

Peter, Stones, and Seers

Shon D. Hopkin

Shon D. Hopkin is an assistant professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.

Peter's stirring affirmation of Christ's messianic role found in Matthew 16:15–19 has been dear to Latter-day Saints since the days of Joseph Smith. His heartfelt testimony and the Lord's response to him have served as the seedbed for numerous discourses on gospel principles that have been particularly emphasized in the restored gospel.¹ This paper will first provide a close reading of these famous verses and will propose that Jesus' words "upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18) equates Peter himself with the rock upon which the church would be built. A full discussion of how Jesus' disciples would have understood this statement connects Peter with the role of the high priest. One of the implications of this understanding points to a further connection, strengthened by Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:42, between Peter, the role of a seer, and the high priest's use of the Urim and Thummim. The last portion of this paper will explore these connections in order to demonstrate possible links between Peter, Joseph Smith, and Latter-day Saints today. The textual analysis that begins with Matthew 16:13–19 will lead back to the scriptural witness of 1 and 2 Peter at the close of this paper.

Peter's Witness in the Gospels

The account of Peter's testimony of Jesus as the Messiah that is familiar to most Christians is found in Matthew 16:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi [meaning the environs surrounding Caesarea Philippi, or its towns, as stated in Mark 8:27], he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias [Greek for Elijah, the Old Testament prophet]; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. (16:13–20)

This passage is structured in layers of three, with three statements by Jesus (vv. 13, 15, 17–19). The last statement contains three parts, each in the form of a triplet with an initial proposition that is developed by two antithetical statements. The first part declares Simon blessed, the second part promises to build the church upon Peter, and the third part promises him the keys of the kingdom.²

A comparison with other versions of this account in the synoptic Gospels shows that Matthew's record—which likely built upon the Gospel of Mark³—contains important details lacking elsewhere, while the other accounts add little to Matthew's version. Luke 9:18 does provide the important element that one of Jesus' purposes in taking the disciples to Caesarea Philippi was to find time and space for prayer. Jesus' declaration that Peter's witness was revealed to him by his Father in Heaven connects well with Luke's description of prayer as

one of the primary antecedents to that witness. Building on the teachings of Moroni at the end of the Book of Mormon, Latter-day Saints also see prayer as a primary precursor to obtaining a witness of the central truths of the gospel (see Moroni 10:4–5).

Verse 13

The location of Caesarea Philippi approximately twenty miles north of the Galilee served as a useful backdrop for Peter's conversation with the Lord. The city had been built up by the tetrarch Philip, one of the sons of Herod the Great. It was named after the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar, with the added title of "Philippi" to distinguish it from the great city of Caesarea built by Herod the Great in the south along the Mediterranean. Today the area is known as Baniyas, an Arabic permutation of the Roman name Paneas, named in honor of the Greek deity Pan. Remains of Roman worship of Pan can still be seen carved as niches into the cliffs found there. Situated far away from the religious center of the Israelites at the base of Mount Hermon, the area had apparently been a location of idolatrous worship since Old Testament times and was known alternatively as Baal Gad (see Joshua 11:17) and Baal Hermon (see Judges 3:3), in honor of the Canaanite worship of Baal. By the time that the Gospel of Matthew was written, its readers would also have associated the location with the deaths of several Jewish prisoners who were thrown to wild animals there by Titus to celebrate his victory over Jerusalem and the Jews.⁴

As noted by Elder James E. Talmage in *Jesus the Christ*, the location was away from the regular environs of Jesus' teachings and required travel that would have afforded Jesus time to provide special instruction to his disciples away from the crowds that often followed him in other areas of Galilee.⁵ Caesarea Philippi is the location of the primary source waters of the Jordan River, which spring from the base of the majestic Mount Hermon and rapidly become a strong river, leading to powerful waterfalls a short distance away. The combination of idolatrous worship, nationalistic pride, the immense "rock" of Mount Hermon, and the flowing streams of the Jordan each would have come together to highlight the truths that were communicated in this passage, that Jesus himself, not the false religions of the Canaanites, Greeks, or Romans, was the Messiah, the Son of God, and that from God sprang the knowledge of Jesus' role to Peter as the river sprang from the "rock" of the great mountain. Jesus' designation of Peter as the rock as he stood in front of the imposing Mount Hermon would likely have been a surprise to Peter and his companions, since Peter's behavior had clearly demonstrated courage and faith, but not necessarily the kind of consistency typically connected with mountains. Jesus' rebuke of Peter immediately following this commandment serves to

further highlight that the designation of Peter as the rock was in some senses a prophetic call rather than a statement of current fact (see Matthew 16:21–23).

Verses 14–16

In verse 16, Peter's identification of Jesus as the Messiah, with the added phrase "the Son of the Living God" that is not included in Mark or in Luke, stands in contrast to the opinions of the Jews. These viewpoints connected Jesus with famous prophets such as Elijah, whose return was anticipated by the Jewish people (see Malachi 3:1; 4:5–6).⁶ Matthew's witness not only saw Jesus as the Messiah who would come to save God's people, but proclaimed the much more profound sentiment that Jesus was of heavenly origin, the Son of God as compared with the ambiguous designation, "Son of Man," in verse 13.⁷ This understanding is found clearly from the beginning of the Gospel of John but develops more gradually among Christ's Apostles in the Gospel of Matthew. Shortly before Peter's testimony, the disciples were constrained to exclaim, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33) after Jesus had calmed the storm. Peter's declaration and his subsequent experience on the Mount of Transfiguration allow for the culmination of this growing awareness of the disciples, albeit still without a full understanding of the necessary suffering and death that will be required of their Messiah. As will be shown below, the phrase "Son of God" did not just designate Jesus as of heavenly origin but also connected him with biblical expectations of the Davidic Messiah.

