

What is the LORD's Definition of His church?

Pages 218-225 of the book, *The Secret Chamber: Spiritual Wifery & the Doctrine of Christ*
Val Brinkerhoff - 2/4/2020 - 7 pages

God said most churches are “built up to get gain” and “not unto **me**” (2 Ne. 28:3; Morm. 8:33; 1 Ne. 22:23; 2 Ne. 26:20-23; D&C 10:46-70). In 1828 the LORD provided a clear definition of **His church** in D&C 10. It is not a financially successful, large corporation (1923), but a community of believers who heed His invitation to “**repent and come unto me**” (D&C 10:67-68, 93:1; 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; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2). His church is thus made up of humble **followers** (“disciples”) who love the LORD and seek **His will** over their own or other men (Mosiah 5:5; D&C 10:56). God said those who *don't* **repent and come unto me** are “**under the bondage of sin**” (D&C 84:50-51). The Old Testament separates God's **will** into *Commandments* (a charge to be observed), *Judgments* (the way to handle a situation), and *Statutes* (an enactment, decree, or ordinance). All are s *Law* – his wise directions or instructions, given in **love**.

When Christ came among those gathered at Bountiful in the Book of Mormon, we see that He first taught them (1) “the *doctrine* of Christ.” He then presented (2) “the fullness of His *gospel*” to them, the higher law laid out in JST Matthew 5 and 3 Nephi 12 in the 12 “blessed” Beatitudes and more. After these, He then addressed what (3) His *church* was and is. Our word “church” comes from the Greek word “**Ecclesia**,” which means, “**an assembly called together**.” It is an assembly of receptive sheep who **recognize and follow the LORD's will** as the Good Shepherd (John 10). In so doing they can become **the bride** of the Lamb or Bridegroom. Three characteristics of God's church are provided hereafter, and by Him.

(1) *Christ's Church* Mortal men baptize others into *their* churches today (including infants and children), but in the church of Christ or the Lamb, it is **God** who spiritually baptizes **His followers** into **His church**. They thus become part of the church of the Firstborn or the Lamb. He said, “after that ye are baptized with water [by men], behold, **I will baptize you with fire and the Holy Ghost**” (3 Ne. 12:1 & 3 Ne. 9:20). No man can imitate this fiery, spiritual baptism. God does it Himself, **baptizing us into His church**. All other churches are preparatory lesser churches created by men. 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.”

(2) *Adding Redeemed Members* The LORD regularly adds repentant believers into **His church** Himself, doing so in and outside of men's different lesser churches today. Acts 2:47 tells us, “**The LORD added** to the church daily such as should be **saved**.” In other words, those **redeemed by Him** personally and His blood receive **His fiery baptism** and are brought into **His church**. The churches of men are often “built up unto **themselves to get gain**” (see D&C 10:56; 1 Ne. 22:23; 2 Ne. 26:20-23, 28:3; Morm. 8:33; Moses 5:29-31). The churches of men are *preparatory* only at their best. At their worst they keep too many from truth and light and a **personal relationship** with God. Mormon said **all** churches in our day are **polluted** (Morm. 8:36). Nephi confirmed this saying, “**all** have gone out of the way” (2 Ne. 28:11). Jacob added that “**all**” trees in the LORD's vineyard are corrupt (Jacob 5:42, 47). Any believing Christian who “repents” and “**comes unto the LORD**” can be part of **the church of the Lamb** (D&C 76:54, 67, 71, 94). They offer up **the sacrifice He** has chosen which is a “**broken heart and a contrite spirit**” (3 Ne. 9:20; Psalm 51:17). They have God's **seal** in their foreheads (Ezek. 9:4; Mos. 5:15; Rev. 7:2-3, 9:4, 14:1, 22:4; D&C 133:17-18).

