

Joseph's "Last Charge" at Nauvoo

Val Brinkerhoff - 11/30/2019 - 10 pages with 3 pages of end notes

In 2018 I published a book on polygamy, Joseph Smith, and what I believed really happened in Nauvoo. It is entitled *The Secret Chamber: Spiritual Wifery and the Doctrine of Christ* (Amazon.com). What separates this book from others on the subject was my desire to put the focus on what God had to say about the topic in each of the book's eight chapters, as men typically have agendas that don't always reflect truth. The night before I turned in the manuscript for publishing, I prayed to know if there were other things to change, highlight, or add to the book. I was encouraged to read the whole book of Acts, not knowing why. When I got to the 18th chapter of Acts, I realized why the LORD had me read Paul's teachings there. In verse 6 of chapter 18 of Acts, Paul the Apostle **shook his garments free of the blood and sin** of those he had just taught. Paul had taught *correct doctrine*, but it was rejected. Paul's teaching focused upon Christ the LORD – that He had come to save the people from their sins. The rejection of the LORD and His salvation by unbelieving Jews also included a threat by them to kill Paul. Under inspiration from God, Paul then did something very unique. We read in Acts 18:

“And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and **testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ**. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, **he shook his raiment**, and said unto them, **Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean**; *from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles*. And he departed thence . . .” (Acts 18:5-7).

Prior to this event, Paul “**shook off**” the **dust** from his feet against *unbelieving* Jews at Antioch (Acts 13:50-51). This earlier rite in chapter 13 was tied to *judgment* and *cursing*, whereas Paul's **shaking of his garments free of the blood and sin of those whom he had taught** in chapter 18 - was a *warning* and a *sign*. It gave unbelievers there time to **change**, if they accepted **responsibility** for their sins and turned to the LORD in humility and repentance.

Paul's shaking of his “raiment” was a **transfer of responsibility** upon those who rejected his teaching. It was focused upon salvation in Christ the LORD. He willingly gave His blood for the repentant. The Book of Mormon features similar stories of other teachers shaking their garments free of the blood and sins of those they taught. The Prophet Jacob was one of them. His people had been taught correct doctrine and yet they were beginning to embrace the ways of King David and Solomon, multiplying wives to themselves. Jacob was calling them to repentance. Joseph Smith was doing the same thing at Nauvoo when he too shook his garments free of the sins of his people in early church history. He did so at a special, private meeting of **leaders** just before he was murdered. It was a transfer of responsibility off of his shoulders and onto to those who were also practicing this abomination secretly in Nauvoo. Joseph and his two brothers (Hyrum and Samuel) were murdered that this practice might continue.

Prior to writing the *Secret Chamber* book, I had read a letter from Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs. He was at this private meeting in Nauvoo. Johnson's long, *unedited* letter reveals two things edited out of most modern accounts of this important meeting. First, Johnson reveals that the meeting was a special meeting of the *Council of Fifty* in Nauvoo in the spring of 1844, **not** a meeting for the Twelve alone. And secondly, Johnson's *unedited* letter reports that Joseph Smith, like Paul the Apostle and Jacob in the Book of Mormon, shook his outer garment free of the blood and sins of those he had taught correct doctrine to. This rite was directed to the leaders of the people at Nauvoo, including those in Twelve who were at the meeting. Some of them were secretly practicing “*spiritual wifery*”, just like Jacob's people in the Book of Mormon. Joseph was removing this abominable sin from him.

Numerous patterns in scripture reveal that Joseph, like Paul, Jacob, and others was transferring **responsibility** for sin upon those whom he had taught. And in the case of both Jacob and Joseph, their shaking of garments was tied to the sin of *multiplying wives* to one man, like David and Solomon of old. Early on at Nauvoo, this same *abomination* was first called “*spiritual wifery*”. It latter became “*Celestial Marriage*” under Brigham Young, or “*polygamy*” to outsiders. “*Spiritual Wifery*” is a term that reveals a mixture of *new religious teaching* offered up to **justify sexual sin**. Throughout history, those who lead others in religious settings have too often used this *abominable* mix to justify their sinful actions. They then lead the people into similar practices. Joseph fought against it and was taken out (along with his two brothers) that others might continue the practice and take over the church.

The patterns presented us hereafter in scripture reveal that the Prophet Joseph was doing what other prophets did; removing the stain of sin among his people just before his murder. He was providing a scripture-based *warning* to

those at this private *Council of Fifty* meeting, Jacob, King Benjamin, Alma, and Moroni – all in the Book of Mormon – freed themselves of the **responsibility** of sin in connection with the people they too had taught (see also the Watchman’s Parable, Ezek. 33:2-9). In reading their accounts in the Book of Mormon, we too have thus been taught correctly. At the end of the Book of Mormon, the Prophet-writer Moroni absolves himself of **our blood and sins**, as he and others in the book have given us **correct doctrine** too. Thus, the responsibility now lies upon our shoulders to understand it and act. We are to repent and come to the LORD in humility, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, seeking redemption at the hands our merciful LORD Jesus Christ. Who you believe determines what you believe. I choose to believe and trust in the precious word of God. Patterns there provide truth. They are witnesses for us today in a world of lies and deception, given us for the sake of “gain” – power, money, the lusts of the flesh, the honors of men, and the things of the world (see 1 Nephi 22:23).

A Different Narrative

Today, the Latter-day Saints are taught that Joseph’s “**last charge**” to *leaders* in the spring of 1844 was a **transfer of all keys of priesthood power to the Twelve**, done in a meeting with *them* prior to Joseph’s departure from this world. Official historical accounts today, including *modified* versions of Johnson’s letter to Gibbs, do not address **Joseph’s shaking of his garments**, *nor* that the meeting was for the **Council of Fifty**, in which **some of the Twelve** were present, men like Brigham Young. The changed narrative is useful in *hiding original connections to polygamy* and *justification* for **how the Twelve obtained all power**. Both can be traced to Young.

Patterns in scripture, along with some portions of Benjamin F. Johnson’s *unedited* letter point us to the truth. They collectively reveal that the Prophet Joseph was **removing himself of all responsibility** tied to what, I believe, was the secret practice of *spiritual wifery* among select church leaders at Nauvoo. He was placing **all responsibility for this abomination** squarely on the shoulders of those present who were **guilty** of this abomination, including Brigham Young, President of the Twelve, and other members of “*the secret chamber*” who were at the Nauvoo meeting. Some in this “*secret combination*” called it “*the secret chamber*”, including William Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph who was in it for a time (the only Smith known to have more than one wife). William eventually turned on Brigham Young and others in this secret organization *after* his three brothers were murdered. Leaders of the *secret chamber* instituted *spiritual wifery* secretly among the people at this time in Nauvoo, **justifying** it via new doctrine, including modified versions of “*the sealing power*” and “*the patriarchal priesthood of the ancient patriarchs*”. The Nicolaitans of the New Testament mixed sexual sin with new religious teachings and thus corrupted early Christianity in similar ways (see Rev. 2:6, 14-15 & D&C 117:11). They had lost their “first love” – Jesus Christ (Rev. 2:4).

Like Paul, Jacob, and others, I believe Joseph Smith was removing their sins from him using this same ancient rite, which involved the **shaking of his outer clothing**. Under inspiration from God Joseph was presenting himself as clean before the guilty parties. It was a *warning sign* to them. He had **freed himself of the blood and sins of his generation**. His act was tied to God’s **judgment** – with time for *repentance*. It was **not** a transfer of **power** upon the ungodly among him, some of whom would be responsible for taking His life a short time latter. Many in the Council of Fifty were not even members of the Church at Nauvoo.