Verse 17

In Jesus' response to Peter, he calls him Simon bar-Jona, "or son of Jona" (Greek *Bariōna*). However, since John 1:42 and 21:15 both identify Simon Peter as the son of John (*Iōannou*),⁸ it is difficult to know what his father's real name was.⁹ The Greek designation of Jonah may have simply been the way in which the Aramaic name for John was transliterated into Greek.¹⁰ The designation of bar-Jona in Matthew 16, however, could also have been an intentional redaction with several possible purposes. First, the name "Jonah" serves to remind the reader of the sign of Jonah that had earlier been introduced as a prophecy of Christ's death and Resurrection (see Matthew 12:38–41). Second, the identification of Peter with Jonah points to the similarity of these two figures as those who were reluctant to take the gospel to the Gentiles but did so at God's command. Third, the name Jonah, which means "dove" in Hebrew, could connect with the presence or witness of the Spirit of God, as it did at Christ's baptism in Matthew 3:16. In light of this interpretation, Jesus' statement could identify Peter as one who has been born of the Spirit, becoming, in a sense, the son of the dove. A related way of reading

this passage is that Christ is the new Jonah (because of his three days in the grave) and that Simon has become a child of Christ.¹¹

Verses 18–19

These verses have been more hotly debated by biblical commentators than any other statements of Jesus.¹² Some scholars have seen this entire passage as created decades later at the time of the composition of the Gospel of Matthew, most likely in Antioch of Syria, an area where Peter spent much time and where his leading role in the Christian church would have been an important point.¹³ Notwithstanding the likelihood that Matthew was composed many decades after the life of Jesus in Antioch, there are a number of clues—accepted by many scholars today—that point to an earlier, Aramaic foundation for the statement. Certain phrases appear to be connected much more closely to a Semitic/Aramaic linguistic background rather than a Greek linguistic background: “gates of hell,” “bind and loose,” “flesh and blood,” possibly “bar-Jona,” and others.¹⁴ In other words, these concepts would not have been phrased in the same way unless they were first spoken in a Semitic language such as Aramaic.¹⁵ If the Aramaic origins of the statement are accepted, various arguments have been proposed to explain why the statement is only included in Matthew, the most prevalent of which suggests that it was originally connected to a Resurrection setting.¹⁶ This paper will proceed on the premise that the original Aramaic speaker of this statement was Jesus and that his words were included in Matthew because of the unique timing and audience of that Gospel’s audience, Jewish Christians, as will be explained below. Mark’s and Luke’s presumed primary audience of Gentiles¹⁷ would have been less concerned with the implications of Jesus’ words.

An approach at appropriately interpreting the identity of the “rock” upon which the church would be built is only possible via an analysis of the meanings and interconnections of the following key words from the passage: “Peter” (Greek *petros*), “rock” (*petra*), “church” (*ekklēsian*), “keys” (*kleidas*), “bind . . . loose” (*dēsēs . . . lysēs*), and “gates of hell” (*pylai hadou*).

Rock

If Jesus is accepted as the source of the “rock” statement, then that statement would have first been made in Aramaic and the only viable interpretation of the rock upon which the church would be built is Peter. When Jesus told Simon that he (Simon) was the rock, he was playing upon a name—Kephias (Aramaic *kēpā[s]*)¹⁸—that the Gospel of John records had first been given to Peter when Jesus called him to become a disciple: “When Jesus beheld [Peter], he said, Thou art Simon the son of [John]: thou shalt be called Cephas (pronounced Kephias),

which is by interpretation, A stone” (John 1:42).¹⁹ Protestant commentators have often emphasized the difference between the Greek for Peter—*petros*, or a stone—and the *petra*, or bedrock/foundation upon which Jesus says that the church would be built: “Thou art Peter (*petros*), and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church.”²⁰ For many of these commentators, Jesus was not saying that the community or church would be built upon Peter, since Peter was only a “stone,” not a “bedrock,” but was merely using Peter’s name as a wordplay to distinguish him from the greater bedrock of Christ on which the church would be built. Because of Roman Catholic claims of authority based on their direct descent from Peter’s authority, this Protestant interpretation of *petros* vs. *petra* became one of the most important ways to refute the authority of that church.

If, however, as is likely, Peter’s name in the Gospel of Matthew is based on the Aramaic for rock—*kepha* (*kēpā*)—then this argument breaks down. In Aramaic there is no designation for *kepha* that would differentiate the *petros* from the *petra*. Both words would have been the same in Aramaic. Only when placed in the Greek do these terms of necessity differ. Although that difference could be understood as a purposeful one in the Greek of the Gospel of Matthew, it is much more likely that the Aramaic was translated into Greek in the only way possible. When used as a name for the male figure of Peter, the word *petra* was necessarily altered to its male form of *petros*, creating the differing forms in this verse.

The view that Peter is the rock does not eliminate the significance of other biblical images that picture Jesus or the gospel of Christ as the rock. Scriptural symbols are not mutually exclusive and often build on each other. Thus biblical and restoration-scripture references to Jesus or the gospel as the rock provide the supporting imagery that will be discussed below. Paul’s statement “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11) builds on Old Testament witnesses (see Isaiah 28:16; also 1 Peter 2:6–8; Romans 9:33) and is supported by Book of Mormon prophets such as Helaman: “Remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation” (Helaman 5:12). Joseph Smith also understood Christ as the rock, stating that “Christ was the head of the church, the chief cornerstone, the spiritual rock upon which the church was built, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”²¹ Other biblical and restoration verses refer to Jesus’ gospel using similar imagery (see Matthew 7:24; 3 Nephi 27:8; Doctrine and Covenants 11:25, 18:17, 39:5). Peter, of course, had just borne witness of the same concept that these verses are teaching: that Jesus was the Messiah, the one with true heavenly authority to build a church, a concept he had learned through direct revelation.

The proposal that Peter was the rock to which Jesus referred fits well with literary themes developed in the Gospel of Matthew. Peter alternates between strength and weakness—walking on water, being called “Satan” by Jesus, denying Christ, and more—but is consistently seen as the spokesman for the other Apostles (see Matthew 15:15, 19:27, 18:18).²² After his glorious Ascension, Christ would leave the management of his new community in the hands of imperfect humans, but he would endow those leaders with great power to effectively support the church, as shown by Peter’s strength in the book of Acts. Doctrine and Covenants 1:17–20 connects the imagery of Peter as the weak one called to lead the church with the role of Joseph Smith: “I, the Lord . . . called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, . . . The weak things of the world shall come forth [that] . . . every man might speak in the name of God the Lord.”