(3) *In God's Name* A third characteristic of God's church is given us in 3 Ne. 27:1-12, where Christ said that **His church** is called in **His name** and will *only be His church* if “it is **built upon His gospel**” (the fullness of which is the two baptisms and **His** gifting of the Holy Ghost to us D&C 5:16; 33:11-15; 39:6). They are those who *see* and *enter* heaven (John 3:3-6). We are to be immersed in the character and attributes of Godliness. These are evident in “**the works of the Father**” or the gifts *and* fruits of the Spirit. They are manifestations of God's approval and are listed in D&C 46 (the LORD's list), 1 Cor. 12 (Paul's list), and Moroni 10 (Moroni's list). The **fruits** of the Spirit are “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). These things, along with visions, prophecy, healings, angels, etc., follow **real believers** in Christ's church. God has said that the churches of men built up to get gain have joy in their work “*for a season* and then cometh the end when they are **hewn down and cast into the fire**” (3 Ne. 27:11). **Who will abide the day of the LORD's coming?** This is what the angel gave to Joseph Smith in the first of 40 scriptures quoted to him in 1823.

The April 6 1830 Gathering at the Peter Whitmer Farm: Six “Elders” are Rebaptized

By 1829, there were three branches of the early church in operation with seventy converts. The “**church of Christ**” was in successful operation. According to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, the gifts and fruits of the Spirit were very evident between 1828 and 1830, prior to April 6 of 1830. Joseph, Oliver, and David received (1) the **lesser priesthood** and were baptized in water, (2) **receiving the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost** immediately thereafter in 1829 (see Joseph Smith History 1:72-74). And (3) they had **the Holy Ghost** with them. Note that all three of these things existed before April 6 of 1830 – before *the ways of an institutionalized church* – run according to the rules, laws, and ways of men, began creeping in. The “**church of Christ**” was in successful operation between 1828-30, the evidence being, (1) priesthood, (2) the Holy Ghost (coming by way of God’s second fiery baptism), and (3) the gifts and fruits of the Spirit! David Whitmer later left the church because of Danite coercion tactics in Missouri, increasing polygamy, and a lessening of spiritual gifts (see Gal. 5:16-25). His name has now been removed from this early record. Since the Church was already in existence and didn’t need to be “organized,” let’s examine what occurred on April 6 of 1830 at the Peter Whitmer farm.

On April 6 of **1830** six “elders” were all re-baptized in full view of the rest of “the church.” From a spiritual perspective, the church was already functioning well according to the LORD’s definition (supplied previously). The gathering at the Peter Whitmer farm in Fayette New York featured some seventy people and had five purposes. Prior to this date, Joseph Smith **was admonished** by a couple of the brothers to organize the church *according to* local New York State law - **to give the church legitimacy** amongst the locals. This was prayed about and voted upon, and then the proper paperwork for this was met. Joseph received a revelation for the re-baptisms to occur on this day. They were of two types; (1) “**baptism unto renewal**” (or a covenant of “re-committment” for the six elders), and (2) “**baptism unto repentance**” for those not previously baptized (including Joseph Smith’s parents).

The six “elders” were the “spiritual teachers” of those in the church and were re-baptized as part of their **re-commitment** (or **renewal**) **to the LORD**. They included Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel Smith, along with David, John, and Peter Whitmer Jr. The gathering accomplished five primary purposes, one of which was *recognition according to men* in the laws of New York State, as Joseph said it was done “agreeable to **the laws** of our country.” These six men had been teaching the doctrine and gospel of Christ. The gifts and fruits of the Spirit were evident with them, including revelation, prophecy, and speaking in tongues, etc. Some of the six men **had the Gift of the Holy Ghost**, specifically Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer. Some had been baptized but had **not** yet received this important gift. This one another purpose for the gathering. Paul did the same basic thing in Acts 19:1-6.

The gathering date of April 6 was not Christ’s birthday (which has now become an LDS tradition), but on or near the date of His **resurrection** in Jerusalem (three days after Passover). It signaled **renewal** for those with faith in Christ, those **repenting** of their sins. Church records *today* say that it was “the precise day upon which, according to his will and commandment, we would proceed to organize his Church *once more* here upon the earth” (HC 1:64-70). It was thus a **resurrection** or “**re-organization**.” It is **not** clear if this was a modified statement later added to our historical record.

