29; Mormon 8:32-33, 36-41; D&C 38:25-27; 42:29-31; 52:40; 70:14; 83:6; 84:78-86, 103; 105:1-5; Jeremiah 7:6, all of chapter 23; Ezekiel 22:25-29; all of chapter 34; Amos 6:1-6; and Micah 3:1-12. Especially insightful is Mosiah 18:26.

Salaries The LDS church was **incorporated** in 1923 during the Administration of Heber J. Grant and his counselors (see <http://mormondisclosures.blogspot.com/2012/09/boogie-on-down-corporation-with-sole.html>). Today the LDS church has many salaried employees, including General Authorities. The for-profit businesses owned by the LDS Church today include Deseret Management Corporation, Beneficial Financial Group, Bonneville International, Bonneville Communications, Bonneville Interactive Services, Bonneville Satellite, 35 different radio stations, KSL Television Station, Deseret Book, Excel Entertainment, Deseret Morning News, Hawaii Reserves, Polynesian Cultural Center, La’ie Shopping Center, La’ie Water Company, La’ie Treatment Works, Temple Square Hospitality and Temple Square restaurants, Zions Securities Corporation, Ensign Peak Advisors, Farm Management Corporation, Deseret Land and Livestock, Sun Ranch, Deseret Ranches of Florida, Deseret Farms of California, West Hills Orchards, Cactus Lane Ranch, Deseret Trust Company, LDS Family Services, Property Reserves Inc., and Deseret Mutual Benefit Administrators (DMBA).

Tithing In Mosiah 11 we read about King Noah and his oppressive tax of 20%: “And he laid a tax of *one fifth part* [20%] of **all** they possessed, a fifth part of their gold and of their silver, and a fifth part of their ziff, and of their copper, and of their brass and their iron; and a fifth part of their fatlings; and also a fifth part of all their grain” (Mos. 11:3). Compare this to what Brigham Young did one month after the Smith’s were murdered. He changed the law of tithing from 10% of one’s surplus (D&C 119:3-4, 1838) to “a tenth of all their property and money...and then let them continue to pay a tenth of their income from that time forth.” The Twelve didn’t pretend this was a revelation, only that there was greater need (Young, Kimball, Taylor and Woodruff had mansions in Nauvoo). After tithing was raised for the Saints (many who were poor), it then fell dramatically. Punishments were then put in place to counter this. Sadly, there was no exemption for Mormons who had already paid one-tenth of all their property upon entering the new church. The taxing of the Saints resembled the 20% of King Noah. By January of 1845, the Twelve reemphasized “the duty of all saints to tithe “themselves one-tenth of *all they possess* when they enter into the new and everlasting covenant: *and then one-tenth of their interest, or income, yearly afterwards.*” Two weeks later, the Twelve voted to exempt themselves from paying it (the two general bishops Newel K. Whitney and George Miller, and the Nauvoo Temple Committee were also exempt). This was due “to their *services* to the church.” See <http://lds-church-history.blogspot.com/2010/12/lds-history-summary.html> <http://puremormonism.blogspot.com/2012/12/are-we-paying-too-much-tithing.html>

Salaries Though Bishops and Stake Presidents are not paid for their service, LDS church General Authorities are. They receive a yearly salary with benefits, including cars, living expenses in some cases, and paid travel, etc. They do not pay tithing. Some estimate salaries for General Authorities to be \$70-100,000 for the members of the Seventy, \$200,000 +

for the Twelve, and \$400,000 + for the First Presidency. Pres. Hinckley referred to these salaries as a “*living allowance*.” He stated, “I should like to add, parenthetically for your information, that the *living allowances* given the General Authorities, which are very modest in comparison with *executive compensation* in industry and the professions, come from this business income [see for profit businesses list, p. 6] and not from the tithing of the people” (Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Pres., Questions and Answers, October 1985 General Conference, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1985/10/questions-and-answers?lang=eng>)