Unedited history reveals that Joseph was threatening to expose the guilty of this abomination at Nauvoo during the last weeks of his life. They would not allow this to occur. Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel were murdered within one month of one another in June to July of 1844 to hide it all. The Book of Mormon has some 80-plus references to *secret combinations*, those rising up again in our day with great strength. They surround us in governments, media, corporations, schools, and churches. One of their primary tools is to hide their designs to “**get gain**” (**power**, sex, money, the honors of men, etc.). These designs are maintained by *secrecy*, **lies** and **deception**, and murder (see Moses 5). God has sprinkled warning messages throughout scripture to help wake us up to these many **lies**, leading to **deception** and ignorance, that the sheep might be fleeced.¹ I have placed these and other scriptures in endnote 1. They include Matt. 24:4; Moses 4:4 (JST Gen. 3:4-5); 3 Ne. 16:10; 3 Ne. 21:18-20; 3 Ne. 20:1-2; 1833 Book of Commandments, 4:5-6 (*removed and replaced* with D&C 5:19); D&C 123:7-17; Eph. 4:10-14; D&C 45:57.

Lies and new doctrines tied to them were enforced among *secret chamber* members via the **fear** and **control** of *secret* blood-oaths (with their death penalties), those addressed in Moses 5:28-31 *and* in Freemasonry (which most men in Nauvoo were part of). The *secrecy* with *blood-oaths* (including 3 ways to *take life* in 3 “*penalties*”) hid what they were doing. These *controlling fear-based oaths* latter became part of Young and Kimball’s modified LDS Temple Endowment.

The death *penalties* tied to these *blood-oaths* were taken out of the Endowment latter in 1990. I have seen these and many other changes made during my life, changes that continue today. God does not change (Num. 23:19; Heb. 13:8; James 1:17).

The pattern of (1) **shaking** garments, (2) **rending** garments, and (3) **dusting one's feet**, are acts tied to (1) **transferring responsibility**, (2) **mourning**, and (3) **God's judgment** in a *curse*, respectively. These are clearly presented in the patterns of numerous scriptures hereafter. The problem is, too many don't rely upon the Word of God. He is Jesus, His written word, and that of pure, personal revelation. Too many trust men to lead them. It is faster, easier, and simpler, but a very dangerous thing. God warns us that **cursing** results when we place our **trust** in "the arm of flesh" (see 2 Ne. 4:34 & 28:31; Jer. 17:5; Psalm 118:8).

Modified accounts of Joseph's "**last charge**" are used to support the false claim that **all keys of power**, including the *sealing power*, were transferred from Joseph to Brigham Young and the Twelve at this special Spring, 1844 meeting. Young later claimed to have sole charge of the *sealing power* as President of the Twelve as a result of this supposed transfer. Today this supposed transfer of **all power** is used to *justify* the **power** the Twelve wield today over the Saints. They sit in the chief seats like king Noah and his priests, administrating over the church, rather than doing difficult missionary work throughout the world like Paul the Apostle. The primary focus of Young's early *sealing power* at Nauvoo was his supposed authority to *seal* multiple wives to one man, allowing select leaders to secretly practice *spiritual wifery*. Today, with polygamy outlawed by our government, this claim of **power** is now used to join family members together through eternity. These are mixed with another false claim also originating with the *secret chamber*, that the dead prophet *Joseph taught the doctrine of multiple wives* to early church leaders, and lived the principle secretly *with them*. Joseph cannot defend himself today.

The Scripture Patterns

In scripture, both the **shaking of garments free of sins and blood** and the "**shaking off of dust**" from one's feet (done under inspiration of God) are tied to a transfer of **responsibility – not power**. The first gives guilty parties merciful time to *repent*. The second is more serious, an official act of God's *judgment* - a "**cursing**." Both acts absolve the one doing it from the **responsibility** of the sins of those who have been taught **correct doctrine** by them. Joseph's 1831 revelation from God on *real love* and *marriage* was given in connection with *the law consecration* in D&C 42. There, God also gave Joseph *the law of monogamy* (see verses 22-23). Joseph's continual teachings on monogamy, right up until his murder, and these kinds of revelations reveal that he taught correct principles to his people. They and we then remain **responsible** for them! This is how men - as *missionaries* for God - remove the stain of blood and sin that is upon them. God then pronounces us clean in His time and way. Women do not have this stain as they have a different role as co-creators with God, in bringing children into this world with their own blood.

The "**shaking of garments**" rite is an important **repeating pattern** presented to us in the words of many good teachers, like Paul the Apostle in the New Testament *and* of Prophets like Jacob, King Benjamin, Alma, and Moroni in the Book of Mormon. Benjamin Johnson's **unedited historical account** of Joseph "*last charge*" at Nauvoo gives us an additional witness of this truth. Johnson was at the meeting and recorded it. Rare copies of his **unedited** letter are hard to find now, as many have been edited, along with the rest of the Brighamite version of church history. Johnson's unedited letter provides a clearer, more accurate historical portrayal of what Joseph did at the "**last charge**". As addressed earlier, the first truth removed from it (1) is that this meeting was a *private* meeting of **the Council of Fifty**, *not* one for the Twelve alone. The second truth removed is that (2) Joseph performed **a dramatic sign**, symbolizing a **transfer of responsibility for sin**, **not** a transfer of all **power** in the priesthood. He did so by removing his outer cloak and vigorously **shaking** it free of **blood and sins** of those present. Joseph did this, stating:

"**I now shake my garments clear and free from the blood of this generation and of all men.**"²

The meaning and purpose behind Joseph's act, Johnson's **unedited** account of it, and similar acts by other teachers in scripture is obvious when we read scripture. All examples reveal that *the stains of sin of the people they had taught were being absolved from* them. This fulfills the responsibility to trumpet truth by God's "watchmen" (see the Watchman's Parable in Ezek. 33:2-9). Two examples are especially relevant, that of Joseph Smith and Jacob of the Book of Mormon. Both Prophets were laying the **responsibility** for the *abomination* of sexual sin among the people they were responsible to teach. Both had groups among them who were justifying sexual sin via new doctrine created to

support it. This is what the Nicolaitans did in the New Testament (see Revelation 2:6, 14-15) and what the Saints were starting to do in Joseph's day (see D&C 117:11). It was a great *abomination* because it featured **justification** for *serious sexual sin* by way of *new religious doctrine*, taught by men who were to feed the sheep, not fleece them. Satan has used sexual sin, secrecy, and blood-oaths to corrupt the things of God from the very beginning (see Moses 5). If he can get the leaders to succumb to his wiles, then the people follow easily thereafter.

Jacob addresses this "shaking" rite three times in the Book of Mormon. It was in connection with the *abomination* of the multiple wives doctrine among his people in Jacob chapters 2 and 3. They – the Nephites - were abandoning *correct doctrine in the gospel of Christ* - for the things of the world and lusts of the flesh. Jacob encouraged his people to abandon *the whoredom* of having many wives and concubines, like David and Solomon of old. Jacob was fully aware of "the abominable thoughts" and "the hard hearts" of his people. He knew of their pride and their desire to **justify** or **excuse** this sin by using the examples of David and Solomon. Jacob gives us three witnesses of his **shaking off** of these sins and "iniquities" from his garments as their teacher. He was thus **free** from the sins of those he taught. He did this in 2 Ne. 9:44-5, then again in Jacob 1:19 and finally Jacob 2:2. There is no transfer of priesthood power.