Each of the six “elders” had previously been baptized into **the church of Christ** *before* 1830, according to the LORD’s own words in D&C 10:67. They followed God’s admonition to “repent and come unto me,” D&C 10, 1828. Some of those previously baptized, did **not** yet have the baptism of fire event in their lives, and thus the gift and power of **the Holy Ghost** to guide them, as did Joseph, Oliver, and David (see Assumption #5, Chap. 6). It represents “the fullness” portion of His gospel. Paul recognized the same problem with those previously baptized in Acts 19:1-6. Others needed a watery baptism first, like Joseph’s parents. At some point in the April 6 meeting, Joseph ordained Oliver an elder in the church before the people (“a spiritual teacher,” not today’s “elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood). Oliver then ordained Joseph. He also ordained him as a “prophet, seer, and revelator” *to the church*, something which concerned David Whitmer (addressed farther below). A **vote** was then taken to approve the men as “spiritual teachers” or “elders” among the people (D&C 28:13). The **Sacrament** was then administered to all those baptized, perhaps the first time this was done among the Saints collectively.

Joseph said, “Several persons...became convinced of the truth and came forward shortly after, and were received into the Church; among the rest, **my own father and mother were baptized**, to my great joy and consolation. ...” (HC 1:79). Joseph, Oliver, and David already had the Holy Ghost and the Aaronic priesthood (an **1829** event). Both men baptized each other earlier, receiving the priesthood under the hands of an angel – John the Baptist (who may have come later as Elijah, with greater priesthood power in 1836, see D&C 110). They also experienced the important baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost event (see JSH 1:73-74), receiving the gift and power of the Holy Ghost from

God. Both men had already been brought into God's church in this **sanctifying** event, as it is God who baptizes us with His fiery Spirit, prior to receiving the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost. Following sanctification, Joseph, Oliver, and David were empowered by **the Holy Ghost**. What were the five reasons for the April 6, 1830 meeting?

(1) **Authoritatively Invite Others to Receive the Holy Ghost** The gathering at the Peter Whimer home provided a place for the *authoritative* "laying on of hands" ordinance for some who did **not yet** have the Holy Ghost (like Joseph's parents). It must be done by someone with *authority* to do so. Joseph, Oliver, and David were **apostles** ("sent ones") of the LORD Jesus Christ. They used their **apostolic authority** to *invite* those there who did not yet have the gift and power of the Holy Ghost - to actually receive it from God. Technically, they may have been "disciples of Christ, like the twelve "disciples" called in the Book of Mormon by our LORD (see 1 Ne. 12:9-10; 3 Ne. 19:4, 28:4-10; John 8:32), as the twelve "apostles" in Jerusalem maintain this position over the whole earth). Inviting others with *authority* - to *actually receive* the Holy Ghost from God is an *official duty* for those called as "apostles" (New Testament) or the (12) "disciples" of Christ in the Book of Mormon (see D&C 20:38-43; 3 Ne. 18:36-38; Moroni 2:2).

Receiving the Holy Ghost is the Father's "endowment of **power** from on high" (see Luke 24:49 & Acts 1 & 2; D&C 95:8-9, 97:12-18, 105:10-12). It completes "the Everlasting Covenant" made at baptism in water, that they might then receive the second, fiery spiritual baptism conducted by the LORD Himself, as He and the Father provide the Holy Ghost to us, not any man (see 3 Ne. 9:20, 12:1; 2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; JST Mat. 3:38; JST Luke 3:16; JST John 1:28; 15:26; D&C 33:15). This second baptism by God is part of the "fullness" portion of the gospel that is rejected by so many today (3 Ne. 16:10). Those sanctified in the *blood* of Christ (His atonement) are cleansed by His fiery *Spirit*, after they are first baptized in *water* (a demonstration of real faith, following real repentance with "a broken heart and contrite spirit" [3 Ne. 9:20]). Such are then gifted with *access to* "the unified mind of the Father and Son" (this is the definition of "the Holy Ghost" in the 5th Lecture on Faith. This meeting (and all others in God's church) was to be conducted by "**the Spirit**" (Mor. 6:9; D&C 46:2). Most of the Saints today believe they are already saved or redeemed of God. Most believe they already have the Holy Ghost. Have you been baptized by fire, a recognizable event? Do you have clear access to "the unified mind of the Father and Son" – and to their pure revelation?