Light Upon the Darkness Secret combinations are established to “*get gain*” (1 Ne. 22:23). In opposition to it, is God’s definition for His doctrine, gospel, and church – “repent and come unto me” (D&C 10:67-68). Secret combinations in our day are addressed in the Book of Mormon, including Alma 37:21-33, 3 Ne. 6:10-30, and Mormon 8:27-41. God promised that in the last-days, when secret combinations return, the wrath of God will “be poured out upon the mother of harlots, which is the great and abominable church . . . at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel” (1 Ne. 14:17). Nephi then addressed John the Revelator, who wrote of our day. His words are “sealed up to come forth in their purity . . . in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel” (v. 26). The words of John the Baptist will also come to the righteous (see D&C 93). Note Alma 37:23. There, one with the special name-title *Gazelem* will rise up in our day. He will use a stone to reveal the secret acts of darkness among us, those among our “brethren.” They will be revealed unto the Lord’s “*servants*.” See also Ether 1:1-4. Scripture encourages us to “*awake and arise*,” as the Bridegroom is coming (D&C 133:10)!

¹² ***Brigham Takes Power*** Brigham Young (President of the Twelve) took control quickly and in surprisingly *crafty* ways following the murder of the three Smith brothers in Nauvoo in 1844. Pres. Young and most of the Twelve were Freemasons. Masonry is often called “*the craft*.” Note how this word is used by the Lord in D&C 76:75, 106:6, and 123:12. The murder of the three Smith brothers (a leadership bloodline) created a “succession of power” crisis that ended up in causing a scattering of the Saints in seven different directions. The Largest group followed Brigham Young westward, made up of mostly new, less seasoned converts from Europe. Scripture clearly states that if the Saints did as the Lord directed, they would **not** be moved out of their place (see D&C 124:45). There is also the *condemnation* apparent in D&C 84:49-59 and 3 Nephi 16:10 (“whoredoms,” see Jacob 2:23-30). As President of the Twelve, Young succeeded in cleverly taking power prior to the departure of many of the Saints to the Salt Lake Valley. With it, polygamy could remain intact. Young later become church President as a result of three things.

(1) Though not directly involved in the murders of the three Smith Brothers, Young had the most to gain from them. He and Heber C. Kimball were conveniently away from Nauvoo at the time of the murders, their own histories claiming they were campaigning for Joseph Smith as President of the United States of America. No record is available of the city they claimed to campaign in. Willard Richards and John Taylor were with Joseph and Hyrum in the Carthage jail. Why? With the murder of the three Smith brothers, the Smith family bloodline (the patriarchal order) was no longer leading the church. Joseph and Hyrum were co-Presidents, Joseph as the *Prophet*, and Hyrum as the *Patriarch* over the church. Both held the *sealing* power, and both were said to be “prophets, seers, and revelators” by the Lord (see D&C 107:94 & 125). The Twelve were not given the *sealing power*, nor the gifts of being a “*prophet, seer, or revelator*.” They were to be *continually traveling missionaries, sent out as special witnesses* of the Lord name, in *proclaiming His gospel*, like the Apostle Paul. They were to *baptize* others and lay their hands upon them thereafter, inviting them with power to receive the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost by the Lord Himself (see 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; JST Mat. 3:38; JST John 1:28; D&C 33:15).

Others in the Smith family were either too young at the time to challenge Brigham Young (Joseph Smith III and David, children of Emma and Joseph), or too unstable (Apostle and brother William Smith) to pose any real threat to him. Samuel, one of the better candidates was murdered by poisoning.

(2) Young cleverly modified church governance parameters set up by God in **D&C 107** (for maintaining equal authority among four quorums), by moving all power into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, of which he was President.

(3) Young also eliminated three the remaining threats to his power:

(A) he released the senior leader of the Quorum of the Anointed or Holy Order

(B) he released the senior leader of the Council of Fifty

(C) and he overcame potential rival “strong men” to lead the church, primarily Sidney Rigdon. Others who could have led did not challenge him. They included Lyman Wight and William Marks (Nauvoo Stake President).