Jacob told his people that he was able to discern their "**abominable thoughts**". He said their **hard hearts of pride** led to embracing the wicked practices of David and Solomon in "**desiring many wives, and concubines.**" Of special note, he said they sought to **excuse themselves in this sin** via such thinking (new teaching among them), saying it was the practice of ancient kings. This same **justification** occurred in Nauvoo. Latter, church leaders added to this **justification** by claiming that the murdered Prophet Joseph implemented the practice among them. Joseph could no longer defend himself, and hence his has been "had for good and evil" ever since, just as the angel said it would be (see JSH 1:33). Joseph Smith's supposed polygamy continues to be a *convenient lie*, and a real stumbling block for many who are not grounded in truth, and in the gospel of love of Christ the LORD. He is The Truth. Both Jacob and Joseph taught their people **correct doctrine**. Both then shook **their garments free** of the blood and sins of those they taught. Jacob stated:

"O, my beloved brethren, *remember my words*. Behold, **I take off my garments, and I shake them before you**; I pray the God of my salvation that he view me with his all-searching eye; wherefore, ye shall know at the last day, when all men shall be **judged of their works**, that the God of Israel did witness that **I shook your iniquities from my soul**, and that I stand with brightness before him, and **am rid of your blood**. O, my beloved brethren, turn away from your sins; **shake off the chains** of him that would *bind you fast*; come unto that God who is the rock of your salvation" (2 Nephi 9:44-45).

Jacob provided similar words two more times, saying:

"For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi. And we did **magnify** our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the **responsibility**, answering the **sins** of the people *upon our own heads* **if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence**; wherefore, by laboring with our might **their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments**, and *we would not be found spotless at the last day*" (Jacob 1:18-19).

"The words which Jacob, the brother of Nephi, spake unto the people of Nephi, after the death of Nephi: Now, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, according to the **responsibility** which I am under to God, to **magnify mine office** with soberness, and **that I might rid my garments of your sins**, I come up into the temple this day that I might declare unto you **the word of God**" (Jacob 2:2).

God in His wisdom provided these words in the Book of Mormon for the Saints in Kirtland and Nauvoo, when the abomination of *spiritual nifery* began to surface (*sexual sin* justified by *new religious doctrine*). These words are also for us today, that we might awaken to truth. Like Joseph, Jacob's statements come in connection with his teaching against rising whoredoms among his people. Jacob added that all are to "**shake off**" the "awful chains" of **sin** that bind us down and cut us off from God (see 2 Nephi 1:13-23 and 2 Nephi 4:31). The LORD has said that he will "**shake**" false churches in our day - those that seek to get **gain** at the expense of their people (D&C 10:56). Of special note are the adulterers, false prophets, and false priests whose hearts are **not** broken, those who **use** the people for filthy lucre (see 1 Nephi 22:23 and Jer. 23:9-11; Isa. 52:2-3).

The false doctrine that **power** was being transferred to the Twelve in this **private** meeting in the spring of 1844 goes against the scripture patterns, and against God's will and direction in D&C 107, which is focused upon church government and protection against **abuse of priesthood power** among four equal quorums. Joseph Smith was fully aware of the content of D&C 107. He and other leaders knew that any changes made in church doctrine, priesthood, etc., especially like the supposed transfer of **all power** in "the last charge" to the Twelve by Joseph – would have to have been **unanimously approved** by each of the **four priesthood quorums, with each of them voting separately** (the four quorums include – 1. the 1st Pres., 2. the High Councils of Zion, 3. the Twelve, and 4. the Seventy). These four unanimous votes had to be followed up with a 5th vote - from **the whole church** (regular members). See D&C 26:2; Mosiah 29:26; Alma 29:4; 1 Sam. 8:7. History reveals that none of this voting occurred with reference to the Joseph transferring all keys of **power** to just one quorum – the Twelve! The Twelve were and are to be **traveling missionaries**, preaching the pure gospel of Christ, like Paul the Apostle.

In addition to D&C 107, scripture reveals that **God alone provides real power** in the priesthood to men, and that it is only given in His time and His way (see JST Gen. 14). This is especially true of *the sealing power* (see Mosiah 26:14-29). God gives it to whom He wills, those whom He trusts, those who have come to know Him (see Helaman 10). Joseph did not, could not, and would not have **secretly** given all power to the Twelve, **power** that God alone gives to proven servants that are humble, righteous, those who have come to know Him.

It should also be noted that Brigham Young eventually tried to excommunicate Stake President William Marks, knowing that Joseph had come to him (Marks) in the last few weeks of his life with a plan to bring Brigham and other guilty members of the Twelve up before **the Council of Fifty** and the Nauvoo High Council - on charges of practicing *spiritual wifery secretly*. Others were aware of this, including Sidney Rigdon.

"It is a fact, so well known, that **the Twelve** and their adherents have endeavored to carry on this **spiritual wife business in secret**... and have gone to the most shameful and desperate lengths, to keep it from the public... How often have these men and their accomplices stood up before the congregation, and called God and all the holy Angels to witness, that there was no such doctrine taught in the church; and it has **now** come to light, by testimony which cannot be again said, that at the time they thus dared heaven and insulted the world, they were living in the practice of these enormities; and there were multitudes of their followers in the congregation at the time who knew it" (Sidney Rigdon, *Messenger and Advocate*, 1 October 15, 1844).

Joseph Smith had hoped that *the Council of Fifty* would watch over the church and clean things up, not the Twelve, as they had many guilty parties among them, especially Young as President of the Twelve. It wasn't long, however, before Joseph and his brothers Hyrum and Samuel were murdered. The *secret chamber* at Nauvoo wanted polygamy to remain in place, and those in church leadership wanted to remain in **power**. Following their deaths (all within one month of each other), polygamy exploded in Nauvoo, latter becoming an official church doctrine under Young in Utah. The abomination continued for some forty years thereafter.

Spiritual wifery became a great **abomination** among select leaders at Nauvoo. They **justified** it falsely via connecting it with new church doctrine tied to (1) the sealing power, and (2) the patriarchal priesthood authority of ancient patriarchs, etc.). Joseph **transferred responsibility** for these and other sins to the guilty parties present at "the last charge" meeting. God revealed to him this "shaking" rite, along with the rite of **shaking off of the dust** from one's feet upon those judged (with the private *washing of one's feet* following this). It is an official **curse** (Mat. 10:14; Luke 9:5; Acts 13:51; D&C 24:15, 60:15, 75:19-22, 84:88-93, 99:2-4). Both are to be done only under the inspiration of God.

Joseph knew for some time that some among the Twelve would betray him and take power after his life was taken. This is clear in a number of statements. One is by Joseph's younger sister Katherine Smith Salisbury, made latter in her life. She said that three days before Joseph's murder (Saturday June 23, 1844), he gave a sermon to thousands of Saints gathered at "the Stand" in Nauvoo to hear him speak. She stated that Joseph knew those in leadership seated behind him were seeking to take his life, that they wanted control of the church. Katherine said:

"I was in Nauvoo a few days before my brothers were brought to Carthage, where they met their death. I shall never forget that Saturday, June 23, 1844, when I last saw my brothers alive. I heard Brother Joseph's last sermon, delivered to a great audience in Nauvoo -- the largest crowd I have ever seen -- in the open air, for no house would hold the people. I might say that it was more in the nature of a **prophecy** than a sermon, or rather its

conclusion was, for as he finished he turned [and] stood **facing** some of the high priests and Elders sitting there – church dignitaries who were seated on the platform behind him and **told them** that there was seated on the speaker's stand beside him those **who were conspiring to deliver him up to the enemy** . . . to take his life, and who would be responsible for his death . . .