The view of Peter as the first bishop in Rome, who subsequently handed down authority and primacy to that office continuing to the present day, has in the past been a central holding pin of the Catholic claim to apostolic authority through direct succession. The view that Jesus named Peter the rock upon which his church would be built does not of necessity, however, serve as a complete support for the Roman Catholic claims to authority, since scholars from all backgrounds have demonstrated that this understanding of Peter did not develop in the Roman Catholic Church until many centuries later.²³

Latter-day Saints, of course, also claim a direct connection to Peter, who descended from the heavens in order to bestow priesthood authority upon the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, who subsequently passed that authority on to others. Each possessor of the Melchizedek Priesthood in the church traces his priesthood lineage back to the rock or foundation of Peter. As Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13 describes it, “Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them; unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom.” From the Latter-day Saint point of view, the gates of death and hell did not prevail against the early church or against Peter, who was resurrected through the power of the Messiah of whom he bore testimony, in order to come forth in the last days to restore the keys of apostolic power and authority. In order to understand the full implications of the church or community, the keys, and the powers that Jesus was describing to Peter, those terms need to first be viewed in connection with the concept of Peter as the rock.

Church

With the understanding of the rock described above, Jesus was stating that the church would be built upon Peter. Paul later offered related imagery when he called Peter, James, and John “pillars” that held up the church of God (Galatians 2:9).²⁴ Jesus’ statement can be seen as the declaration of a new covenant community, built upon the rock of Peter, just as his ancient covenant community was hewn from the rock of Abraham: “Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn . . . Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him” (Isaiah 51:1–2). One scholar has suggested that prophetic figures such as Abraham (and, by extension, Peter) typically received new names when God gave them a people to lead.²⁵

But how would Jesus’ listeners have understood this reference to a church or community (*ekklēsia*)? Since Jesus’ statement was prophetic, it was also anachronistic.²⁶ Later on, at the time of the composition of Matthew, *ekklēsia* would have more specific connotations for the Christian community, but in Jesus’ day it could refer to any called assembly or gathering, and in Roman usage referred to a civil institution: the citizens were the *ekklēsia* who were called together by the herald.²⁷ In light of the Aramaic foundation of the statement, the original was most likely *qābhāl*, a word translated as *ekklēsia* more than one hundred times in the LXX (i.e., the Septuagint).²⁸

Seen through the lens of Matthew’s Jewish expectations, this assembly, or *qābhāl*, can most likely be understood as the fulfillment of the hope that the Davidic Messiah would usher in a new community, and that new community would be centered on the temple.²⁹ Many biblical scriptures speak of building a community,³⁰ and a text at Qumran has textual connections to this passage: “My soul went down to the gates of death . . . it is thou who will set the foundation upon rock . . . in order to build a stout building.”³¹ Peter had just proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah, an identification that had connotations to temple building for Matthew’s primary audience, connections that would have been missed by a primarily Gentile audience (possibly explaining why this passage was not included in Mark or Luke). Not only did messianic expectations in 2 Samuel 7:12–13 and 1 Chronicles 17:7–10 refer to the future temple builder—particularly Solomon, but with pointed messianic undertones as well—as a son of God, as Peter had just called him, but many other biblical verses prophesied of the role that the Messiah would take in building a renewed temple.³²

The allusion to the “Son of God” scriptures that talk of Solomon with messianic undertones is further strengthened by the allusion to building in Matthew 7:24, in which Jesus says that the “wise man” (a potential allusion to Solomon or

the Messiah) “built” his house upon “the rock.” Who was the wise man? Solomon or Jesus the Messiah. What would the house be that both Solomon and the future Messiah would build? A temple. Upon what would Jesus the Messiah, the “wise man,” build his house or his temple? Upon Peter, the rock.³³ Matthew accordingly shows Jesus speaking in positive terms about temple worship (see Matthew 5:23–24), and even shows him quoting a scripture that was seen as prophetically anticipating a renewed temple at the end of times (see Isaiah 56:7 and Matthew 21:12). The text of Matthew is picturing Jesus as the messianic temple builder, the Son of God, and Jesus is designating Peter as the rock upon which this community, centered on the temple or as a temple itself, would be built.³⁴

As mentioned above, Paul picks up the imagery of temple building when he calls Peter, James, and John pillars, pointing many in his audience to the famous pillars of the temple known as Boaz and Jachin (see 2 Chronicles 3:17). The designation of Peter primarily as a rock upon which the future temple community would be built makes him the foundation stone of that temple,³⁵ an image Paul also uses in Ephesians 2:20: “[The household of God is] built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” Since the foundation of the temple would not have been the only temple stone important to Jesus’ audience, other connections with the rock and the temple will be discussed further below.

Keys: Bind and Loose

After identifying Simon as Peter and indicating that he would build his church upon “this rock,” Jesus went on to promise, “I will give unto thee the keys [Greek *kleidas*] of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind [*dēsēs*] on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose [*lysēs*] on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). This assurance connects with a statement about palace authority in Isaiah 22:22, in which a figure known as Eliakim is given the authority of a viceroy: “the key of the house of David [Hebrew *maptēah bêt-dāwid*] will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” In Isaiah 22:24, Isaiah prophesies that “they shall hang on [Eliakim] all the glory [or “weight” (Hebrew *kēḥôd*)] of his father’s house,” a possible connection with the weight of the church being placed upon Peter. Although this statement could simply be interpreted as indicating that Eliakim, a servant of Hezekiah, would be promoted and given authority in the palace that would allow him to determine who would enter before the king, most have understood the Eliakim “prophecy” as having messianic undertones, especially in light of his possession of the key of the “house of David” and the reference to “his father’s house.”³⁶ Peter, then, was being promised the keys that would first be held by the Messiah.

In light of other elements of apostolic authority connected to the new community, or the “kingdom of heaven,” these keys may give the ability to forgive sins (as mentioned in Matthew 18:18–22). Others have claimed that they included the ability to decide what behaviors were appropriate or inappropriate in the new church, since rabbinic teachers used the terms “bind” and “loose” to refer to things that were bound by law or those that were loosed or freed from legal regulations.³⁷ The power could also refer to the right to determine to whom permission to enter the new community would be granted and to whom it would be denied (such as first only allowing the gospel to go to the Jews and later extending that right to the Gentiles).³⁸ It should be noted that all of these rights were connected to priestly roles: the priests were the teachers of the law, they were those who granted access to the temple rites, and they were those who would have to approve entrance into the community, since they had authority over the rites that allowed that entrance.