(2) **Public Vote for their Spiritual Teachers** The re-baptisms of the six "elders" signified their new beginning as teachers before the people. Why? In order to meet the law of the LORD's own doctrine, gospel, and church, a public **vote** must be obtained from those served (D&C 26:2). The six "elders" were then **approved** to be the "spiritual teachers" or "elders" of the people (the LORD called Oliver an "**apostle**," an "elder," and "the first preacher" unto "this church of Christ," D&C 21:10:12). Modern corporations and governments have a single dictator or president making decisions for the people **without a vote** or input from them. This is what is occurring today.

(3) **Authoritative Ordinations & Confirmations** The rites of the priesthood needed to be carried out in the prescribed manner. This included ordination to the Aaronic priesthood and confirmation – an authoritative priesthood *invitation* to receive the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. Joseph, Oliver, and David were "apostles" and newly voted on "elders" or "spiritual teachers" for the people. They were inviting others to receive this gift *from God*.

(4) **Partake of the Sacrament as a Group** This gathering may have been the first time the sacrament was administered to a group of followers. It was to occur regularly thereafter so that Christ's disciples would have His Spirit to be with them, a part of their regular "remembering" of him and His commandments to them (D&C 20:75).

(5) **Be Recognized as an Independent Religious Society** The *newly ordained* "elders" **desired** to become *licensed ministers*, "elders" or "spiritual teachers" according to New York State law. There was no legal requirement for this, however. They believed this would allow them to conduct marriages and other rites lawfully. In reality, any license is only a piece of paper, whereas the Holy Ghost is what actually qualifies the actions of the LORD's servants in **His church** (God's mind & will). Those part of His doctrine, gospel, and church must "**repent and come unto him**" (Christ is the head of the church), and be **sanctified and empowered by Him**. It is to receive the gift and power of the Holy Ghost to guide them ("the unified mind and will of the Father and Son via pure revelation).

It has long been thought that Joseph Smith applied to the State of New York for the church to be licensed or incorporated under state law, due to the words "it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country..." etc. Note the wording "agreeable to" not "pursuant to" or "subject to." There were no statutes requiring churches to be licensed by any state. How could there be? For a church to petition a state for permission to exist would put the church of Jesus Christ under government control, which would violate the First Amendment. Instead, what Joseph and Oliver did was "organize" the church as a "religious society," after which **the Church** (not the government) issued licenses to the traveling elders for the purpose of identifying them as emissaries of a specific denomination sent out to preach the gospel of Christ. It would have been more accurate had Oliver Cowdery, when he wrote D&C 20, to use the wording "agreeable to the customs of our country," since the organization of this newly

formed church followed the customs of the Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Baptists whenever they entered an area of the country to form a new religious society. Like those other denominations, the church of Christ was “organized” at its founding, not “incorporated.” See David K. Stott, *Legal Insights into the Organization of the Church in 1830*, BYU Studies Vol. 49, No. 2.