Katherine said this was Joseph's last public speech at Nauvoo, some 3000 gathered to hear him. Joseph said:

“There are those among you **who will betray me soon**; in fact, you have **plotted to deliver me up to the enemy to be slain.**”

Katherine added,

The truth of this prophecy is of history. He was betrayed, and by his own alleged best friends. These same fellows attempted to assume **the reigns of the church** at his death. They not only attempted this, but they attempted to introduce obnoxious teachings into the church” (Katharine Smith Salisbury, I.G. Davidson interview, Fountain Green, Ill., May 1894, <http://olivercowdery.com/smithhome/BroBill/KStestimony.htm>).

John Taylor in D&C 135 stated that Hyrum Smith quoted Ether 12:37-40 the day he (Hyrum) and Joseph were on their way to Carthage Jail (June 25, 1844). Ether 12 is one of two sets of scripture written by Moroni where he too freed himself of our blood and sin (the other is Mormon 9:35), as Moroni had taught us correct doctrine on the pages of the Book of Mormon. He said **we will meet him** at the judgment bar of God at some future point. God told Moroni...

“wherefore, **thy garments** shall be made clean . . .

Moroni then tells us,

And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until **we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ**, where all men shall know that **my garments are not spotted with your blood**” (Ether 12:37-38).

Earlier, Moroni stated that he and all the prophets in the Book of Mormon wrote that they might be clean of our blood and sins.

“But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written . . . therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof. And **these things are written that we may rid our garments of the blood of our brethren**, who have dwindled in *unbelief*” (Morm. 9:34-35).

Like many other historical documents featuring Joseph Smith's words, the “**last charge**” was modified to fit Brigham Young's narrative (and those following him in leadership), implying that both Brigham and the Twelve were given **all keys of power** in the priesthood by Joseph at this meeting, including the power to *seal many women to one man* – the earliest focus of the sealing power at Nauvoo for those in *the secret chamber*.

Some versions of Benjamin F. Johnson's letter to George Gibbs have been modified too. The unmodified version I originally found is now difficult to find (see endnote 2). The changes made to it represent lies put in place to protect early polygamy and the **power** the Twelve had taken, that they might sit in the chief seats as administrators over the Saints, living a life of luxury, much like King Noah and his priests in the Book of Mormon. Again, God's word tells that the Twelve are to be *traveling missionaries*, like Paul the Apostle, preaching Christ, and doing so humbly, with much sacrifice of earthly things, “freely giving” to the people. The Book of Mormon makes it clear that leaders (priests, kings, and missionaries like the Twelve) were not to be supported on the backs of the people. The Twelve were to preach Christ, and like Him - cast out devils, heal the sick, and raise the dead (see Matt. 10:8). They were not to be administrators living off the people, as they do today, a legacy that began with Brigham. The **power** he sought and obtained for himself and the Twelve - has become the focus of the current false narrative today, a replacement focus for Christ's mission. It was centered upon **repentance** and **faith on the LORD Jesus Christ**, and **redemption** at His hands alone! **Power** and other forms of “**gain**” are the focus of fallen men (see 1 Ne. 22:23).

Modified accounts of “**the last charge**” today include those of Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, and Benjamin F. Johnson (all polygamists). They are found in endnote 2, along with a mostly *unedited* portion of the letter from Johnson to Gibbs about the meeting. Today the LDS church claims that (A) the Twelve were given **all power** by Joseph at the meeting. Some of the earliest accounts also claim that (B) Brigham Young, as President of the Twelve was given sole management of “**the sealing power**” over the whole earth – and that it was primarily used at this time (early Nauvoo, following Joseph’s murder) to seal multiple wives to one man. This is not addressed in today’s accounts. These and other clear connections to early polygamy are no longer apparent in the modern, edited accounts, and thus most don’t match the reality of what really happened in this **private** meeting with the *Council of Fifty*. All four accounts of “the last charge” in endnote 2 are a little different, but similar in the false claim of **all power** being given to the Twelve. Benjamin F. Johnson’s letter to Gibbs reveals some of the truth (Joseph’s shaking of garments and that it was a meeting of the Council of Fifty), but he too was a polygamist latter in Utah. He is not the key authority. Instead, it is **God’s word** given us throughout scripture! Nephi’s statement in 2 Nephi 4:34 – that we are **cursed** *when we trust in the arm of flesh*, rather than **trusting in God** alone - is clearly evident in the deception presented us today in governments, media, schools, and churches. Who each of us believes determines what we believe. Blessings result in believing and trusting God! This is the message of David in Psalm 118:8, Jeremiah in Jeremiah 17:5, and Nephi in 2 Ne. 4:34 and 28:31.

Rending Garments in the Bible & Book of Mormon

Rending or tearing a garment in scripture has clear ties to great mourning, sorrow, despair and hopelessness, often in connection with needed **repentance** by some. This was the case with both Reuben (who needed to *repent*) and his father Jacob in the story of valiant Joseph, sold into Egypt. When Reuben learned that his younger brother Joseph was no longer in the pit (where he and his brothers had placed him), he **rent** his outer garment in fear. Later when his father was given a piece of Joseph’s coat (dipped in goat’s blood to fake his death), Jacob **rent** his garment in despair and mourning (Gen. 37:29 & 34). Besides rending one’s garment, this act was often accompanied by *shaving* one’s head or putting *earth* or *ashes* there as a symbol of mourning or humility. Some wore *sackcloth*.

Note that the **rent** garment no longer serves as a protective covering (as in Christ’s blood or His protective wings as a mother hen). The heart is exposed. Israel’s kings often rent their clothes. It typically symbolized that the kingdom of a particular wicked king would be **rent** from them. Such was the case with King Saul (2 Sam. 3:31) and King Solomon’s posterity (1 Kings 11:11-13, 29:31; 2 Chron. 34:27; see also D&C 84:118, 133:40; Gen. 37:29-30; Eccl. 3:7; Ezra 9:3-5; Joel 2:12-13; Amos 9:11; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Peter 1:3). King Hezekiah, however, was a righteous king. Isaiah promised that he and his people would be protected from the Assyrian army. Note the summary below.

1. **Rending** (tearing) garments = *Great mourning, concern, and despair shown*
Job 1; Num. 14:6; 1 Kings 11; Esther 4; 2 Kings 19; 1 Sam. 4; John 19:23-24; Matt. 27:5-54; D&C 45:54 (many more)
2. **Shaking** garments free of blood & sins = *Transfer of responsibility, warning with time to repent*
Acts 18:6; 2 Ne. 9:44-45; Jacob 1:18-19, 2:2; Mosiah 2:27-28; Alma 5:21; Mormon 9:34-35; Ether 12:37-38
3. **Dusting** of one’s feet = *Judgment with cursing*
Mat. 10:14; Luke 9:5; Acts 13:51; D&C 24:15, 60:15, 75:19-22, 84:88-93, 99:2-4

Moses provided instruction to **priests** in the Old Testament that they were **not to rend** their garments - as part of **mourning** and **repentance**. This was because *the priesthood* (unlike kings) were to be representatives of God (the Great High Priest). They were to provide **hope** for the people as they repented before God (in connection with the future Atonement of Christ, see Lev. 10:6, 21:10). The High Priest Caiaphas broke this priestly law when he **rent** his outer robe *and* his inner tunic, after Christ revealed to him that He was the Messiah standing before him (Mat. 26:64-66). There was no *humility* or **repentance** on his part as leader of the people, no despair in his standing before the Messiah, only pride and disdain as Christ was a threat to his control, power, station, and money.