The keys offered to Peter are understood by Latter-day Saints as the right to preside in the priesthood (see Doctrine and Covenants 107:8). According to Joseph Smith, they were given to Peter, James, and John when they ascended the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus as recorded in Matthew 17:1–12. “The Savior, Moses, and Elias gave the Keys to Peter, James and John on the Mount when they were transfigured before him.”³⁹ The keys of apostleship were then given in modern times to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by Peter, James, and John according to Doctrine and Covenants 27.⁴⁰ Additional keys were also provided in the last dispensation to Joseph and Oliver in the Kirtland Temple by figures similar to those who appeared upon the mount: “The heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel . . . [and] after this, Elias appeared . . . [and] Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us . . . [and] . . . Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16).

President Boyd K. Packer has recounted a stirring experience in which President Spencer W. Kimball, visiting in Copenhagen, Denmark, testified that he, as the current prophet, was currently in possession of those Petrine keys:

We were standing near the statue of Peter, whom the sculptor depicted holding keys in his hand, symbolic of the keys of the kingdom. President Kimball said, “We hold the real keys, as Peter did, and we use them every day.” Then came an experience I will never forget. President Kimball, this gentle prophet, turned to President

Johan H. Bentin, of the Copenhagen Stake, and in a commanding voice said, “I want you to tell every prelate in Denmark that they do not hold the keys! I hold the keys!” There came to me that witness known to Latter-day Saints but difficult to describe to one who has not experienced it—a light, a power coursing through one’s very soul—and I knew that, in very fact, here stood the living prophet who held the keys.⁴¹

The Gates of Hell

One element of the Eliakim prophecy that has often been missed by biblical scholars when discussing how Jesus’ disciples would have understood his statement is that the imagery in the remainder of the prophecy pictures Eliakim not only as one connected to the Messiah and his kingly authority, but also provides clear connections to the sacred vestments of the high priest. In Isaiah 22:21, Eliakim is clothed with a “robe” (Hebrew *kuttānēṭ*; see Leviticus 8:7) that is circled by a “girdle” or sash (*’abnēṭ*; see Leviticus 8:7, 13), and the government is placed “in his hand” (*bēyāḏô*; see Leviticus 8:33). Along with the “filling of the hand,” a Hebrew phrase referring to the ordination of priests in Exodus 28:41, Leviticus 8:33, and many other places,⁴² Eliakim is also “called” in verse 20. He is told that he will act as a “father” “to the house of Judah” in verse 21.⁴³ Other phrases in Isaiah 22:22–25 that refer to “his father’s house” may also have either palace or temple connotations, such as “a nail in a sure place,” the “throne of his father’s house” (23), referring either to a kingly throne or to the mercy seat of the Holy of Holies, and the “vessels” (24).⁴⁴ All of these images appear to purposefully point to the role of the high priest and the temple, and Jesus uses language designed to connect Peter with that role.⁴⁵ In fact, a Jewish explanation or midrash of this passage identifies Shebna, the man that Eliakim will replace, as the high priest.⁴⁶ Numerous references in later Jewish literature discuss the role of the priests as holders of the “keys” to the temple.⁴⁷

With this understanding of Peter’s role as connected to the temple, the reference to the “gates of Hell” (Greek *pylai hadou*; see Matthew 16:18) suggests an additional understanding for the “rock” upon which the church would be built and the “keys” that Peter would hold. In addition to Jewish connotations with the foundation stone of the temple, the giant rock found in the Holy of Holies (possibly where the “throne” or mercy seat sat) was understood by Jews as the foundation stone of the world, and as the gate to the world of the dead (Greek *Hades* or Hebrew *šē’ôl*). Many Christians have understood Jesus’ promise that “the gates of Hell shall not prevail” as an assurance that the power of the devil would not

prevail against the church in a way that would cause a general apostasy.⁴⁸ Biblical commentators, however, have understood the reference to *Hades* or *She'ol* as indicating an assurance that death itself would not triumph over the church. In other words, even if the leaders and members of the new community should die or be killed, the kingdom of God would still survive.⁴⁹

For Latter-day Saints, a belief in a general apostasy would not necessarily contradict Jesus' promise, considering the Restoration of the gospel in the last days and the fact that the very person to whom this promise was made conquered death through the power of the Resurrection in order to return in resurrected form and provide priesthood authority to Christ's church. Rather, from a Latter-day Saint viewpoint, the promise would provide hope during the difficult days of martyrdom and apostasy ahead. When the church was organized in 1830, the Lord used language connected to this promise in Matthew 16: "Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all [Joseph Smith's] words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, . . . for by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory" (Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–6).

Another fascinating connection for Latter-day Saints may be derived from the identification in Jewish literature of the foundation rock of the world, located at the center of the Holy of Holies, as a gateway to the world of departed spirits,⁵⁰ indicating that Peter would be given keys or authority to overcome the power or the claims of the world of spirits. Latter-day Saint views of the importance of keys given in the temple (see Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16) to open or shut the gates of spirit prison and let the prisoners go free as a result of vicarious work for the dead are an interesting modern-day corollary to this promise. The connection becomes even more interesting in light of the existence of passages referring to Christ's descent to the prisoners in the world of the spirits in 1 Peter 3:18–20 and 1 Peter 4:6. The reference to Jonah, one who descended into the waters of death and was lifted out of those waters three days later, also supports this connection between Peter and the foundation rock of the world, since Jews understood the primordial ocean as connected to *Hades* and kept at bay by the stone in the Holy of Holies that served as a gateway to that world.

An additional implication of Peter's priestly role with the rock found in the Holy of Holies could also point to the high priest's ability to pass through the veil of the temple on the Day of Atonement, symbolically representing all of Israel and providing them the opportunity through him to enter into the presence of the Lord (see Leviticus 16:15). Joseph Smith referred to "keys" when he taught

that encouraging God's people to enter into God's presence was one of the roles of Moses, and, by extension, of modern-day prophets:

Moses sought to bring the children of Israel into the presence of God through the power of the Priesthood but he could not. In the first ages of the world they tried to establish the same thing . . . but did not obtain them but they prop[h]ecied of a day when this glory would be revealed. Paul spoke of the Dispensation of the fulness of times when God would gather together all things in one &c and those men to whom these Keys have been given will have to be there.⁵¹

Peter, “a Seer, or a Stone”

The Gospel of John indicates that Jesus gave Peter his name early on, as recorded in John 1:42. The Joseph Smith Translation for this verse suggests one more “rock” with which the disciples might have connected Peter’s new, high-priestly role in connection with the temple: “Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, *a seer, or a stone*” (italics indicate Joseph Smith Translation addition).⁵² In what sense would the Jews of Jesus’ day have connected Peter, the rock or stone, with a seer, one who would receive the knowledge of Jesus through “revelation”?