Addressing the special April 6th gathering and its purposes, Joseph spoke specifically about the need for a vote, taking the sacrament, ordaining each other, and obtaining the Holy Ghost. “We were, however, commanded to defer our ordination [before the people] until such time as it should be practicable to have our brethren, who had been and who should be baptized, assembled together, [1] when we must **have their sanction** to...ordain each other, and have them decide **by vote whether they were willing to accept us as spiritual teachers or not**; when also [2] we were commanded to bless **bread** and break it and to take **wine**, bless it, and drink it with them; afterward [3] proceed to *ordain each other* according to commandment; then call out such men **as the Spirit should dictate**, and [4] ordain them; and then attend **to the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost**, *upon all those whom we had previously baptized*, doing all things *in the name of the Lord*” (HC 1:60–61). Note how *everything was to be done by the Spirit*, not a handbook of instructions (especially the more secretive second handbook, for select higher leaders only). To do so, you must first have “**the Spirit**,” in the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, which may attend those who “**repent and come unto him**” (D&C 18:11). They must be sanctified in the second baptism to receive it. All meetings are to be conducted by “**the Spirit**” (Mor. 6:9; D&C 46:2).

Early Idolatry in the Church – the Great Sin of our Day

The 1887 final testimony of David Whitmer is useful in trying to make sense of early church history, including the April 6th, 1830 gathering at the Peter Whitmer home, which the church today says is the date when “the church” was “organized.” David’s final testimony before his death was about his belief in Christ and the Book of Mormon, not the church that evolved from Joseph Smith’s early work, a church later modified by Brigham Young. The judges in both the Kirtland Temple Suit and The Temple Lot case stated that Brigham Young had **changed the church** brought forth by Joseph Smith, and that the Utah church was **not** the legal successor church to the one Joseph had founded (see their final verdicts, pages 124-26). Whitmer’s thoughts are credible and insightful. **God chose** him to be one of three witnesses for the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. He was also second in command (Assistant President of the Church in Zion) for a time in Missouri, President of the High Council in Zion, and an early Stake President there. In addition, he and Oliver had responsibility to find and call *the first set of twelve* “disciples” in **the church of Christ** as part of the Restoration (D&C 18:17-28). They were true “disciples” (followers) of Christ with Joseph Smith. They called the first “twelve disciples.”

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 (see Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrines of the Kingdom*, Bookcraft, 1973, p. 195). Later statements by the LORD in the D&C point to Joseph’s successor being of the Smith bloodline (D&C 43:3-5; 124:58-59). As seen in chapter 4, succession did go to Joseph Smith III. Corruption later entered into this group as well, a major split occurring in 1984. Some 30 “restoration branches” were latter formed.

David Whitmer had discernment in the gift and power of **the Holy Ghost**. He has credibility because of God’s calling and his experiences in the church with Joseph in the early Restoration. Though he left the church later (primarily over the Danite secret combination that entered into the church in Missouri), he never denied the reality nor importance of the Book of Mormon, nor his strong **faith in Christ** (it is the first principle and ordinance of the gospel of Christ). He was committed to both, but not to a man or to the later, changing church, the one evolving from the early days. Christian churches are to bring us to **Christ**. Churches are not to be *the focus* of faith, **replacing Christ**. This is what has occurred in the LDS Church. David identified the cause of this idolatry in Mormonism. It is one reason other believers often suggest we are not “Christians.” The first statement in the Handbook of Instructions states that the purpose of the church is to bring its members **to Christ** (I had a copy of Book 1 when I was a Stake High Councilor). David’s words hereafter provide insights into early church history available nowhere else. Joseph, Oliver, and David were all baptized in the same month that they were shown the gold plates (June, 1829), receiving their fiery baptism and **the Holy Ghost** at that point in time. This is very significant, for it defines the fullness of the gospel of Christ! The three men had repented and come unto Christ. This is the definition the LORD Himself has given us for **His church** in D&C 10:67 (1828). The April 6 1830 event at the Peter Whitmer home occurred two years later. David

Whitmer was the third person baptized prior to this gathering. He was baptized into **the church of Christ!** The three men were very young, yet they led the church. Joseph and David were only 23 years old. Pride and inexperience were part of their learning. Pray as you read the words that follow, to know both the truth and any errors in David's words.