Hereafter 12 short summaries are provided revealing the meaning behind the pattern of **rending** garments in the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon. These two books, combined with the account of Paul the Apostle in the New Testament, represent *three* witnesses in three books establishing **truth**. God said, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Cor. 13:1; see also Deut. 19:15; 2 Ne. 11:3; Jacob 4:6; D&C 6:28 & 128:3).

A. Rending Garments in the Old Testament / 7 Witnesses

1. Job *tore* or **rent** his garment and *shaved his head* when he was informed that he had lost everything, including his sons and daughters. He remained loyal to the LORD, however (see Job chapter 1).

2. Joshua (of the Tribe of Joseph through Ephraim) and Caleb (of the tribe of Judah) both **rent** their clothes and put earth on their heads when they listened to “*the evil report*” given to Moses by the other ten spies (representing each of the 12 tribes of Israel) who were sent into Canaan to spie on the peoples in that land. They came back fearful of the giants in the land (descendants of the fallen angels, the Watchers), who had armour and inhabited great fortresses. Their “*evil report*” in Numbers 14:6 revealed that they had little faith and trust in the living God, the one who had just delivered them miraculously from 400 years of captivity in Egypt. They were thus *cursed* with 40 years of wandering in the Sinai desert. Only a new untarnished generation of Israelites, with faith in God were worthy to enter the Promised Land. Joshua, Caleb and their posterity were part of this *blessed* group.

3. In 1 Kings 11 we read about the Prophet Ahijah taking hold of a new garment upon Jeroboam (a mighty man of valor, and leader of the house of Joseph), and **rending** into 12 pieces. He told Jeroboam to take *ten* of the pieces as a symbol of what would soon occur, stating, “Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will **rent** the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee” (1 Kings 11:31) . . . because **they have forsaken me** . . . and not walked in my ways . . . and thou shalt reign . . . if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways”(see verses 31-43).

4. Mordecai, uncle of Queen Esther, **rent** his garment, put on sackcloth, and placed ashes upon his head to publically show his great distress when Haman announced that he had obtained a decree from the king that all Jews were to be put to death in the near future (Esther chap. 4). Queen Esther asked Mordecai to help her in her future request before the King (which could result in her life being taken), by having the Israelites *fast* before the LORD for three days and nights, that another miraculous deliverance might take place. It did.

5. When King Hezekiah of Israel learned that the powerful Assyrian army was on its way towards Jerusalem, he **rent** his garments in mourning and fear. He turned to Isaiah for God’s word. Isaiah assured the king that this army was in His hands. Some 185,000 Assyrians were killed miraculously in one night, and Israel delivered again (see 2 Kings 19).

6. After the defeat and slaughter of 4,000 Israelite soldiers by the Philistines, the Ark of the Covenant was obtained in Shiloh to take into the next battle. In the ensuing battle, some 30,000 foot soldiers in Israel’s army were defeated by the Philistines, even though the Ark was among them. A messenger was sent to Eli at Shiloh. He had **rent** his garment, also placing earth upon his head – both were signs of great mourning. In the great death toll given in his report, were the two sons of Eli, Hopni and Phinehas. When Eli was informed that the Ark of the Covenant had also been captured by the Philistines, he fell back out of his chair, braking his neck. He died immediately. When the pregnant wife of Phinehas was informed that her husband and father in law were dead, and the Ark captured, she had contractions in her distress. She died in childbrith but the baby survived. The child was named “*Ichabod*”, meaning “*the glory is departed Israel*”. The pathway to this disaster was Israel turning its back on the living God. Hopni and Phinehas, priests for God, had committed sexual sin with women at the gate to the Tabernacle. Eli had allowed them to remain in their positions, and thus all three leaders over Israel were taken. The **power** was not in the Ark, but in God and the righteousness of Israel when they put their trust in the God who continually delivered them (see 1 Samuel 4).

7. While our LORD hung on the cross, His clothing was **rent** or *parted* four ways, yet his one piece tunic (an undergarment) was left intact, taken by a soldier in a lottery (John 19:23-24).

Upon His death, the veil of the temple was **rent** in two (Mat. 27:5-54). Some say it was the veil-like curtain hanging in front of the temple that was **rent** in two.

When Christ returns, scripture tells us that He will set foot first upon the Mount of Olives, the setting of His atonement. This holy mountain will be **rent** or cleave in *twain* (D&C 45:48). We know the LORD’s garments were **stained** with His own precious **blood** in Gethsemane, but at His second coming they will be stained with the **blood** of the wicked (Isa. 63:1-3; D&C 133:46-52).

Many scriptures reveal that *tearing*, **rending**, and **shaking** has ties to God’s *judgment* and *the wrath of God* that is coming upon the ungodly, those who have abused, oppressed, and taken advantage of the LORD’s people for

“gain”. This “*shaking*” and *rending* is addressed in 2 Sam. 22:8; Psalm 18:7, 68:8, 77:18; Isa. 23:11 and Heb. 12:26. Satan *trembled* at the power of God in Moses 1:21. In the last-days the earth will *shake* and the wicked will *tremble* and *burn* when the Mighty LORD returns in great power and glory.

B. Rending Garments in the Book of Mormon / 5 Witnesses

The Book of Mormon reveals the same inspired pattern of **rending** and **shaking** garments. Seven examples follow:

1. The Prophet Jacob’s statements in the Book of Mormon provide a clear and direct link to the actions of Joseph Smith during his “*the last charge*” to leaders in Nauvoo in the spring of 1844. This was just before his murder and that of his two brothers. Both Prophets were addressing their people as they were *turning* from the LORD, like the ancient Israelites. Jacob’s words are not repeated here (see p. 3). They are provided in the following scriptures:

- a. **2 Nephi 9:44-45**
- b. **Jacob 1:18-19**
- c. **Jacob 2:2**

2. King Benjamin was a wise, righteous man. He supported himself rather than taxing the people living off their labors. The Book of Mormon tells us that King Benjamin gathered the people together prior to his death to do three main things; (1) to confer the kingdom upon his son Mosiah (mostly likely done at Tabernacles in the ancient Bible pattern); (2) teach the people about the mission of the future Christ to redeem them, that they might be “born again” in Him, taking His name upon them in a covenant of righteousness; And (3) that he might remove the stain of blood and sin of his people off of his garments. Like Joseph Smith, he knew he would soon die. He said:

“I at this time have caused that ye should assemble yourselves together, that I might be found **blameless**, and **that your blood should not come upon me**, when I shall stand to be **judged** of God of the things whereof he hath commanded me concerning you . . . that **I might rid my garments of your blood** . . . when I am about to go down to my grave, that I might go down in peace, and my immortal spirit may join the choirs above in singing the praises of a just God” (Mosiah 2:27-28).

King Noah provides us an opposing example, a type for Brigham Young and those following him. Noah and his priests relied on the people for their luxurious lifestyle. He and the priests had many wives and concubines. And they built many fine buildings at their expense. Alma left this lifestyle that he might come to *know* the living God. His many teachings are relevant to us today, especially chapters 5 and 36 where we are taught how to awake, arise, and come out of spiritual “Egypt and Babylon”, by being “born again” in Christ Jesus. Alma spoke of not supporting wicked priests who live off the people in “priestcraft” (Alma 1:3). And most importantly, he wrote of how to remove the sin-laden blood upon us by becoming clean *and* “**saved**”. He taught that this can only occur when one has –

“his **garments washed white** . . . **cleansed from all stain**, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers who should come to **redeem** his people *from their sins*” (Alma 5:21).

