

## A Culmination of Learning: D&C 84 and the Doctrine of the Priesthood

*Matthew C. Godfrey*

One of the most significant doctrinal revelations that Joseph Smith received was Doctrine and Covenants section 84. Focused on an explication of the priesthood, the revelation delineated the existence of a greater and lesser priesthood while also explaining the duties and responsibilities assumed by those who obtained it. One recent commentator noted that section 84 “is a landmark revelation with a breathtaking scope,” as it “explained the priesthood’s past and projected its future use in temples.”<sup>1</sup> Because of its significance, one might expect that Joseph and other Church leaders had kept a careful record of the circumstances surrounding its reception. Although they may have done so, no such explanation is extant today. A manuscript history of Joseph begun in 1838 devotes only one small paragraph to the context behind the revelation. However, a careful examination of early documents provides clues into the revelation’s background. Using conference minutes, other revelations, journal entries, Joseph’s work on his inspired translation of the Bible, and personal histories, this paper will show that section 84 did not just spring into being in September 1832 but rather that many of the concepts

---

*Matthew C. Godfrey is a volume editor of The Joseph Smith Papers and a coeditor of the Document series in which this document appears.*

revealed therein were taught to Joseph prior to that time. This paper is not meant to discuss in great detail the meaning of these concepts; it is only to show that Joseph was aware of many of them before they were consolidated in section 84.

### Context and Background to Section 84

Section 84 was revealed over the course of two days: September 22 and 23, 1832. The six months leading up to this revelation were eventful for Joseph. In February 1832, he and Sidney Rigdon had experienced their vision of “the economy of God and his vast creation through[h]out all eternity,” which provided knowledge about premortal life; the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms; and the fate of Satan and his followers.<sup>2</sup> In April, Joseph, in company with Rigdon, Newel K. Whitney, Jesse Gause, and Peter Whitmer Jr., had traveled to Missouri, where they organized the United Firm, an organization that joined together those responsible for the Church’s mercantile and publishing concerns, and held one of the first meetings of the Literary Firm, a group included in the United Firm with the specific charge to manage the Church’s publications. On the trip back to Ohio in May, the stage in which Rigdon, Whitney, and Joseph were riding crashed, breaking Whitney’s ankle. Joseph stayed with Whitney in Greenville, Indiana, for several weeks until Whitney could travel. With Whitney spending most of his time in bed, Joseph had ample opportunity for solitary meditation and told his wife, Emma, that he had “visited a grove which is Just back of the town almost every day where I can be secluded from the eyes of any mortal and there give vent to all the feelings of my heart in meaditation and prayr.”<sup>3</sup> Such solitude may have allowed Joseph to gain spiritual insights about many Church doctrines, including the priesthood.

After Whitney had recuperated to the point that he could travel, the pair returned to Ohio, arriving in June. Joseph then took his family back to John Johnson’s home in Hiram, Ohio (where he and his family had been staying since September 1831), so that he could continue his translation of the Bible. On September 12, 1832, Joseph relocated his family to Kirtland, where they began residing in Newel K. Whitney’s white store.<sup>4</sup>

After moving his family to Kirtland, Joseph began hearing accounts of elders returning to the town from missions to the eastern United States. As Joseph recounted in a later history, “The elders began to return from their

missions to the eastern states, and present the histories of their several stewar[d]ships in the Lord's vineyard; and while together in these seasons of Joy, I enquired of the Lord and received [section 84]."<sup>5</sup> Joseph likely heard these elders' reports in either the "translating room" or the "council room" in the upstairs portion of Whitney's white store.<sup>6</sup> It may have been in one of these meetings that section 84 was given. The revelation itself states that the initial group in attendance was Joseph "and six elders" and that they had "united their hearts and lifted their voices on high" (D&C 84:1).

At least one account indicates that the revelation was given beginning in the evening of September 22 and continuing into the early morning hours of September 23.<sup>7</sup> Early manuscript copies support this view, suggesting that a pause in the dictation came at some point on September 23. The three existing manuscript copies of the revelation (one of which was made by Frederick G. Williams, one by Williams and Joseph, and one by John Whitmer) all contain a clear break between verses 102 and 103, suggesting an interruption in the dictation.<sup>8</sup> Whitmer's copy even inserts "Received on the 23 day of September 1832" between those two lines. However, the three manuscripts also include "viz 23d day of September A[D] 1832" as a notation several pages before this break, indicating that material presented before the interruption was also given on September 23. It may be, then, that the dictation began the evening of September 22, continued into the early morning hours of September 23, halted for a period of time, and then recommenced later that day.