Multiple passages in the Hebrew Bible indicate that the high priest, the leading priesthood authority in Israelite society (and as such in at least one sense an equivalent to the Latter-day Saint prophet in the church), received precious rocks called Urim and Thummim (typically translated as “lights and perfections”) as part of his priesthood calling. Aaron, the first high priest under the law of Moses, was given Urim and Thummim that he bore on or in the “breastplate of judgment” (see Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8). He was to always wear the Urim and Thummim when he went in before the Lord. The Urim and Thummim appear to represent in some way “the judgment [Hebrew *mišpāṭ*] of the children of Israel” (Exodus 28:30). This description fits well with the possible functions of Peter’s keys as described above. The concept of Aaron bearing the Urim and Thummim “before the Lord” would be particularly true on the Day of Atonement, the only officially designated time when the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies “before the Lord” to obtain forgiveness of Israel’s sins. From a Latter-day Saint and Christian perspective, this passage connects the Urim and Thummim with the presiding priesthood authority in the land and his role as a type of Christ in representing all of Israel.

Moses’ prayer in Deuteronomy 33:8 indicates a desire that the tribe of Levi would continue to be a possessor of the Urim and Thummim in the future,

demonstrating a connection between the Urim and Thummim and the authority and power of the office of the Israelite high priest. The Urim and Thummim held by the high priest are closely connected with receiving revelation in other Old Testament passages. Numbers 27:21 indicates that Eleazar the priest should ask “after the judgment of Urim before the Lord” in order to determine the will of the Lord concerning Joshua and all of Israel. In this case “judgment” appears more closely connected to the decisions of the Lord regarding his people. First Samuel 28:6 makes reference to how the Urim and Thummim had been used in the past, indicating that it was one of the ways (including dreams and revelation to prophets) in which the Lord had provided answers and direction to kings of Israel through the high priest. The Lord’s unwillingness to answer Saul through the Urim and Thummim (presumably in the hands of the high priest) demonstrates the Lord’s rejection of him as king. Ezra 2:63 and Nehemiah 7:65 indicate that the lack of Urim and Thummim in the hands of the high priest demonstrated a lack of priesthood authority and that full priesthood authority would not be recognized again until a priest with Urim and Thummim once again arose. Each of these references loosely connects with Peter’s role as one with authority, or “keys,” given him by Christ to fully lead the church and to receive revelation on its behalf. The Aramaic *kepha* appears to allow this interpretation, since the Aramaic word can be understood as a foundation stone but was also used to describe a precious stone.⁵³

Multiple scriptural references to the importance of stones through which a presiding authority could gain revelation are also found in restoration scriptures. In the Book of Mormon, Mosiah 8:13–19 discusses the ability of King Mosiah to look into stones or “interpreters” in order to gain knowledge. They were also given to the brother of Jared as two stones that he was to seal up with his account so that the one who received them would be able to translate or interpret his writings (see Ether 3:23; 4:5). These were the stones that Joseph Smith found with the Book of Mormon record when he first obtained the plates. In the 1835 manuscript prepared for the Doctrine and Covenants, he referred to them as the Urim and Thummim⁵⁴ (see Doctrine and Covenants 17:1; Ether 4:6–7; Joseph Smith—History 1:52), providing a textual link between the interpreters and the biblical Urim and Thummim.

The description of two stones in the possession of the brother of Jared is found in close proximity to another account of sacred stones that are not explicitly described as interpreters. When the brother of Jared sought a way for the Jaredites to travel in their eight boats without light, the Lord touched sixteen stones—two stones per boat. Later these stones are described in a manner

that places them as symbolic lessons for God's way of leading all his children through the challenges of life: "And thus the Lord caused stones to shine in darkness, to give light unto men, women, and children, that they might not cross the great waters in darkness" (Ether 6:3). The description of those affected by the stones as including "men, women, and children" (rather than just the Jaredite voyagers) demonstrates that Moroni is describing a broader pattern in which God prepares stones such as the Urim and Thummim, or interpreters, in order to give mankind access to the light of revelation. This pattern certainly fits the sacred stones, but it seems to fit even better the pattern that God has followed of using prophets in order to lead his people through darkness through the power of inspiration. The description provides a link between the role of the stones and that of the seer, such as the link regarding Peter as a stone, or in other words a seer, in Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:42.⁵⁵

References to the Urim and Thummim also exist in the Book of Abraham, in which they are used by Abraham to receive revelation (3:1), including an overarching vision of God's creations and the history of the world. Providing another link with Peter, keys, and the Urim and Thummim, Doctrine and Covenants 63:20–21 implies that a magnificent vision of the future of the world was opened to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, similar to that had by Abraham, Moses, the brother of Jared, Nephi, John the Revelator, and others. Since Herod's temple operated under the Levitical Priesthood of the law of Moses, President Joseph Fielding Smith suggested that the Mount of Transfiguration functioned as a location where Melchizedek Priesthood temple ordinances could be revealed to Peter.⁵⁶ Indeed, Doctrine and Covenants 132:59 connects the keys of the priesthood with a sacred endowment of power from God. Through this lens, when Peter was given the keys of the priesthood promised in Matthew 16 and received the endowment of priesthood power, he had a vision of the future of the earth and became himself a seer, or a stone, one through whom the Lord would reveal truth to the world.