3. Alma also tells us about Captain Moroni. He **rent** his garment and made it an **ensign** of freedom or liberty in connection with a **covenant** not to forsake the LORD. Those who took this **covenant** upon themselves stated that if the time came that they became ashamed of the LORD’s **name** (Morm. 8:38), that the LORD would then **rend** them for their actions. Captain Moroni equated his **torn** garment with the **torn** coat of Joseph of Egypt, his distant relative. He too was a remnant of Joseph and his *blessed, believing* bloodline. We know the LORD will gather the remnant of Jacob throughout the world in the last days (see Alma 46:21-27). They love the LORD above all else.

4. The Prophet-historian-writer Moroni, who compiled the Book of Mormon with his father Mormon, provides us two final examples of **shaking** or **rending** one’s garment in the book. They are found on p. 5 and below.

- a. **Mormon 9:34-35**
- b. **Ether 12:37-38**

5. Those who love the LORD today are encouraged to **rend** the veil of unbelief and experience what the brother of Jared did and saw in the book of Ether (see Ether 4:15). Mormon and Moroni provide us the insightful experiences of the brother of Jared in chapters 3 and 12 of Ether. Of special note there, is the discussion of wicked being removed

from the earth, and the coming of Christ to dwell with His people in peace, justice, and love. Because of His love for us and His shed blood on our behalf, John tells us that “the Lion of the tribe is Judah”, the “Root of David”, the slain “Lamb” alone is worthy to read “the sealed book” in Revelation chapter 5. Nephi and Moroni address this special “sealed book” too (2 Ne. 27:8-11; Ether 3:25, 4:4-5). Only those invited to Zion will have opportunity to see and hear the LORD read from this book, the Book of Life. The names of the Redeemed are written in it. Are you there? Sadly, too many today remain in an *awful* state of blindness, unbelief, and wickedness. They have not searched God’s word to know of such things. A wise, loving God makes them available to all who value **His** precious word.

Conclusion

A week before Joseph and Hyrum Smith were murdered (June 27, 1844), Joseph directed the Twelve to **remove** their “garments”. This was on June 20th (see HC 6:519). Why did he do this? I believe Joseph had come to realize that many damaging things were occurring among the Saints just before he was taken, all part of Satan’s plan to corrupt the things of God given the Saints early on. The secrecy of *spiritual wifery*, concealed with the *secret blood-oaths* of Freemasonry (see Moses 5), were chief among them. Joseph, like all men had made mistakes too, but he was not guilty of *spiritual wifery*. His directive to the Twelve was recorded by Heber C. Kimball in his diary (Dec. 21, 1845, written by William Clayton. See *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, p. 224. See also D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, Signature Books, p. 145). The two Smith brothers - Joseph and Hyrum went to Carthage without their coverings. Others kept wearing theirs. One month later, Samuel Smith was also murdered.

Both the Prophet Jacob of the Book of Mormon, and Joseph Smith **were placing the burden of the sin of polygamy upon the shoulders of the guilty**. At Nauvoo, they became **the leaders of the people** following the murder of the Smith brothers. Such were turning their backs on the LORD and His teachings. The current church narrative about this meeting is a **false**. It goes against (1) how God alone provides Priesthood Power, including the sealing power to His most trusted servants (see Helaman 10); And (2) the supposed **power** that was transferred there privately goes against how the church was to be governed - by four equal priesthood quorums out in the open, each with their checks and balances (see D&C 107), so that power wouldn’t be abused by one quorum or one man. The four required unanimous **votes** of these priesthood quorums, and that of the whole church, never happened. Power was taken when the Smith’s were gone.

The patterns in scripture provide us many useful witnesses. We can trust God and His word. He warns us repeatedly against placing trust in the arm of flesh (see 2 Ne. 4:34 & 28:31; Jer. 17:5; Psalm 118:8). Nine additional scriptures provide another revealing, important *pattern*. It is that we are given **lies** and **deception** by many who us in governments, media, schools, and churches (see end note 1). It is a difficult truth to embrace (Matt. 24:4; Moses 4:4 [JST Gen. 3:4-5]; 3 Ne. 16:10; 3 Ne. 21:18-20; 3 Ne. 20:1-2; 1833 Book of Commandments, 4:5-6 [*removed and replaced* with D&C 5:19]; D&C 123:7-17; Eph. 4:10-14; D&C 45:57). **Lies** and **deception** remain key tools used by those seeking **gain** at our expense (1 Ne. 22:23). Such are false shepherds, wolves in sheep’s clothing. We can awaken to these things and arise above them, that we might embrace Truth. He is the LORD Jesus Christ – “the way, **the truth**, and the life” (John 14:6). He is the “good Shepherd. He gave His life for the sheep (John 10)! He alone redeems us. Let us turn to Him. Addressing the last-days, the Prophet Joel said, “**rend your heart**, and not your garments, and **turn unto the LORD your God**: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:13). All glory, honor, praise, and thanksgiving be to Him.

Seek the LORD for a second witness on what is presented here. For more on church history, polygamy, and the doctrine of Christ, see the author’s book, *The Secret Chamber: Spiritual Wifery & the Doctrine of Christ*, Amazon.

End Notes

¹ **Lies and Deception** Secret combinations are put in place by Satan and evil men in high places - to **murder** and “**get** Our God is focused upon **love** and has repeatedly tried to wake us up, encouraging us to “**awake and arise** and go forth. This is done in many scriptures sprinkled here and there. When those dealing with **lies** and **deception** are put together in one place (below), they reveal a troubling message, including our “**awful situation**”, that (1) *we are surrounded by secret combinations* (Ether 8:24) that #1 **lie** and #2 **deceive**, keeping us in *ignorance* for the sake of *their gain* (1 Ne. 22:23). And as a result, (2) most remain in a second **awful** or unsaved condition (Mos. 2:40). The lies cause many to be bound down by “*awful chains*”. We must

“*awake, awake from a deep sleep*” that we might be redeemed of God (2 Ne. 1:13), as the great last-days **harvest of souls** is right around the corner! Three times the warning states, “*the harvest is come and our souls are not saved*” (D&C 45:2, 56:16 & Jer. 17:11). God loves and encourages all “**wise virgins**” to be informed *and saved*, spiritually and physically. He is the Great Deliverer for those who **turn** to Him in repentance.

Speaking to His most trusted disciples in Jerusalem and to us today about the last-days events leading to His second coming return, the LORD first said, “Take heed that **no man deceive** you” (Matt. 24:4). In the following eight additional scriptures note that God lists “**lies**” *first*, followed by “**deception**” *second*. This is the pattern in the first 7 of them. He then lists other sins among us, including “**whoredoms**” (which continue today). This order is significant, given to help **wise virgins** “**awaken**” to our “*awful situation*” and how it has come about among us. We read:

1. And he became Satan, yea even the devil, the father of all **lies**, to **deceive**, and to *blind men*, and to *lead them captive* at his will, even as many as would *not* hearken unto my voice” (Moses 4:4; JST Gen. 3:4-5).

2. “And thus commandeth the Father that **I** should say unto **you**: At that day *when* the Gentiles shall sin against **my gospel**, and shall **reject the fullness of my gospel**, and shall be *lifted up* in the **pride** of their *hearts* above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of **lyings**, and of **deceits**, and of *mischiefs*, and all manner of *hypocrisy*, and *murders*, and *priestcrafts*, and *whoredoms*, and of *secret abominations*; and if they shall do all those things, and shall **reject the fullness of my gospel**, behold, saith the Father, **I** will bring *the fullness of my gospel from among them*” (3 Nephi 16:10).