Ignoring God’s Will in D&C 107 God set up a balance of power between four equal priesthood groups to avoid a single individual or group taking all power – as Brigham Young did, going against the 1835 revelation to Joseph on Priesthood (D&C 107:33-38). God set up four equal groups to lead the church; (A) the First Presidency; (B) the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; (C) the Seventies Quorum; and (D) the Nauvoo Stake High Council (representing all the Stake High Councils of the church). Together, with the influence of the Holy Spirit, this division of power was to be a check against abuses of power. With the Smith brothers gone (the First Presidency), Young eliminated the “*equal authority*” parameters of the two remaining quorums. He did so by moving some 2,500 priesthood brethren under the direction of the other

quorums - into the jurisdiction of the Twelve, of which he was President. He usurped power in a *mass-ordination* that went against God's law in D&C 107.

The Clever Plan Young first negated the equal power of the Nauvoo Stake High Council and its leader William Marks (who was anti-polygamy and anti-Young) in three bold moves. He did this by taking away membership from the Stakes he oversaw, placing them in new Seventies Quorums he set up, quorums that were *under the leadership of the Twelve!* Young started by ordaining 63 subordinate members of the First Quorum of Seventy as presidents of nine *local* quorums of Seventy on Sept. 29 of 1844. This vacated the Seventy's first quorum, which the Lord in D&C 107:26 said, was "*equal in authority*" with the *Quorum of the Twelve*. Days later at the October 7 conference, Young *released* William Marks as Stake President of the Nauvoo Stake. Young had earlier tried to excommunicate Nauvoo Stake President William Marks, accusing him of Apostasy, but the Stake High Council would not do it (Nov. 30, 1844). Without men to lead, Marks was then powerless.

The next day, Young ordained 400 more men to the office of Seventy on that single day! This mass ordination included all former deacons, teachers, priests, and every elder under the age of thirty-five. This new large Seventies quorum now accounted for 80% of all males in Nauvoo – or some 35 quorums of Seventy. Young had succeeded in removing them from the jurisdiction of the Stake High Council (which had authority over elders). The new Seventies then fell under the jurisdiction of the Quorum of the Twelve, which resulted in a net transfer of 2,500 males away from the Nauvoo High Council to the Quorum of the Twelve, led by President of the Twelve Brigham Young.

Young next removed 85 High Priests from the jurisdiction of the Nauvoo High Council by sending them abroad to preside over various branches of the church. There is no revelation in the D&C giving the Twelve jurisdiction over High Priests, however. Appointed now as Branch Presidents in *the mission-field*, these High Priests then fell under the leadership of the Quorum of the Twelve, no matter where they were physically.

Three months later, Young then called another 50 High Priests as missionaries, also outside the jurisdiction of the Nauvoo High Council.

Neutralizing Other Remaining Threats With the Nauvoo High Council now disarmed, Young then *released* the senior leaders of two important groups that might challenge him. They were the Quorum of the Anointed (or Holy Order), and the Council of 50. Men leading both groups did so via seniority (age). Though Brigham Young was 24th in Seniority in the Council of 50, he was then President of the Twelve. Lyman Wight (#2 in Seniority in the Council of 50, a loyal friend to Joseph Smith and an outspoken critic of Brigham) did not challenge Young for church leadership. Young moved quickly, secretly admitting 21 new people to what was called the Holy Order (or Quorum of the Anointed). Twelve of them were female *polygamous wives* (now 57% of the Order). According to Quinn, "This was the beginning of Young's effort to make polygamy an institution," something that would occur later in Utah. There he made polygamy a requirement for exaltation (see Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, Signature Books, p. 176). Two months later he removed from the Council of 50 those he knew opposed him. They included William Marks, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, James Emmett, Samuel James, George J. Adams, and Lorenzo E. Wasson (Emma Smith's nephew). He also dropped every non-Mormon from the Council of 50.

