



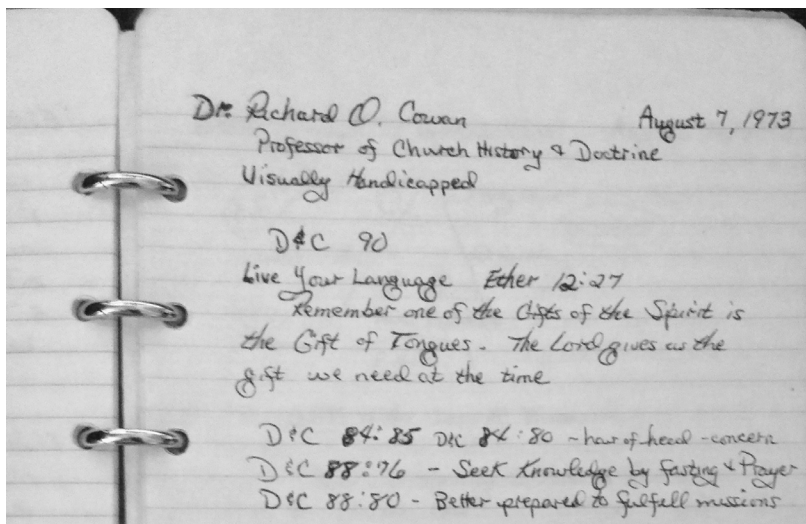
*Families are sealed together through priesthood power in rooms such as this one found in the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple. (Photo by Christina Smith, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.)*

# THE PROMISES MADE TO AND THE RIGHT BELONGING TO THE FATHERS



CRAIG JAMES OSTLER

*My first encounter with Dr. Richard O. Cowan came on August 7 in the summer of 1973. I was in the Language Training Mission on Brigham Young University campus preparing to serve as a missionary in Colombia. A young professor of Church history came to speak to us regarding missionary work. I was enthralled as this man, who was visually impaired but spiritually enlightened, taught us that “perhaps the very things that make us feel inadequate can be our strengths.”<sup>1</sup> From his encouragement, I took handwritten notes that I have retained to this day. A little over twenty years later, I received a call from Dr. Cowan, who, as the chair of the Department of Church History and Doctrine, invited me to join the faculty at Brigham Young University. We celebrated that moment together by going for lunch to “eat Mexican,” as he called it. Since that time I have enjoyed additional lunches together, where we have “eaten Mexican.” In addition, Dr. Cowan and I have worked together editing articles for publication and collaborating in writing. He has always been a scholar and a gentleman. For more than fifty years, Dr. Richard O. Cowan contributed to our understanding and appreciation of the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, especially regarding temples and their importance. I have chosen that rather than author an article rich in the history of the*



An excerpt of handwritten notes recorded by the author in 1973 during Richard Cowan's address to a group of missionaries. (Courtesy of Craig James Ostler.)

*Church, to focus on the theology of the promises associated with temples for which Dr. Cowan has invested so much love and energy.*

In the dispensation of the fulness of times, the Lord revealed promises he made to the early patriarchs of the Old Testament. In so doing, the Lord also made known the right of the patriarchs or those known as the fathers and what it means to be numbered among the fathers in eternity. Further, he clarified that those who were heirs to the right of the fathers were ordained to the priesthood in a patriarchal order.

The Prophet Joseph Smith recounted that on the night of September 21–22, 1823, Moroni quoted the prophecy of Malachi regarding the return of Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord “with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles” (Joseph Smith—History 1:36).<sup>2</sup> Moroni’s variation emphasizes the latter-day restoration of the blessings of the priesthood and promises made to the fathers: “Behold, I will reveal unto you *the priesthood*, by the hand of Elijah the prophet . . .,” Moroni pronounced, “and he shall plant in the hearts of the children *the promises* made to *the fathers*, and the hearts of the children shall turn to *their*

*fathers*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:39; emphasis added). Before Moroni expounded Malachi’s promise, there were none on earth that understood it. The words of Malachi’s promise in the Bibles of that day did not provide the necessary elements of the prophecy to understand its true meaning. This passage as rendered in the King James Translation of Malachi makes no reference to “the priesthood,” or “the promises,” nor does it make a distinction between “the fathers” to whom the promises were made and the group known as “their fathers” to whom the hearts of the children would turn (see Malachi 4:5–6). Thus Moroni’s expounding of Malachi’s promise opens the door to consider each of these terms and their connections to each other.

While the Prophet Joseph Smith worked on the translation of the Book of Abraham he learned that Abraham “sought for the blessings of *the fathers*,” including that of becoming “a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding *the right* belonging to *the fathers*” (Abraham 1:2; emphasis added). Understanding how Malachi’s promise of Elijah’s return and Abraham’s account relate to each other and their common message enlightens readers regarding priesthood and family. A discussion of these two passages also offers insight to the ancient biblical record regarding the attention to genealogy of the fathers, especially in the book of Genesis. Further, individuals may better understand how they can become one of “the fathers.”