Joseph Smith, of course, also received the Urim and Thummim. Although the phrase was first added for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and does not exist in the 1833 Book of Commandments passage, Doctrine and Covenants 10:1 states that Joseph translated the Book of Mormon "by means of the Urim and Thummim."⁵⁷ Joseph had also found another stone, often referred to either as a seer stone or as the Urim and Thummim, that he used at times in his translation of the plates.⁵⁸ Some uncertainty still exists as to how Joseph used the Urim and Thummim and the seer stone to translate the plates. One of the methods he employed, according to some witnesses, included placing the stone (either the

seer stone or Urim and Thummim) in a hat in order to exclude outside light, and then placing his face into the hat so that he could see the information that would appear in light by means of the Urim and Thummim.⁵⁹ Much like the Old Testament high priest, Joseph Smith was also known to inquire before God for revelation using the Urim and Thummim. At one point while seeking an answer to a biblical question, Joseph and Oliver “mutually agreed to settle it by the Urim and Thummim.” Orson Pratt also describes Joseph using a seer stone to inquire of the Lord when Orson went to Joseph with a question.⁶⁰

From the perspective detailed above, Jesus’ designation of Peter as the rock right after he told Peter that he had learned of Jesus’ messianic role through revelation was in part referring to Peter’s role as the high-priestly possessor of the Urim and Thummim. Joseph Smith stated very clearly what has become a very important view for Latter-day Saints: “Peter obtained his knowledge through revelation, and if they could not know him they did not build upon him; they could not be his church; . . . whenever the church is built upon that rock, and have the revelation of heaven for their guide, as Peter had, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.”⁶¹ Interestingly, early church fathers such as Origen, Ambrose, and Chrysostom also understood that it was Peter’s testimony of and faith in Jesus that were commended in Matthew 16:18. According to them, the church was to be built on the type of experience Peter had.⁶² Revelation 19:10 connects thematically with Peter’s prophetic witness of Christ and supports the view that it is the testimony of Christ that stands at the center of the prophetic gift: “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” The wording of Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–6 relies upon language found in the famous promise to Peter, “[The prophet’s] word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth. . . . For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.” President Kimball has forcefully declared the constant existence of revelation to every presiding prophet from the time of Joseph Smith until the present: “I say, in the deepest of humility, but also by the power and force of a burning testimony in my soul, that from the prophet of the Restoration to the prophet of our own year, the communication line is unbroken, the authority is continuous, a light, brilliant and penetrating, continues to shine. The sound of the voice of the Lord is a continuous melody and a thunderous appeal.”⁶³

The writings of 1 and 2 Peter also support the connection of Peter with the high-priestly role that received revelation for the community of the church. Second Peter 1:19 states, “We have also a more sure *word of prophecy*; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, *as unto a light that shineth in a dark place*” (emphasis added). Earlier in the same text it was made clear that this word of prophecy that “shineth

in a dark place” is connected to the knowledge of Jesus (just as Revelation 19:10 connects the spirit of prophecy with the testimony of Jesus), “For if [the attributes of godliness] be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8). Peter’s description of the “light that shineth in a dark place” is linguistically connected to Alma’s description of Gazelem, “a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light” (Alma 37:23).

Second Peter 1:20–21 goes on to further discuss the process of revelation through the Holy Ghost, affirming that prophets (or seers) have the right to provide or interpret scripture: “Knowing this first, that no *prophecy of the scripture* is of any private interpretation. For the *prophecy* came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Peter 1:20–21; emphasis added). Having just introduced the concept that the “word of prophecy” is “as a light that shineth in a dark place” (2 Peter 1:19), the immediately following detail that the text is specifically referring to the “prophecy of scripture” by “holy men . . . moved upon by the Holy Ghost” links well with the claims of Joseph Smith regarding the Book of Mormon and the description of the translation process provided by others. Interestingly, this description is located in an epistle bearing the name of Peter, who was designated a seer and a stone in Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:42.

The First Epistle of Peter encourages true disciples to come unto Christ as a precious, living stone: “To whom coming, as unto a living stone [Greek *zonta lithon*], disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious” (1 Peter 2:4). He follows this concept by indicating that as they come unto Christ they themselves will become “as lively stones [*zontes lithoi*] . . . an holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5). This democratic ideal in which all have the ability to become stones—similar to Joseph Smith’s and Moses’ desire that all would learn the spirit of prophecy—is so pronounced in this section of 1 Peter that the text became one of the primary points used in support of the Protestant view known as the “priesthood of all believers,” the belief that all can hold the priesthood simply by exercising faith in Christ.⁶⁴ While Joseph Smith and Latter-day Saints do not interpret this concept in exactly the same way as Protestant Christians, the encouragement in 1 Peter is clear. Terms reserved for Abraham or Peter elsewhere are used here to describe the entire church. The same pericope in 1 Peter later employs language reminiscent of imagery that 2 Peter 1:19 uses to describe “the word of prophecy”: “But ye are a chosen generation . . . that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). The people were to become rocks of revelation themselves, seers or stones that would shine with light.

Joseph Smith did not simply serve as a type of seer stone for his people. Like 1 and 2 Peter, his revelations also show a willingness of the Lord to help others become seers as well. Joseph appears to have echoed the feelings of Moses in Numbers 11:29: “Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” Both prophets desired that all would learn the spirit of prophecy, which is “the testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 19:10). The Doctrine and Covenants also extends the role of a seer, one who can use a seer stone, beyond the high priest. According to Doctrine and Covenants 130:10–11, “The white stone mentioned in Revelation 2:17, will become a Urim and Thummim to each individual who receives one, whereby things pertaining to a higher order of kingdoms will be made known; And a white stone is given to each of those who come into the celestial kingdom, whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.” In Doctrine and Covenants 130:11, the name of the possessor of the stone is also inscribed upon the stone, so that both the individual and the stone bear the same name. This connects well with Peter’s experience, who was called a seer, or a rock. Elder David A. Bednar has recently repeated this interpretation of the “rock”: “As is evidenced in Peter’s reply and the Savior’s instruction, a testimony is personal knowledge of spiritual truth obtained by revelation. A testimony is a gift from God and is available to all of His children.”⁶⁵ In many respects, it is the testimony of Christ found in individual members of the church that keeps the “gates of hell” from prevailing against the restored church. As has been noted by President Henry B. Eyring, the church is “always one generation away from extinction.”⁶⁶ When members of the church cease to have a burning witness of the gospel, the strength of the church will rapidly fade.

Conclusion

As has been shown, Jesus’ own disciples would likely have connected his designation of Peter as the rock on whom the church would be built with Davidic, messianic expectations centered on the temple. Jesus was appointing Peter as the leader or high priest of his new community, one with temple authority over the gates of death, one with authority to use the Urim and Thummim to gain revelation for God’s community, and possibly one with authority to help that community receive their own revelation and symbolically enter into the presence of God. If this understanding of Jesus’ words is correct, it connects in remarkable ways with the witness of the Book of Mormon and other restoration scriptures, and with the modern-day experiences and teachings of Joseph Smith. Like Peter, the presiding high priest today holds the keys of temple work for the living and the dead. One of his greatest desires is to help the Latter-day Saints learn to gain

revelation for themselves and return to God's presence, where they will dwell upon the glorified earth, which "will be a Urim and Thummim [i.e., a rock] to the inhabitants who dwell thereon" (Doctrine and Covenants 130:9).