Rival Strong Men Young also overcame other "strong men" who were potential rivals to his leadership over the Church. They included Sidney Rigdon (a former member of the First Presidency), Lyman Wight (first High Priest in the Church as chosen by God at the Morley Farm and the one who ordained Joseph Smith as a High Priest there), and William Marks, Nauvoo Stake President. Young and Rigdon spoke before the Saints to demonstrate why they should lead the Saints. Years later false stories placed in our history, supposedly showing that Young was transformed before the people, looking and sounding like Joseph Smith. These have proven to be inserted fabrications into early church history, providing evidence that Young should lead the Saints. See the revealing research of Historian Richard Van Wagoner at <http://www.mormonthink.com/glossary/transfiguration.htm>

Though not directly involved, Young's rise to power was aided by the murders of the Smith brothers. Others in the Smith family *at the time* were either too young (Joseph Smith III and David Smith, sons of Joseph and Emma) or too unstable to be a threat to him (such as Apostle William Smith, who was originally part of "the secret chamber" under Pres. Young's direction). The Levitical and Patriarchal orders of priesthood are based on bloodline (father to son). Pres. Young took advantage of the loss of the co-Presidency of the *Prophet* (Joseph Smith) and the *Patriarch* (Hyrum Smith) thereafter (see D&C 124:15, 91-96). In our day, the Twelve eliminated this threat entirely by phasing out the office of the church Patriarch in 1979, further cementing their power. Joseph Smith III eventually came to lead the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The blood of the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum remains in some today.

Emma Smith was outspoken against Brigham Young from the very beginning. She did not want him to become the next leader over the Church. Prior to Young's speech before the people to lay claim to leadership, Apostle Heber C. Kimball (friend and relative to Brigham, and eventual first counselor in the First Presidency in Utah) paid Emma Smith \$1,000.00 in cash. According to historian D. Michael Quinn, "This was a transparent effort to buy Emma's support of the claim Young would present to the conference" – a claim to lead the Church (Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, Signature Books, p. 164). Later when many of the Saints left for the Rocky Mountains, Young asked Emma for the coveted inspired re-translation of the

Bible. She would not give it to him. The Community of Christ today maintains copyright to this very important work, mostly completed in 1834. Some 16 pages of it are found at the back of the LDS version of the Bible.

For a more complete overview of how Brigham Young came to power, obtained wealth, and married 55 wives, see *King Brigham*, and *A Sent One: The Apostolic Charge*. I also recommend, *The Apostolic Coup d'état: How The Twelve Apostles, In a Breathtaking Power Grab, Assumed Absolute and Complete Control of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

Part I: <http://puremormonism.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2017-10-22T14:52:00-07:00&max-results=1>

Part II: <http://puremormonism.blogspot.com/2017/10/brigham-youngs-hostile-takeover.html>

See also http://www.originalbookofmormonrestored.com/1844_Apostasy.html

Making His 3 Sons Apostles Pres. Young had unquestioned authority in Utah. It became problematic in the endowing and ordination of his 11-year old son John Willard Young privately to the Apostleship in 1855, and the adding of two other sons as Apostles and counselors in the First Presidency in 1864. Few are aware of these secret ordinations. He eventually told other leaders about them in the year his two other sons were made counselors to him. Pres. Young asked leaders not to reveal these actions to the general membership (it was not made public until 18 years later). Sadly, John Willard Young exhibited notable vices as an adult in New York City and San Francisco where he lived, with no desire to associate with the church. He was never removed as an Apostle, however.