3. “And **I** will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of **thee**; so will **I** destroy *thy cities*. And it shall come to pass that all **lyings**, and **deceivings**, and *envyings*, and *strifes*, and *priestcrafts*, and *whoredoms*, shall be done away. 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 Nephi 21:18-20).

4. “Hearken, O ye **Gentiles**, and *hear the words of Jesus Christ*, the Son of the living God, which he hath commanded **me** that **I** should speak concerning **you**, for, behold he commandeth me that **I** should write, saying: **Turn**, *all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways*; and **repent** of *your evil doings*, of *your lyings* and *deceivings*, and of *your whoredoms*, and of *your secret abominations*, and *your idolatries*, and of *your murders*, and *your envyings*, and *your strifes*, and from all *your wickedness and abominations* [changing my doctrine], and **come unto me**, and be baptized in **my name**, that **ye** may receive *a remission of your sins* [by being born again in me] and be filled with **the Holy Ghost** [the endowment of power from on high], that ye may be numbered with **my people** who are of *the house of Israel*” (3 Nephi 30:1-2).

5. “And thus, if the people of *this generation* harden **not** their hearts, **I** will work *a reformation* among *them*, and **I** will put down all **lyings**, and **deceivings**, and *priestcrafts*, and *envyings*, and *strifes*, and *idolatries*, and *sorceries*, and all manner of *iniquities*, and **I** will establish **my church**, like unto the church which was taught by **my disciples** in the days of old. And now if this generation *do* harden their hearts against **my word**, behold **I** will deliver them up unto Satan, for he reigneth and hath power at this time, for he hath got great hold upon the hearts of the people of *this generation*: and **not far from the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrah**, do they come at this time: and behold the sword of justice hangeth over **their** heads, and if **they** persist in the hardness of their hearts, the time cometh that it must fall upon **them**” (1833 Book of Commandments, 4:5-6, *removed and replaced with D&C 5:19*).

6. While in Liberty Jail, the Prophet Joseph wrote the following to the Saints: “It is an *imperative duty* that **we** owe to God, to angels, with whom **we** shall be brought to stand, and also to ourselves, to our wives and children, who have been made to bow down with grief, sorrow, and care, under the most damning hand of *murder, tyranny, and oppression*, supported and urged on and upheld by the influence of that spirit which hath so strongly riveted **the creeds of the fathers**, who have **inherited lies**, upon the hearts of the children, and filled the world with *confusion*, and has been growing stronger and stronger, and is now *the very mainspring of all corruption*, and the whole earth groans under the weight of its *iniquity* [passed down *false teachings and traditions* from our “fathers, priests, and kings”]. It is an *iron yoke*, it is a *strong band*; they are the very *handcuffs*, and *chains*, and *shackles*, and *fetters* of hell. Therefore it is an *imperative duty* that **we** owe, not only to our own wives and children, but to the widows and fatherless, whose husbands and fathers have been *murdered* under its *iron hand*; Which dark and blackening deeds are enough to make hell itself shudder, and to stand aghast and pale, and the hands of the very devil to tremble and palsy. And also *it is an imperative duty* that we owe to all the rising generation, and to all the pure in heart—For there are many yet on the earth **among all sects, parties, and denominations, who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men**, whereby they **lie** in wait to **deceive**, and who *are only* kept from **the truth** *because they know not where to find it*—Therefore, that **we** *should waste and wear out our lives in bringing to light all the hidden things of darkness, wherein we know them*; and they are truly manifest from heaven—These should then be attended to with great earnestness. *Let no man count them as small things*; for there is much which lieth in futurity, pertaining to the saints, *which depends upon these things*. You know, brethren, that a very large ship is benefited very much by a very small helm in the time of a storm, by being kept workways with the wind and the waves. Therefore . . . let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for **his arm to be revealed**” (D&C 123:7-17).

7. “**He** [the LORD] that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that **he** might fill all things. And **he** gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers [in scripture and a few sprinkled among us]; For the *perfecting* of the saints [the **wise virgins**], for the *work* of the ministry, for the *edifying* of the body of Christ: Till *we all* come in the *unity of the faith*, and of the *knowledge of the Son of God*, unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of **the fullness of Christ**: That we henceforth be *no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of [false] doctrine, by the sleight of men*, and [their] cunning **craftiness**, whereby they **lie** in wait to **deceive**” (Ephesians 4:10-14).

In the final *eighth* scripture, our LORD has provided a **5-part** scripture instructing **us** on *how* to return to His holy presence. The number 5 is a *covenant* number tied to *life, eternal life*, and His “**grace**” – symbolized in the **5** nails driven into His body for us. D&C 93:1 addresses **not being deceived** by *crafty men* among us.

8. “For **they** [1] *that are wise* [virgins – who “*repent and come unto me*”] and [2] have received **the truth** [Jesus Christ as their light and His words], and [3] have taken **the Holy Spirit** *for their guide* [been “born again” in Christ, receiving the gift and power of the Holy Ghost – “*the endowment of power from on high*” to guide them], and [4] have **not been deceived** [by the lies and deceptions of crafty secret combinations surrounding us] - verily I say unto you, [5] **they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire**, but shall *abide* the day” (D&C 45:57) of God’s return. See also *Moses 4:4*.

² **Benjamin F. Johnson’s Account of Joseph’s Last Charge** Benjamin F. Johnson sent a letter to George F. Gibbs containing, what I believe to be, the most accurate account of Joseph’s “last charge” at Nauvoo in the spring of 1844. See https://archive.org/stream/BenjaminFJohnsonLetterToGeorgeFGibbs/Benjamin%20F%20Johnson%20Letter%20to%20George%20F%20Gibbs_djvu.txt Three other “official” versions of the “last charge” are provided below. Although Johnson’s full letter is not included here (clearly revealing it was a *Council of Fifty* meeting), he does address Joseph’s **shaking of his garments free of sin** (some versions have neither fact). Johnson lived during Brigham Young’s leadership. He too became a polygamist. His account merges *more* truth about Joseph’s actions during “the last charge” but also merges somewhat with the official church narrative of his day, allowing him to remain safely in the fold in Utah in his day. The pattern in God’s word in scripture is where truth fully emerges.

Account #1 Johnson wrote, “And now returning to the council [of Fifty] and the ‘Last Charge.’ Let us remember that by revelation he [Joseph] had reorganized the Holy Priesthood, and by command of the Lord (D&C 124 and D&C 123) had *taken* from the First Presidency his brother Hyrum to hold as Patriarch, *the sealing power*, the first and highest honor due to priesthood; that he had turned the keys of endowments, to the last anointing, and sealing together with keys of Salvation for the dead, with the eternity of the marriage covenant and the power of endless lives. All keys he held, and under these then existing conditions he stood before that association of his select friends, *including* all the Twelve, and with *great feeling and animation* he graphically reviewed his life of persecution, labor and sacrifice for the church and kingdom of God, both of which he declared were now organized upon the earth. The *burden* of which had become too great for him longer to carry, that he was weary and tired with the weight he so long had borne, and he then *said, with great vehemence*: ‘And in the name of the Lord, I now **shake** from my shoulders the responsibilities of **bearing off the Kingdom of God** to all the world, and here and now I place **that responsibility**, with *all the keys, powers and privileges* pertaining thereto, upon the shoulders of you the Twelve Apostles, in connection with this **council**; and if you will accept this, to do it, God shall bless you mightily and shall open your way; and if you do it **I now shake my garments clear and free from the blood of this generation and of all men**’; and **shaking** his skirt with great vehemence he raised himself from the floor, while the spirit that accompanied his words thrilled every heart as with a feeling that boded *bereavement and sorrow*.”