At some point, the audience of the revelation shifted from the six elders to "Eleven high Priests save one," a notation in the copy inscribed by Williams that was not included in the 1981 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.<sup>9</sup> At this point, the revelation provided direction as to what missionaries should proclaim, how they should receive sustenance while serving, and what would happen to those who did not accept their message. These instructions paralleled New Testament accounts of the resurrected Jesus Christ's directions to the eleven Apostles before his ascension into heaven. Calling the ten high priests "Eleven high Priests save one" was a clear reference to the eleven Apostles to whom Christ spoke, a point that was emphasized when the revelation called the high priests "mine apostles" (D&C 84:63).<sup>10</sup> These ten high priests were likely Joseph, Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith Sr., Hyrum Smith, Ezra Thayer, Zebedee Coltrin, Newel K. Whitney, John Murdock, Frederick G. Williams, and Joseph Coe.<sup>11</sup>

### Pre-June 1831 Understanding of the Priesthood

According to the index to the Kirtland Revelation Book—one of the volumes where this revelation was recorded—the revelation “explain[ed] the two priest hoods and commission[ed] the Apostles to preach the gospel.”<sup>12</sup> Apparently in 1832, the concept of priesthood, especially what the high priesthood was, was still nebulous among Church members, even though both the Bible and the Book of Mormon contained teachings about it. In the book of Alma, for example, Alma delivered a lengthy exposition on high priests and the priesthood. Calling the high priesthood God’s “holy order, which was after the order of his Son” (Alma 13:1), Alma explained that high priests were “called [to] and prepared” for that office “from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works” (v. 3). The high priesthood, Alma continued, was “without beginning of days or end of years” and included the responsibility of proclaiming God’s “commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest” (vv. 7, 6). Alma taught that Melchizedek was a high priest in the high priesthood and that he was one of the greatest high priests; therefore the scriptures “particularly made mention” of him (v. 19). However, others who exercised “exceeding faith and repentance” and showed “righteousness before God” could also obtain the high priesthood (v. 10).

In addition to these Book of Mormon teachings, other churches at the time—including ones with which many early Church members were familiar—taught about the priesthood. The Disciples of Christ, from which many early members of the Church converted, for example, had developed its own priesthood doctrines, influenced by Alexander Crawford, a Scottish minister living in Canada. In 1827, Crawford had delineated the existence of three distinct priesthoods: a patriarchal priesthood (which he also called a priesthood after the “order of Melchisedec”), an Aaronical priesthood (originally held by Aaron), and a priesthood held by Jesus Christ. Crawford regarded Melchizedek as a greater priest than Abraham, citing the fact that Abraham paid tithes to him; indeed, according to Crawford, Melchizedek was one of the key players in the order of the patriarchal priesthood. Crawford also considered the patriarchal priesthood and the Aaronical priesthood as branches of the Levitical priesthood. Alexander Campbell and the Disciples of Christ were influenced by Crawford’s ideas, although Campbell differed somewhat

in his conception of the priesthood, arguing that God had given a “priesthood” to the tribe of Levi and a “high priesthood” to Aaron and his sons.<sup>13</sup> Regardless, as one historian has claimed, Campbell taught his understanding of priesthood “to many of his followers who [became] part of the Mormonite community and continued to believe the same doctrine.”<sup>14</sup>

Despite the Book of Mormon’s teachings and the presence of priesthood concepts in other religions, some early Church members still expressed confusion about what the priesthood really was. Levi Hancock, for example, recalled in his autobiography that in January 1832, he and Lyman Wight conversed with a woman in Jefferson City, Missouri, who “said She liked the Doctrine for we had the Priesthood and that looked like Sense.” After this conversation, Hancock continued, he and Wight “had some conversation on the priesthood and neither of us understood what it was.” Both Hancock and Wight were present at a June 1831 conference where elders were first ordained to the high priesthood (with Wight performing some of the ordinations), yet, as Hancock put it, “I did not understand it and [Wight] could give me no light.”<sup>15</sup> Likewise, William McLellin remembered that when he was presented to an October 1831 conference for ordination to the high priesthood, he “was willing to do anything that was the will of God, but [he] did not understand the duties of the office.”<sup>16</sup>