Notes

1. A review of general conference talks, talks recorded in *Journal of Discourses*, and the teachings of Joseph Smith reveals 325 times that these verses have been quoted or referenced. These references, of course, are only the smallest fraction of the talks that have been given by General Authorities and individual members of the church since the days of Joseph Smith. See <http://scriptures.byu.edu>.

2. Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 402.

3. Other possibilities exist, including that Mark was the last of the three synoptic Gospels to be written and that it relied on Matthew and Luke. See M. J. Brown, "Matthew, Gospel of," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. K. D. Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 3:841–42; and E. B. Powery, "Synoptic Problem," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary*, 5:429–34.

4. For information regarding Baniyas/Paneas, see Leander E. Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 343; and Tremper Longman III and D. Garland, eds., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew–Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 9:415. Josephus recorded the death of the Jewish prisoners in William Whiston, trans., *The Works of Flavius Josephus: A History of the Jewish Wars* (Philadelphia: Kregel Publications, 1971), 3:9:7, 443–44.

5. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ: A Study of the Messiah and His Mission According to Holy Scriptures Both Ancient and Modern*, Missionary Reference Library (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 334.

6. Although texts indicating a return of Jeremiah in the last days may be later than Jesus' time, Jeremiah's role as one who preached strongly against the people and the temple may have led to his identification in verse 14, and Jeremiah was often considered a representative of the entire group of the prophets. For reference to an eschatological appearance of Jeremiah along with Isaiah, see 2 Esdras 2:18. For Jeremiah as representative of all biblical prophets, see the list of Hebrew prophets found in *baraita B. Bat. 14b*. The *baraitot* are Jewish oral traditions that were not included in the Mishnah, but were compiled afterward and are relied on by the Talmud in assessing the validity of arguments. Jews maintained beliefs that many of the prophets would return before the end of the world, particularly those such as Enoch and Elijah for whom no death was recorded. See Donald Alfred Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 467. The belief of the return of all prophets before the end of the world fits well with the Latter-day Saint concept of the great meeting at Adam-ondi-Ahman, described in D&C 27:5–14.

7. Matthew provides the title "Son of Man" in verse 13 to Jesus' question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Mark and Luke leave this title out, possibly because its ambiguous nature might have raised questions for their primarily Gentile

audiences. Although Bible references use the title in different ways (for example, in numerous designations of Ezekiel as a son of man), a Jewish audience would have been aware of its potential messianic implications as given in Daniel 7:13. See *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 9:247.

8. Although the King James Version names Peter as bar-Jona[s] in both John 1:42 and John 21:15, the Greek clearly names him as the son of John in those places.

9. See D. J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 247. For a full discussion of the issue, see Joachim Jeremias, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:407–8; hereafter *TDNT*.

10. For this possibility, see the Lucianic Septuagint's similar designation for John in Nehemiah 6:18, 2 Kings 25:23, and 1 Chronicles 3:24.

11. Although the designation of Jonah could be a textual corruption, considering the other wordplay employed with Peter's name in these verses strengthens the possibility that the use of a similar literary technique in this case was intentional.

12. W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *The Anchor Bible: Matthew* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), 197.

13. See Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., "Peter," in *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 4:170. See also John P. Meier, "Matthew," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:626. For a discussion of the importance of Antioch in the developing understanding of Christianity and for the provenance of the Gospel of Matthew, see Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 15–27.

14. See Jeremias, "kleis," in *TDNT*, 3:749–50; Karl Ludwig Schmidt, "kaleō," in *TDNT*, 3:520; Jeremias, "pyle," in *TDNT*, 6:924. See also Karl P. Donfried, "Peter," in *TDNT*, 5:257; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 2:605, 627; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 465–66, 469–71.

15. I am not arguing here that the Gospel of Matthew was first written in Aramaic, but rather that this passage shows evidence that it was originally spoken in Aramaic and then translated to Greek. For a discussion of a possible Aramaic/Hebrew Gospel of Matthew that was then translated into Greek—a concept that I do not support—see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 63–64; and Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 15–17.

16. For a summary, see Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 471; and Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 250.

17. Paul J. Achtemeier, "Mark, Gospel of," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 542–44; and L. T. Johnson, "Luke–Acts, Book of," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 404–8.

18. This chapter uses SBL academic style throughout. The style has been modified in the Hebrew and Aramaic transliterations to show spirantization (softening) of certain consonants for a general audience. Consonants that have a line beneath them received a "soft" or spirantized pronunciation anciently. Thus $\underline{b}=v$, $\underline{p}=ph$, $\underline{t}=th$, and so forth.

19. This early naming of Peter may be supported by a similar identification in Mark 3:16.

20. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament*, 4th ed., 185; Meier, “Matthew,” 623–24. For an ecumenical statement that encompasses the arguments in this paragraph, see Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann, *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973).

21. Joseph Smith to Isaac Galland, 22 March 1839; *Times and Seasons*, February 1840, 53; <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/letter-to-isaac-galland-22-march-1839?p=3>.

22. The depiction of Peter as the spokesman for the other Apostles becomes less clear in the view of some biblical scholars who believe—based on their reading of certain passages in Acts—that James became the leader of the church at some point after Jesus’ death. See Donfried, “Peter,” 253–54.

23. See Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1999), 171. Cyprian, in the third century AD, appears to have been the first of the church fathers to identify Peter as the first bishop of Rome, who subsequently passed his authority down to others.

24. Paul’s imagery also relies on the concept of the church as God’s temple, a view connected to Jeremiah 1:18. This concept is discussed extensively in Michael Patrick Barber, “Jesus as the Davidic Temple Builder and Peter’s Priestly Role in Matthew 16:15–19,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 4 (2013): 935–53.

25. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 470. Schmidt sees a different *ekklesia* as connected to a different word. See Schmidt, *TDNT* 3:525.