Note that *this* version of Johnson’s letter addresses the solemn “**responsibility**” of “**bearing off the Kingdom of God**” in missionary labors - the primary responsibility of the Twelve witnesses **for Christ** in His day. Christ and His saving mission was to be their focus as “**traveling missionaries**” to the world, like Paul the Apostle. He and they went out to preach the gospel without purse or script, to cast out devils, heal the sick, and raise the dead. *Modern versions* of Johnson’s letter no longer feature (1) **the shaking of Joseph’s garments free of blood and sin** of the guilty; And (2) they don’t address the fact that this was a **Council of Fifty** meeting, where many of the Twelve were present. Why would Joseph transfer all power at a private or secret meeting, one in which non-church members were present (some of the Council of Fifty were not members of the church)? Only God provides to the sealing power to those He chooses (Helaman 10). The clearest thing showing editing, in these modified accounts – is the focus **on power transfer**, *not* a focus on **Christ the LORD** and Joseph’s transfer of **responsibility** for the sin on polygamy to the guilty – Brigham and other leaders among the Twelve!

These differences are evident in the three modified accounts below. Two of them are by early polygamist in the Twelve, Parley Pratt (account #2) and Wilford Woodruff (accounts #3 and #4). The last is by former BYU church history professor Richard Hozaphel, now an Area Authority Seventy (he quotes Woodruff, account #4). They focus on **power transfer** to the Twelve and to Young specifically, whose **sealing power** was first used to **seal** multiple wives to one man in Nauvoo’s early “*spiritual wifery*”. This fact is swept under the rug today, but **was** the focus of the earliest, edited accounts. **Power** is now the primary focus (see 1 Ne. 22:23; Moses 5:31).

Account #2: Parley P. Pratt stated, “He [Joseph] proceeded to confer **on Elder Young**, the President of the Twelve, **the keys of the sealing power**, as conferred in the last days by the spirit and power of Elijah, in order to **seal the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers**, lest the whole earth should be smitten with a curse” (see the full account in the *Millennial Star*, 5:151, March 1845). Young *justified* his many wives (55-56) citing his *sealing power* and the special *Patriarchal priesthood authority* he had, like that of David and Solomon of old. Jacob warned his people about *justifying* their similar *sins* in this manner, a mix of sexual sin and abuse of women, *justified* via *false religion* and *new doctrine*. This is why God and Jacob called such a mix an “abomination”, a “whoredom”, an “iniquity”, and a “grosser crime”. Ancient Baal worship in the Old Testament and the teachings of the Nicolaitans in the New Testament (Rev. 2:6, 14-15: D&C 117:11) had a similar *justifying* mix.

According to Joseph Smith History 1:39, Moroni quoted Malachi 3 and 4 differently, stating that in the last days, “the hearts of the children were to **turn** (*remember* or be *sealed*) **to the promises** [God] **made to fathers**.” This has to do with understanding the covenant promises God made to ancient patriarchal fathers like Abraham, Noah, Jacob, and Joseph of Egypt, promises we

too can *remember* and *inherit* by living the gospel of Christ and keeping His commandments. Moroni's quoting of Malachi to Joseph was about "turning" or "remembering" God's covenant promises to men who had parted the veil to God. These same promises may be "**sealed**" upon us too as we live God's ways. It was **not** about sealing family members together in a temple – today's modified focus, one replacing Young's original focus on *sealing* multiple wives to one man (he had 56 wives). The new doctrine came about to originally support sexual sin among early leaders who used the "sealing" doctrine to justify multiple wives. These men were also Freemasons who used the fear and control of the blood-oaths of Masonry to keep their secret lifestyle going.

Account #3: Wilford Woodruff stated, "**I have had sealed upon my head every key, every power, every principle of life and salvation that God has ever given to any man who ever lived upon the face of the earth . . .** Now," said he [Joseph] addressing the Twelve, "**I have sealed upon your heads every key, every power, and every principle which the Lord has sealed upon my head**"...After addressing us in this manner he said: 'I tell you, the burden of this kingdom now rests upon your shoulders; you have got to bear it off in all the world' (see the full account in the *Deseret Weekly*, Mar. 19, 1892, 406; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], p. 32).

Account #4: The last example of an "official" church history account of the "last charge" is *the first one* found when searching Google. It is not by a church leader, as such things today are left to academics, like BYU church History professor Richard Holzapfel. He stated that "Joseph Smith took one final decisive step in his prophetic mission as he prepared the Church for his departure. The Prophet did not want to die without establishing proper **succession of authority** [power] . . ." Nothing is said about *the Council of Fifty*, nor Joseph *shaking his garments free of the blood and sins* of those listening to him. Instead, Holzapfel quotes Wilford Woodruff, and **much latter in his life**, when he quoted Joseph Smith as saying, 'Brethren, I have had **great sorrow of heart** for fear that I might be taken from the earth with *the keys of the Kingdom of God* upon me, without *sealing* them upon the heads of other men. God has sealed upon my head *all the keys of the Kingdom of God* necessary for organizing and building up of the Church, Zion, and Kingdom of God upon the earth, and to prepare the Saints for the coming of the Son of Man. Now, brethren, I thank God I have lived to see the day that I have been enabled to give you your endowments, and I have now *sealed upon your heads all the powers of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and Apostleship*, with *all the keys and powers thereof, which God has sealed upon me*, and I now roll off all the labor, burden and care of this Church and Kingdom of God upon your shoulders, and I now command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to round up your shoulders, and bear off this Church and Kingdom of God before heaven and earth, and before God, angels and men; and if you don't do it you will be damned.'" For the full account, see <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/joseph-smith-prophet-and-seer/prophets-final-charge-twelve-1844>

Conclusion Because Joseph Smith was murdered and long gone, he could be quoted as saying nearly anything. Young and others *justified* their polygamy in this way. Such lies continue in our governments, media, schools, and churches today, all to get gain. Additional lies by early church leaders suggest that Joseph implemented the practice of polygamy among them. In reality Joseph and his two murdered brothers spoke out against the practice right up until their deaths. They were removed when their teachings began to turn towards leadership of the Twelve. This truth has been suppressed among the Utah Brighamite Saints. Yet among those that rejected Young and his polygamy who stayed behind, the historical narrative is very different and revealing. **Who we believe determines what we believe!** I believe God, and the Smith family narrative. Lucy Mack Smith, Emma Smith, and Joseph's sister Katherine spoke truth about what really occurred at Nauvoo. Hyrum, Joseph, William, and Samuel Smith all spoke out against polygamy.

Emma and her children and Joseph's mother and siblings, all stayed behind for good reason. Most of the Saints today rely on leaders in the Brighamite tradition, not God and His precious word in scripture and pure revelation. Thus, their knowledge is skewed and controlled. Historical documents have been changed to reflect a false, deceptive narrative, to keep those in the chief seats in **power**. It is that simple. **Power** is the key thing stressed in the changes, not **repentance for sin** and **responsibility**, the clear meaning of shaking garments in scripture. This is one reason we are given the account of King Noah, Abinadi, and Alma in the Book of Mormon. Alma left the employ of King Noah and his priests (all sitting in the chief seats) that he might embrace truth as taught by Abinadi. Abinadi was murdered for going against the Noah and the priests. Alma was latter born again in the LORD Jesus, the Lamb of God (see Alma 5). He obtained "a mighty change of heart." As a former priest, living off the people he was to shepherd, Alma became part of another "church". Nephi said, "Behold there are save **two churches only**; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth" (1 Ne. 14:10).