Also unclear was the way that the priesthood connected to different offices in the Church. The Articles and Covenants of the Church (as well as the Book of Mormon) had explained the different duties of Apostles, elders, priests, teachers, and deacons, but it did not associate these offices with any particular branch of the priesthood.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the term *priesthood*—while appearing in both the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith’s biblical revisions—did not appear in any other contemporary documents (meaning documents that were actually written before September 1832) until the minutes of the June 1831 conference, which noted that several individuals “were ordained to the high Priesthood.”<sup>18</sup>

Throughout 1831, however, Joseph increasingly revealed more information about the priesthood to Church members. As explained below, he obtained some of this information through his translation of the Bible; other concepts came through additional revelations from God. Some of the information that Joseph received was present in Alma’s discussion of the high priesthood in the

Book of Mormon, but the principles revealed in 1831 and 1832 clarified these teachings and applied them directly to the Saints.

### Developments in Priesthood Understanding, June 1831 to September 1832

As mentioned above, the first recorded ordinations of elders to the high priesthood occurred in a June 1831 conference in Kirtland, Ohio. Exactly what the term “high priesthood” meant to Joseph or other Church members at this time is difficult to determine. It apparently referred to both the authority of the greater priesthood (which would later be called the Melchizedek Priesthood) and the specific office of high priest. Jared Carter, for example, recorded in his journal that his brother Simeon, who had been ordained to the high priesthood at the June 1831 conference, was “an elder in the high prie[s]thoood.” In this instance, Carter appears to be using “high priesthood” to refer to a specific authority, not to an office.<sup>19</sup> At a conference held October 25–26, 1831, in Orange, Ohio, however, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon used the term “High priesthood” to refer to a specific office with specific duties.<sup>20</sup> By the end of 1831, “high priest” was generally used to refer to the office, reducing some of the confusion surrounding the term.<sup>21</sup>

Because some of those present at the October 1831 conference exhibited “indifference” to obtaining the office of high priest, Joseph, assisted by Sidney Rigdon, taught the elders at that meeting of the dignity and responsibilities of that office. Joseph explained that “the order of the High priesthood is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life.” Such sealing, Rigdon declared, would occur after God’s people had “give[n] all for Christ’s sake.” Several conference participants then reiterated their covenant to “give all to the Lord.” Since, as the minutes say, the high priesthood had the duty of sealing up the Saints to eternal life, and since such sealing could not come until one had consecrated all to the Lord, apparently those performing the sealing, first and foremost, had to have consecrated all as well. Nearly all the participants who expressed their willingness to consecrate all at the conference were those who had been ordained to the high priesthood or those who would be ordained at that meeting, suggesting, at the very least, a connection between the high priesthood and consecration.<sup>22</sup>

The October 1831 conference also indicated that one progressed through different offices in the Church in an orderly fashion, rather than haphazardly,

until one attained the office of high priest. Joseph told the gathered members that “it was the privilege of every Elder present to be ordained to the High priesthood” and that “those who had been previously ordained Priests would be ordained Elders, & the others would be ordained Priests.” As these ordinations occurred, the orderly nature of priesthood progression was emphasized.<sup>23</sup> This order was reiterated in a November 11, 1831, revelation, presently incorporated in section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants. That revelation stated that one progressed from deacon to teacher, from teacher to priest, and from priest to elder before reaching the office of high priest, which was “the greatest of all.”<sup>24</sup>

The November 11 revelation also stated the need for presiding officers to be called over each office in the Church, including the high priests. It explained that the president of the high priesthood had different duties from those of a bishop. A revelation received just a few days previously specified that a bishop’s duties included being a worthy high priest (see D&C 68:15); though the president of the high priesthood had to meet that same qualification, his administrative duties were different from a bishop’s. “The office of a Bishop is not equal unto” the president of the high priesthood, the revelation declared, “for the office of a bishop is in administering all temporal things.” The president of the high priesthood, on the other hand, was responsible for “the administring of ordinances & blessings upon the Church, by the Laying on of the hands.”<sup>25</sup> Describing the differences between the president of the high priesthood and the bishop in these ways indicated that the high priesthood dealt primarily with spiritual matters in the Church.