"Now, when April 6, 1830, had come, we had then established three branches of the 'Church of Christ,' in which three branches were about seventy members: One branch was at Fayette, N.Y.; one at Manchester, N.Y., and one at Colesville, Pa. It is all a mistake about the church being **organized** on April 6, 1830, as I will show. We were as *fully organized* — **spiritually** — before April 6th as we were on that day. The reason why we met on that day was this; **the world** had been telling us that we were not a *regularly organized church*, and *we had no right to officiate in the ordinance of marriage, hold church property, etc., and that we should organize according to the laws of the land.* **On this account** we met at my father's house in Fayette, N.Y., on April 6, 1830, to attend to this matter of organizing according to the laws of the land; you can see this from Sec. 17 Doctrine and Covenants: the church was organized on April 6th 'agreeable to the laws of our country.' It says **after** this, '*by the will and commandments of God*;' [were these words added later?] but this revelation came through Bro. Joseph as 'mouthpiece.' Now brethren, how can it be that the church *was any more organized* — **spiritually** — on April 6th, than it was before that time? There were *six elders* and about *seventy members* before April 6th, and the same number of elders and members after that day. We attended to our business of organizing, **according to the laws of the land**, the church *acknowledging us* six elders as their ministers; besides, a few who had recently been baptized and *not confirmed* were **confirmed** on that day . . ."

"I do not consider that the church was *any more organized* or established **in the eyes of God** on that day than it was previous to that day. I consider that on that day *the first error* was introduced into the Church of Christ, and that error was Brother Joseph being ordained as 'Prophet Seer and Revelator' to the church [sole leader]. *The Holy Ghost was with us in more power during the eight months previous to April 6, 1830, than ever at any time thereafter. Almost everyone who was baptized received the Holy Ghost in power, some prophesying, some speaking in tongues, the heavens were opened to some, and all the signs which Christ promised should follow the believers were with us abundantly. We were an humble happy people, and loved each other as brethren should love.*"

"Just before April 6, 1830, **some** of the brethren began to *think* that the church should have **a leader**, just like the children of Israel [and modern churches in their day] *wanting a king*. Brother Joseph finally inquired of the Lord about it. *He must have had a desire himself to be their leader [an idol in his heart], which desire in any form is not of God*, for Christ said, '*If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. He that would be great, let him be your servant. For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.*'"

"A true and humble follower of Christ *will never have any desire to lead or be first, or to seek the praise of men or brethren. Desiring any prominence whatever is not humility*, but it is **pride**; *it is seeking praise of mortals instead of the praise of God*. Joseph received a *revelation that he should be the leader; that he should be ordained by Oliver Cowdery as 'Prophet Seer and Revelator' to the church, and that the church should receive his words as if from God's own mouth.* *Satan surely rejoiced on that day, for he then saw that in time he could overthrow them* [via idolatry in raising men up as our light]. Remember, '**Some revelations are of God; some revelations are of man, and some revelations are of the devil**' [the three ways we may receive revelation]. *God allowed them to be answered according to their erring desires [of their hearts]. They were like the children of Israel wanting a king, and God gave them a king, but it was to their final destruction.*"

"He gave the church a leader, but it proved their destruction and final landing of the majority of them in the Salt Lake valley in **polygamy, believing that their leader** [Brigham] **had received a revelation from God to practice this abomination.** *This [making Joseph our sole leader] was the first error that crept into the church.* None of us detected it then. We had all confidence [trust] in Brother Joseph, 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* [Bill Hickman believed the same thing about Brigham Young]. That is what I thought about it. You see how **we trusted too much in man** instead of **going to God in humility** [for *pure* revelation], and to **his written word** [D&C 18:3-5], 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 . . . After Sydney Rigdon came into the church — or in the spring of 1831 — we began to make proselytes faster; but great numbers coming into the church does not always signify great *spiritual* prosperity."

"I want the brethren [and all today] to understand me concerning this error of ordaining Brother Joseph to that office on April 6, 1830. Not at all do I mean to say that I believe the church was then rejected of God [see D&C 124:32]. What occurred on that day was this: One of the elders of the church (Joseph) was led into a grievous error; and **the** [other] **members acquiesced in it.** In time it proved to be a most grievous error, being the cause of the trouble which afterwards befell the people of God [**idolatry**, replacing God and His direction, with that of one man]."