26. There have been numerous proposals for how to understand the community that is suggested in the Gospel of Matthew. For an excellent summary of six influential viewpoints, see Paul Foster, *Community, Law, and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 22–79.

27. David L. Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 404; Schmidt, *TDNT*, 1:518–26.

28. Even though ‘*ēdā*’ was the word most frequently used for assembly or congregation in Jesus’ day, Matthew used that word to refer to the Jewish assemblies at the synagogue. See Turner, *Matthew* 404; *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 346; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 471; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 251.

29. For discussions of Matthew’s Davidic messianic expectations, see Lidija Novakovic, *Messiah, The Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 152–83; Young S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd* (Tubingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2006); and Joel Willitz, *Matthew’s Messianic Shepherd-King* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007).

30. Jeremiah 12:16, 18:9, 31:4, 33:7, 42:10; Amos 9:11; 1 Corinthians 3:9–15, 14:4–5, 12; Ephesians 2:19–20; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:1–6; 1 Peter 2:5, 4:17; 1QS 5:5–7; 8:4–10; 9:3–6; 1Qp Habbakkuk 12:3; 4Q164. See Turner, *Matthew*, 405.

31. 1QH 6:24–28.

32. The messianic role was connected with temple building both in connection with its Davidic roots (see 2 Samuel 7:12–13, 1 Chronicles 17:7–10, and 4Q174) and, more importantly, with the anticipation of a renewed temple in the last days. See Isaiah 2:2–3; Ezekiel 37:26–27, 40–48; Micah 4:1–2; Psalm 87:5–6; Zechariah 4:7–9; Tobit 14:5; Sirach 36:13–14; 2 Maccabees 1:29; 11Q19 47:1–18. 4Q174 links Nathan’s prophecy to David with his messianic hopes for a temple in the end of times.

33. Barber, “Jesus as the Davidic Temple Builder,” 942.

34. The Gospel of Matthew again connects the title “Son of God” with building and the temple when Jesus was accused of being the Son of God at his trial and he promises that he will rebuild the temple (see Matthew 26:61, 27:40). See Barber, “Jesus as the Davidic Temple Builder,” 941.

35. W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), 2:626–68; R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 193–94; Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew–Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 9:410.

36. For a few scholars who have supported this connection, see H. Benedict Green, *Matthew, Poet of the Beatitudes* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 135; J. A. Emerton, “Binding and Loosing—Forgiving and Retaining,” in *Journal of Theological Studies* 13 (1962): 325–31; Davies and Allison, 2:640; Craig A. Evans, *Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 314; John T. Willis, “An Interpretation of Isaiah 22:15–25 and Its Function in the New Testament,” in *Early Christian Interpretations of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 344–51.

37. See Joel Marcus, “The Gates of Hades and the Keys of the Kingdom (Matthew 16:18–19),” in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 449–52. The *Sipre* on Deuteronomy 32:25 actually speaks of this authority in connection with Eliakim’s authority to open and shut, in a direct allusion to Isaiah 22:22.

38. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 473; Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament, Fourth Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 186.

39. Joseph Smith, History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842], 546; <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842?p=546>.

40. “How have we come at the priesthood in the last days? It came down in regular succession. Peter, James, and John had it given to them and they gave it to others.” Smith, History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1, 546.

41. Boyd K. Packer, “The Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 7.

42. See James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914), 12:494.

43. For the priesthood connection with fatherhood, see Judges 17:10.

44. See Exodus 37:16, Numbers 4:7–15, 1 Kings 7:50, 1 Chronicles 28:11–19, and Jeremiah 52:19.

45. Although I am responsible for the specific Hebrew connections, the proposal of Eliakim as a messianic high priest is by Barber, “Jesus as the Davidic Temple Builder,” 944.

46. This is from the Midrash Rabbah. See Leviticus Rabbah 5:5.

47. Barber summarizes this literature effectively in “Jesus as the Davidic Temple Builder,” 946–47.

48. Neil M. Alexander, ed., *NIB* (Nashville: Abingdom Press, 1995), 8:346.

49. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 472; Albright and Mann, *The Anchor Bible: Matthew*, 196; George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible*, 12 vols. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), 7:452.

50. Gerhard Friedrich, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 6:96.

51. Joseph Smith, History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1–2 [2 November 1838–31 July 1852], 547; <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842?p=547>.

52. It is not possible for a modern reader to determine whether this addition by Joseph Smith was meant to restore an ancient meaning that had been lost from the text, or whether it was meant as modern prophetic commentary on the role of Peter and the role of prophets.

53. Gerhard Friedrich, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 6:96.

54. Revelation, June 1829-E [D&C 17]; <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/revelation-june-1829-e-dc-17>. W. W. Phelps appears to be the first to have referred to the interpreters and Joseph's seer stone as "Urim and Thummim," as can be seen in "The Book of Mormon," *The Evening and the Morning Star*, January 1833, 2.

55. A similar connection between seer and stone may be found in Alma 37, in which Alma the Younger asks his son to preserve the Nephite interpreters (see Alma 37:21, 24–25). The Lord states, "I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem, a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light," whose purpose is to assist God's people in obtaining knowledge. The difficulty in distinguishing whether Gazelem refers to the servant or to the stone may indicate that both will "shine forth in darkness unto light."

56. "I am convinced in my own mind that when the Savior took the three disciples up on the mount. . . . He there gave unto them the ordinances that pertain to the house of the Lord and that they were endowed. That was the only place they could go. That place became holy and sacred for the rites of salvation which were performed on that occasion." Bruce R. McConkie, comp., *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 2:170.

57. Revelation, Spring 1829 [D&C 10]; <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/revelation-spring-1829-dc-10>.

58. Michael Hubbard MacKay, ed., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press), xxx.

59. MacKay, *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, xxxii.

60. MacKay, *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, xxxv.

61. Joseph Smith, *Times and Seasons*, 15 February 1842, 693; <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/times-and-seasons-15-february-1842?p=7>.

62. Donfried, "Peter," 257.

63. Spencer W. Kimball, "Revelation: The Word of the Lord to His Prophets," *Ensign*, May 1977, 78.

64. Fahlbusch and Bromiley, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 172.

65. David A. Bednar, "Converted unto the Lord," *Ensign*, November 2012, 106.

66. Henry B. Eyring, "We Must Raise Our Sights," as quoted in *Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Manual* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2012), 405.