Indeed, the high priesthood was a sacred thing that had both great responsibilities and great power, a concept that was emphasized in another November 1831 revelation to Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson, Lyman Johnson, and William McLellin (all of whom had just recently been ordained to the office of high priest). This revelation (section 68 in the Doctrine and Covenants) stated that the four, together with “all the faithful elders of my church” (D&C 68:7), were “to proclaim the everlasting gospel, by the Spirit of the living God, from people to people, and from land to land” (v. 1). As they did so, they would have “power to seal” Saints “up unto eternal life” (v. 12).<sup>26</sup> The revelation also declared that when “those who were ordained unto this priesthood,” or the high priesthood, spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost,

such utterances would “be scripture, . . . the mind of the Lord, . . . the word of the Lord, . . . the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation” (vv. 2, 4).

Answers that Joseph received in March 1832 to questions he had about the book of Revelation emphasized the responsibilities of high priests to preach the gospel throughout the world. One of the Prophet’s questions dealt with the 144,000 that Revelation 7 says were “sealed” out of “all the tribes of the children of Israel” (v. 4). According to Joseph’s list of questions and answers (section 77 in the Doctrine and Covenants), these 144,000 were “high priests, ordained unto the holy order of God, to administer the everlasting gospel.” Taken “out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people,” their primary responsibility was “to bring as many as will come to the church of the Firstborn” (D&C 77:11). This explanation clearly emphasized the duty of high priests to preach the gospel, thereby gathering Israel from all corners of the earth. With the great responsibilities of preaching the gospel, however, came great rewards—even the ability to see the Lord. Late in 1831, the Lord promised a conference attended by several high priests, “Inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves, . . . the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am” (D&C 67:10).<sup>27</sup>

As 1832 progressed, Joseph also came to understand more about the different forms of the priesthood. That summer, he composed a history of “his marvilous experience” and “an account of the rise of the church of Christ in the eve of time” that delineated his reception of two forms of priesthood authority. Joseph noted that he had received two types of authority: one, given to him through “the ministring of Aangels,” allowed him “to administer the letter of the Gospel.” The other, which gave him “power and ordinance from on high to preach the Gospel in the administration and demonstration of the spirit,” was “the high Priesthood after the holy order of the son of the living God.”<sup>28</sup> According to Webster’s 1828 *Dictionary of American Language*, one meaning of “ordinance” at this time was “appointment,”<sup>29</sup> which clarifies that Joseph believed that his reception of the high priesthood appointed him to preach the gospel—a concept in line with what had been revealed to him before this time about the responsibilities of the high priesthood. In addition, this account shows that Joseph understood that there were two different authorities that he had, although he did not go so far as to call them greater



and lesser forms of the priesthood. That would not come until the revealing of section 84.<sup>30</sup>

Joseph's work on his new translation of the Bible in 1831 and 1832 also revealed more about the priesthood, especially its eternal nature and its lineal passage through ancient patriarchs and prophets. As Robert J. Matthews has argued, "In the . . . translation of the Old and New Testaments many revelations were received which contained much information and gave expanded views on the gospel."<sup>31</sup> Joseph's revisions to Genesis 14 and Hebrews 7 (completed around February or March 1831 and February or March 1832, respectively), for example, revealed that because the priesthood was embedded in God, it was an eternal thing, something, as mentioned above, that Alma also explained in the Book of Mormon (see Alma 13:6–7). "The order of the Son of God . . . came not by man nor the will of men neither by father nor Mother neither by begining of days nor end of years but of God," Joseph's revision of Genesis 14 declared.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, his revision of Hebrews 7:3 clarified that the description "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither begining of days, nor end of life" pertained to "the order of the son of God."<sup>33</sup> In making these changes, Joseph showed that since the priesthood was something instituted by God, it was eternal and did not have a beginning or an end.

In a similar way, the new translation provided more details about some of the patriarchs who held the priesthood—namely Melchizedek (a concept, as discussed above, also present in the Book of Mormon). Joseph Smith revised Genesis 14 to explain that Melchizedek was a "high Preist after the order of the covenant which God made with Enock it being after the order of the Son of God." Called "a man of faith who wrought righteousness," Melchizedek blessed the sacrament, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed Abraham as well. The translation of Genesis 14 further explained that Melchizedek led his people in seeking the "City of Enock" and "was called the King of heaven by his people or in other words the King of peace."<sup>34</sup> In addition, Joseph's revision to Hebrews 7:3 stated that "Melchisedec was ordained a priest after the order of the son of God."<sup>35</sup>