The ordination of Brigham Young's three sons to the Apostleship was met with surprise and timid acceptance in 1864. According to Brad Hart, Apostle Wilford Woodruff recorded in his diary, "President Young said I am going to tell you something that I have never before mentioned to any other person. I have ordained my sons Joseph A., Brigham & John W. Apostles and my Counselors [in the First Presidency]. Have you any objections? J. Taylor & G.A. Smith said they had not, that it was his own affair & they considered it under his own direction" (The Journal of Wilford Woodruff (1858-78), cited in Todd Compton's John Willard Young, Brigham Young, and the Development of Presidential Succession in the LDS Church. Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, vol. 35 (4) pps. 111-134).

Hart added, "And though some church leaders were aware of the ordination of Brigham Young's children as Apostles, the general membership of the church was kept in the dark. President Young had instructed members of the Quorum of the Twelve to "make a record of it, but...not tell anyone not present about the event" (Compton, John Willard Young, Pp. 120). It wasn't until April of 1873, nearly eighteen years after being ordained by his father, that John Willard, along with his brothers, were publicly sustained as "Prophets, Seers and Revelators" and as Assistant Counselors in General Conference (Brigham, Jr. had been sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve in the October General Conference of 1868, see Compton, John Willard Young, pps. 120-21). See the doctoral (Ph.D) dissertation of Charles W. Watson, entitled John Willard Young and the 1887 Movement for Utah Statehood, Ph.D. Dissertation, Brigham Young University, Dept. of History, 1984 (WorldCat database, Denver Public Library), pps. 32-34. See Brad Hart's blog on this subject at <http://hartbrad.blogspot.com/2015/09/child-prophet-curious-case-of-john.html>

Administrators versus Traveling Missionaries Historian Scott Faulring has shown how Joseph Smith's journal was changed regarding seating for the Twelve at the Kirtland Chapel dedication on March 27 of 1836. Joseph desired that various administrators over the church be seated in the west pulpit-altars of the Kirtland Chapel. To their left was the High Council and to the right the Twelve. Brigham didn't like this. Joseph's words were crossed out and a new seating arrangement for the Twelve was substituted, one in which the Twelve were given the top row of seating at the right, with placement of others below them. The new added words "highest seats" and "below" suggest a new, elitist viewpoint, one raising up the Twelve as administrators rather than missionaries. This has become the *modern legacy* of Brigham Young's rise to power. The Twelve Apostles today retain this power as administrators, power that Brigham Young brought to this quorum as part of going against God's wishes in D&C 107. God's word in scripture reveals that the Twelve were to be **traveling missionaries**, like Paul the Apostle of New Testament, bearing strong testimony of the reality of Christ's existence and His mission as our redeemer. The "Apostolic Charge" of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery was that the Apostles were to see Him and feel and see the marks of the atonement in His body, that they might bear this "special" witness of His reality to the world as an Apostle or "sent one" of the Lord. Each Apostle or sent one was to be called, and also chosen, empowered, and sent by the Lord Himself, and thus become a fruitful servant or branch of the Tree of Life (Christ the Lord).

In D&C 121:34-46, God said that too many are not "chosen" by Him because their hearts are set on the things of the world, and because they aspire to the honors of men. "Gain" (1 Ne. 22:23) dominates administrative roles today in overseeing the extensive business interests of the church. As we have seen, leaders in their own words now downplay the need for the Apostolic Charge, claiming that the Holy Ghost is a sufficient witness of Christ today.

For more on Brigham Young's rise to power and his influence over the church, especially with regard to polygamy, see *Idolatry: Our #1 Sin*, and *Just One Wife*, www.7witnesses.com

Related Resources / *Removing Idolatry* – www.7witnesses.com

Idolatry: Our #1 Sin
Removing the Lectures on Faith
Just One Wife
Serious About the Sabbath
Repent and Come Unto Me
Joseph Smith's Last Three Dreams
A Latter-day Gazelem
The Way, the Rod, and the Tree
Fruit Meet for the Father's Kingdom

Receiving Revelation
Pentecost Endowment of the Holy Spirit
Endowment of Power from on High
Know the Lord and Seek His Face
Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit
The Whole Armor of God
Be Wary of Man and His Words
We are the Temple