They put their **trust** in Brother Joseph [a man] and received his revelations **as if from God's own mouth**. (Jer. 17:5) "Thus saith the Lord: **cursed** be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and whose heart **departeth from the Lord**" [see also 2 Ne. 28:31-32; Jer. 2:13, 17:5-13]. **This has been the great curse of the work of God in these last days**. Nearly all of the church have continued to heed the words of **men as if from God's own mouth — following man** into one error in doctrine after another — from year to year — even on down into the doctrine of **polygamy**" (see David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/address1.htm>).

According to God's 1833 revelation to Joseph in the Book of Commandments (chap. 5:4), Joseph's primary job was to bring forth **more of God's word**, *not* become the sole **head** of the church. **Christ is that head** (see Mosiah 5:5-8; Eph. 1:22, 2:20:15, 5:23). David Whitmer knew that "**idols in one's heart**" can dramatically affect one's ability to receive pure, undefiled revelation. He noted that Joseph made changes to some revelations that were given to all three men (Joseph, Oliver & David), as a group. He believed Joseph's ordination as "prophet, seer, and revelator" to the Church in 1830 resulted in an increase in *pride* (Joseph was only 23 years old). David knew that it was Satan's desire to corrupt the church and that idolatry would be a useful tool for this. He also knew that Joseph's *primary role* was to bring forth **God's precious word in scripture** (see 2 Ne. 3:8 — "**none other work**"). Note one scripture change.

"And he (Joseph) has a gift to translate the Book and I have commanded him that **he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift**" (early 1833 Book of Commandments, 5:4; 2 Ne. 3:8).

In the 1835 D&C, Joseph amended this scripture (without input from Oliver or David) adding the words in italics.

"And *you have* a gift to translate *the plates, and this is the first gift that I bestowed upon you*, and I have commanded *you that you should* pretend to **no other gift, until my purpose is fulfilled in this**; for I will grant *unto you* **no other gift until it is finished**" (1835 and later editions of the D&C, verse 4; a total of 31 changed words).

Scripture doesn't hide the weaknesses of men and women, including Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, David or Joseph. It gives us hope today, that our Savior can make us clean too. It is ironic that after Joseph's murder, Joseph's words in journals were later changed by Brigham Young and others to reflect a pro-polygamy stance. Between July of 1833 and August of 1835 revisionist history began occurring (see <http://greatandmarvelouswork.com/the-book-of-commandments-vs-the-doctrine-and-covenants-part-1/>). The LORD warned Joseph to not follow "the dictates of his **own will** and carnal desires" (D&C 3:1-9). Joseph was **not** to "walk in crooked paths" nor boast "in his own strength."

Whitmer's words point to the start of **idolatry** in Mormonism, an inherited *iniquity* passed down to us, further magnified today in the single man — President Nelson — who manages "**the corporation sole**." He has sole power to do as he pleases, just like the Pope, and **without** the vote of the people. The management instructions for this "Corporation of the President" is the Handbook of Instructions (one for top leaders and another for lower leaders). They have replaced God and His holy word as the source of guidance.

Is the LDS Church "True" and to What or Who?

A better question to ask is, what are those in this organization **true** to — to Christ and the fullness of the doctrine He taught, or to the ways of men, including Brigham Young? There is truth in the Brighamite church today (available in scripture) and many errors too. There are wise virgins, sleeping virgins, wheat growing with **tares, and wolves** among the sheep. In the next chapter we will see that different "churches" existed among the Saints simultaneously. The church and its leaders are not our light, nor "**the gate**," **Christ is!** King Benjamin said Christ **must be our "head"** (see Mosiah 5:8-15). Many today have a testimony of the church or its President. Neither grants us salvation. We are to abide in **Christ** and bear fruit in **Him**, "fruit meet for the Father's [celestial] kingdom" (D&C 84:58).