Building on this discussion, the vision of the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms that Joseph and Sidney Rigdon experienced in February 1832 emphasized that the high priesthood carried the name of Melchizedek. Those who inherited the celestial kingdom, the vision declared, were "priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order

of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son” (D&C 76:57). Joseph may have taught even earlier than this revelation that the high priesthood bore the name of Melchizedek. Ezra Booth, a former Church member writing in the fall of 1831, for example, asserted that many members of the Church had “been ordained to the High Priesthood, or the order of Milchesidec.”<sup>36</sup>

### Section 84’s Contributions to Priesthood Understanding

With this background, section 84 can be seen as a culmination of revealed concepts and teachings that Joseph had been given prior to September 1832. Much of its doctrine did not just suddenly appear in September 1832 but had been revealed to Joseph “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30; see also Isaiah 28:10). In accordance with the concepts discussed above, the September 22–23 revelation outlined the existence of two priesthoods: a greater priesthood that “holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God,” and a lesser priesthood—also termed the preparatory priesthood—holding “the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel,” defined as “the gospel of repentance and of baptism” (D&C 84:19, 26–27). The authority of the greater priesthood, according to the revelation, allowed man to “see the face of God, even the Father, and live” (v. 22)—much like the Lord had promised high priests late in 1831 (see D&C 67:14). The revelation traced the lineages of the two priesthoods, noting that the greater priesthood was held by Moses, who received it from a line of individuals (including Melchizedek) who ultimately had received it from God. Aaron, meanwhile, held the lesser priesthood, which passed to his descendants until it reached John the Baptist. As Joseph’s translation of the Bible emphasized, both priesthoods were of an eternal nature (see D&C 84:6–27).

Yet in other ways, section 84 went further than these earlier teachings. For example, although earlier revelations had noted the different offices of the Church, section 84 provided a concrete explanation of how these offices were connected to the greater and the lesser priesthoods. The offices of elder and bishop, it stated, were “necessary appendages belonging unto the high priesthood,” while the offices of teacher and deacon were “necessary appendages belonging to the lesser priesthood.”<sup>37</sup> High priests, elders, and priests, the revelation continued, had an obligation to travel to proclaim the gospel (just as section 68 had told Orson Hyde and other high priests in November 1831),

while teachers and deacons were responsible for watching over the Church where it already existed (see D&C 84:29–30, 111).

Moreover, section 84 expanded on the duties of high priests to preach the gospel by providing a general discussion of who should serve missions, how they should serve, and what they should proclaim. Revelations from 1830, 1831, and 1832 had called specific individuals on missions,<sup>38</sup> but only a few revelations gave procedural instructions about missionary work.<sup>39</sup> Section 84, however, gave lengthy instructions to those who were to “go . . . into all the world”; the Lord called those who answered the call “mine apostles, even God’s high priests,” as well as “my friends” (D&C 84:62–63). Much like the direction Jesus provided to his Apostles after his Resurrection, these “friends” were to preach the gospel to all inhabitants of the world, reproving them of their wickedness. They were to use members who held the lesser priesthood “to make appointments, and to prepare the way, and to fill appointments that [they themselves were] not able to fill,” thus allowing those holding the lesser priesthood to be strengthened and trained for their own missionary service (v. 107). Those who would not receive the message to repent and be baptized would be damned, and God would scourge the wicked nations and issue plagues upon them for their disobedience (see vv. 74, 96–97). Spiritual gifts would follow those who believed, which gifts included the casting out of devils; the healing of the sick, blind, deaf, and dumb; and protection from the effects of poison (see vv. 65–72). In practical terms, the revelation instructed missionaries to go without purse or scrip, relying on those to whom they preached for subsistence (vv. 77–78, 86, 89–90). The Lord would “go before [their] face,” the revelation told the elders; furthermore, the Savior said, “I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (v. 88).

In addition to these teachings—and perhaps most significantly—section 84 instructed Church members as to how the promises of the priesthood could become a tangible reality to them. Having provided the lineage of the greater priesthood from Adam to Moses and the lesser priesthood from Aaron to his sons, the Lord declared that “whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods . . . and the magnifying their calling” would “become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham” (D&C 84:33–34)—thus connecting those laboring in the latter days with ancient Israel. Those who received the priesthood, the revelation continued, would

receive God's kingdom; the Savior said, "All that my Father hath shall be given unto him" (v. 38). Such a promise is likely what Sidney Rigdon and the Prophet Joseph referred to when they told a group of high priests and elders in October 1831 of the "power" of the high priesthood.<sup>40</sup> It also likely reflected the declaration in a December 1831 revelation that the Lord had given "the kingdom and power" unto "the high priests of [his] church" (D&C 72:1). In addition, it built on what Joseph and Sidney saw in their vision of the three degrees of glory—that those who inherited the celestial kingdom were "priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek," who had "received of [the Father's] fulness, and of his glory" (D&C 76:57, 56).

### Conclusion

Section 84 thus culminated Joseph's learning about the priesthood to that date, presenting much of the already-revealed doctrine in a consolidated section that also instructed the Saints as to how the priesthood could bless their lives. The Lord taught these truths to Joseph through a variety of means, including providing inspiration as Joseph worked on his translation of the Bible and giving Joseph additional revelations that clarified priesthood doctrine and responsibilities. Joseph, in turn, conveyed these teachings through his revelations and through conferences of elders and high priests. Such teachings helped members such as Levi Hancock, who did not understand what the priesthood was in 1831. Section 84 solidified priesthood doctrine—of the presence of a greater and lesser priesthood, of the eternal nature of the priesthood, of the power of the priesthood, of the offices of the priesthood, and of the duties of the priesthood to preach the gospel—by presenting them as one cohesive whole and by making them directly applicable to Church members. "All those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved," the revelation declared. Because of this, Church members could receive "all that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:40, 38). In the years that followed, the Lord would reveal more to the Prophet about priesthood; by 1835, for example, the greater priesthood, or the umbrella under which all offices of the priesthood exist, was known as the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the lesser priesthood was called the Aaronic Priesthood. But the doctrines revealed in the Church's initial years provided the foundation for this understanding, making what Joseph taught about the priesthood in the early years of the Church even more significant.

## Notes

1. Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 295, 303.

2. Vision, February 16, 1832 (D&C 76), in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books*, vol. 1 of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 414–15 (hereafter referred to as *JSP R1*); Doctrine and Covenants 76.

3. Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, June 6, 1832, holograph, ALS, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago.

4. [Emma Smith], List, ca. 1845, in Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter referred to as CHL); Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 251. Whitney had two stores in Kirtland: a red store and a white store.

5. Joseph Smith, 1838 Manuscript History, vol. A-1, 229, CHL.

6. Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 251.

7. Lula Greene Richards, "A Sketch of the Life of Evan M. Greene," 2, copy provided to author by Steven Harper, gives the revelation's date as "the night of the 22 and 23 of September 1832." However, this may not be accurate, as other details in this account are incorrect. It states, for example, that Oliver Cowdery came into the room as the revelation was being dictated, but minutes from Missouri meetings place Cowdery in Missouri at both the end of August and the first of October, making it highly unlikely that he had the time to travel to Kirtland in September. See "Far West Stake (Mo.): The Conference Minutes and Record Book of Christ's Church of Latter Day Saints," 29, 31, CHL (hereafter referred to as Minute Book 2).

8. For copies of the Whitmer and Williams and Joseph Smith manuscripts, see *JSP R1*, 275–89, 453–75. Newel K. Whitney had a copy of the revelation in Williams's handwriting. Vision, February 16, 1832, in Newel K. Whitney Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

9. If this notation remained, it would come in the middle of verse 42 after the phrase "you who are present this day."

10. I am indebted to Richard Jensen and Mark Ashurst-McGee of the Joseph Smith Papers Project for this insight.

11. According to a January 14, 1833, letter from Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith that mentions this revelation, the high priests in attendance were the same twelve that met in a conference on January 13–14, 1833. Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith to "the Bishop his council and the inhabitants of Zion," January 14, 1833, Letterbook 1, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL. Those high priests were the ten mentioned above plus Samuel H. Smith and Orson Hyde. See Kirtland High Council, Minutes, Dec. 1832–Nov. 1837, 5, CHL (hereafter referred to as Minute Book 1). However, in September 1832, Samuel H. Smith and Orson Hyde were proclaiming the gospel in the eastern states and had not

yet returned to Kirtland. See Orson Hyde, diary, September 22, 1832, transcript, 31, CHL; Samuel H. Smith, diary, September 22, 1832, transcript, 19, CHL. Subtracting them from the number leaves “Eleven high Priests save one,” if Joseph is included as one of the high priests.