Many in the institutional (corporate) church seek "gain," including control and the honors of men (1 Ne. 22:23; D&C 121). A few practice real love and are good people. According to the LORD Himself, His church is made up of those that "**repent and come unto Him**" (1 Ne. 10:18; D&C 18:11). Thus, those in the Brighamite church and any Christian church for that matter, may be part of **His** church if they choose by *turning* to **Him**. It is the choice **wise** virgins make in any church. Ours has survived under rejection (D&C 124:32), and condemnation (D&C 84:54-58), doing so with and without "*the fullness*" of the gospel of Christ (3 Ne. 16:10; 30:2). For a time it did a good job of sending the Book of Mormon forth to the world. Today the baptism rate is at its lowest point in recorded history (1.4

baptisms per missionary, down from 8 in 1989, see endnote 4). Many are leaving the Brighamite church. Some are turning to home-based worship (see <https://churchwithoutwallsinternational.org/what-is-house-church/>).

A significant reason for the decline (besides lies and deception) is that missionaries convert people to “**the church**,” rather than to the message of the Book of Mormon, which is entirely centered upon **Christ**. We read repeatedly there and in other scripture of God’s invitation to “**repent**” [of our idolatry] and “**come unto me**” (D&C 10:67-68, 93:1; 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; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:2). Brigham Young diminished this message (Morm. 8:36). His version of the church has been rejected and condemned. Even those in Joseph’s early restoration movement rejected “the fullness” of what God wanted to restore (see 3 Ne. 16:10; 30:2). The Brighamite church retains some truths, but most of it is found in **scripture**. If we feast upon God’s words there *and* in prayer, we can find **Christ** and receive **His** salvation.

President Grant made the church a corporation in 1923. Like Pres. Woodruff before him, he needed money and turned to worldly bankers for it (Assumption #5). And now, because of “the carrot” of our tax exempt 501(c)3 status, the corrupt U.S. Government and the IRS wield a huge “stick” over the LDS church. There is too much focus on getting “gain” at the top. The corruption filters down to the people. Zion can only be created by focusing on purifying our hearts, loving God and one another. Our tax exempt status explains why there is **silence** from leaders on important moral issues forced down our throats by the Federal Government (like the 2015 Supreme Court decision forcing all 50 states to marry gay couples). The **great and abominable church** controls our government and many others, and because of the carrot of tax-exempt status (money), they control most churches too. The evil one (D&C 93:39) targeted Joseph and what he was trying to restore (the fullness of the gospel of Christ, see D&C 38). It has resulted in **compromise, change, and pollution**, especially through Brigham Young, polygamy, and Masonry.

God’s definition of **His church** is what matters, **not** men’s definition of it. Collectively, too many are in the cursed “awful situation” described in the Book of Mormon (both Mosiah 2:36-41 and Ether 8:24), primarily because too many look to **men** to lead them rather than **God** (1 Ne 8:5-8). He said He will be our King in the Millennium. Mortal leaders are often weak and imperfect and are rarely grounded in God’s holy **word** (scripture and direct, *pure* revelation from Him). Some are evil and turn to the lord of this world, including some in the LDS church. Prayer is often the only way we can know about such things. Turning to God, in humility and repentance is our only hope. We must seek His sanctification, that we might obtain the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. Wise virgins have this **oil** in their lamps. It is essential to discern light from darkness (the focus of the latter part of D&C 38). Only God provides this important discerning gift. In 1828, before significant pollution began entering in, God told the Prophet Joseph: “For, behold, **I will gather them** [My humble followers] as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, **if they will not harden their hearts; Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely.** Behold, this is **my doctrine**—whosoever **repenteth** and **cometh unto me**, the same is **my church**. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is **not of me**, but **is against me**; therefore he **is not of my church**. And now, behold, whosoever is of **my church**, and endureth of **my church** to the end, **him will I establish upon my rock**, and the gates of hell shall **not** prevail against them” (D&C 10:65-69).