12. *JSP R1*, 413.

13. Alexander Campbell, *Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon; with an Examination of Its Internal and External Evidences, and a Refutation of Its Pretences to Divine Authority* (Boston: Benjamin H. Greene, 1832), 11; see also Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 148–50.

14. Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People*, 150. As a former associate of Campbell, Sidney Rigdon was probably familiar with these ideas.

15. Autobiography of Levi Ward Hancock, holograph, 43, CHL.

16. W. E. McLellan, M.D., to Davis H. Bays, May 24, 1870, in *The William E. McLellan Papers, 1854–1880*, ed. Stan Larson and Samuel J. Passey (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2007), 458. According to McLellan, after he expressed his concern, Joseph told him “to take upon [them] the office, and it would explain its duties.”

17. Articles and Covenants, April 10, 1830 (D&C 20), in *JSP R1*, 75–87. The Articles and Covenants did not mention the priesthood office of Seventy, which apparently was not revealed to Joseph until 1835.

18. Minute Book 2, June 3, 1831, 4.

19. Journal of Jared Carter, typescript, 4, CHL.

20. Minute Book 2, October 25, 1831, 11.

21. See, for example, D&C 72:1, from a revelation given on December 4, 1831.

22. Minute Book 2, October 25, 1831, 10–15.

23. Minute Book 2, October 25, 1831, 11, 14.

24. Revelation, November 11, 1831-B (D&C 107:64), *JSP R1*, 216–17.

25. Revelation, November 11, 1831-B (D&C 107:65–68), *JSP R1*, 216–17.

26. This power to seal apparently worked in another way as well. Doctrine and Covenants 1, given in November 1831, stated that “they who go forth, bearing these tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth, to them is power given to seal both on earth and in heaven, the unbelieving and rebellious . . . up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure” (D&C 1:8–9).

27. The minutes of this conference declare that it was a conference of elders, and the revelation is addressed to those “elders of my church, who have assembled yourselves together” (D&C 67:1). However, all of the individuals except for Lyman Johnson listed as “Elders Present” in the minutes had previously been ordained high priests (Johnson would be ordained a high priest at the conference). See Minute Book 2, November 1–2, 1831, 15; Minute Book 2, October 25, 1831, 14; Minute Book 2, June 3, 1831, 4; Minute Book 2, August 28, 1831, 5. “Elders” in this sense appears to be used as a general title for Church leaders.

28. Joseph Smith, “A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr. . . .,” ca. summer 1832, in Letterbook 1, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

29. *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828, s.v. “ordinance.”

30. Joseph probably had an understanding of higher and lower authorities before the summer of 1832, as both biblical texts and the Book of Mormon referred to different authorities in the priesthood. In the case of the New Testament, for example, John the Baptist had the authority to baptize but, as the account in Matthew states, did not have the authority to “baptize . . . with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” That would come with Christ, who was “mightier” than John (Matthew 3:11).

31. Robert J. Matthews, “The ‘New Translation’ of the Bible, 1830–1833: Doctrinal Development During the Kirtland Era,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 403.

32. JST Old Testament Manuscript 1, in Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 127.

33. JST New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 4, in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible*, 539.

34. JST Old Testament Manuscript 1, in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible*, 126–28.

35. JST New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 4, in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible*, 539.

36. Ezra Booth to Ira Eddy, October 2, 1831, “Mormonism—No. II,” *Ohio Star*, October 20, 1831. Hebrews 5:6, of course, stated that Christ was “a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

37. While bishop is an office in the Aaronic priesthood, a November 1831 revelation indicated that bishops “shall be high priests” (D&C 68:15; see also v. 19).

38. See, for example, D&C 24 (given July 1830), D&C 31 (given September 1830), D&C 33 (given October 1830), D&C 52 (given on June 7, 1831), and D&C 80 (given March 1832).

39. Section 68, for example, was directed toward Orson Hyde, Lyman Johnson, Luke Johnson, and William E. McLellin, but it told “all the faithful elders of [the Lord’s] church” to preach the gospel to the world, “acting in the authority which [the Lord] ha[d] given [them].” The elders were to baptize those that believed, who would then “be blest with signs following” (D&C 68:7–8, 10).

40. Minute Book 2, October 25, 1831, 11.