## The Fathers and the Promises

Several writers have taken in hand to identify the various aspects of the prophecy in Malachi as quoted by Moroni or they have provided commentary on Abraham seeking the blessings of the fathers, including discussions of the meanings of “the promises” and “the fathers.”<sup>3</sup> However, although understanding of these passages of scripture is intertwined, none of these writers have made connections between Malachi’s prophecy and Abraham’s writings. Further complicating understanding is that some writers have mistakenly confused reference to promises made to “*the fathers*” with turning the hearts of the children to “*their fathers*” without regard to the additional insight

offered from the clarifications in Moroni's citation of the passage from Malachi. No doubt much of the reason for the confusion is that the authors wished to emphasize the connections of Malachi's promise with family history and vicarious ordinances for the dead. For example, in their commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, Smith and Sjodahl explained that "the fathers are our ancestors for whom the work of salvation could not be done while they were living. *This includes all from the beginning down to and including this dispensation who were denied the knowledge of the Gospel and the privilege of the ordinances thereof.*"<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, in contrast to interpreting "the fathers" as ancestors that died without opportunity to accept the gospel, Elder Bruce R. McConkie provided an insightful perspective that "the fathers were three in number. There is a general sense in which revelations came to several ancestors that bear on the subject, or at least allude to it, but the fathers within the meaning of this passage are three in number: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our ancestors." He continued, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received some promises."<sup>5</sup> A few writers have cited Elder McConkie's explanation but then determined to leave the discussion closed without considering the connection to "the fathers" to whom Abraham referred in his record. Thus there is need to build upon and add to Elder McConkie's explanation to better understand how these two accounts inform us concerning "the promises" and "the fathers."

First, it is imperative to understand that as recorded in the book of Genesis and explained in the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants, the promises made to the fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—are those of eternal and innumerable seed or posterity. To Abraham the Lord said, "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered" (Genesis 13:16). Following the test of offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice, this promise was renewed. The Lord swore unto Abraham, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore" (Genesis 22:17). These promises

were further renewed with Isaac and then with Jacob in essentially the same words. To Isaac the Lord said, “I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven” (Genesis 26:3–4). Likewise, when Isaac’s future bride, Rebekah, prepared to leave her home and family to travel with Abraham’s servant to marry Isaac, her family blessed her, “be thou the mother of thousands of millions” (Genesis 24:60). Lastly, the Lord taught Jacob and in a dream or a vision promised him, “thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth” (Genesis 28:14).

In this dispensation, the Lord revealed, explained, and renewed the promises made to the ancient fathers. He revealed that the promise of innumerable seed is fulfilled within the bounds of marriage and that a man and a woman could be sealed as husband and wife for eternity. Further, he explained that those who enter into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage and have that covenant sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise will inherit the highest degree of celestial glory, “which glory shall be a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19). William Clayton, the Prophet Joseph Smith’s clerk and journalist, recorded that Joseph taught, “Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity while in this probation by the power and authority of the Holy priesthood they will cease to increase when they die (i.e., they will not have any children in the resurrection), but those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory.”<sup>6</sup>

Most important, the promises made to the fathers are not restricted to the ancient patriarchs. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord renewed the promises that he had made anciently to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord affirmed, “Abraham received promises concerning his seed . . . which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were

to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them. This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham” (D&C 132:30–31).

To better comprehend the promises made to the fathers, consider a supposition for a moment. What if Abraham and Sarah never had any children? Suppose that they passed from mortality and died in their old age without ever giving life to Isaac. Further, suppose that Abraham never took Hagar or Keturah to wife and thus never had children by either of them.<sup>7</sup> What would then have become of the promises the Lord made to Abraham that his seed would be as numberless as the sands of the seashore or the stars in the heaven? Could the Lord still have fulfilled the promises made to Abraham? Our understanding is that the answer to those inquiries is that God could fulfill those promises to Abraham in the resurrection. That is, in the resurrection, Abraham’s body would be renewed to have the power to beget children and have seed throughout eternity.<sup>8</sup> This is the meaning of the above passage that “Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins [that] . . . as touching Abraham and his seed, *out of the world they should continue*; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were able to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them” (D&C 132:30; emphasis added).

In the latter days, the Lord renewed the promises made to Abraham with the assurance that “this promise is yours” (D&C 132:31). That is, the Lord restored the blessing of endless seed to those living in this dispensation and they can obtain the promise of being fathers and mothers in eternity. They “shall come forth in the first resurrection . . . to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19). Referring to women who are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, President Joseph F. Smith explained, “Some of you will understand when I tell you that some of these good women who have passed beyond have actually been anointed queens and priestesses unto God and unto their husbands, to continue their work and to be mothers of spirits in the world to come.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, following the resurrection from the dead,



they will come forth from the grave with bodies that have power to beget, conceive, and give birth to spirit children.<sup>10</sup> In eternity their posterity will be as numberless as the stars in the heavens or the sands upon the seashore.

## Abraham Sought the Promises Made to the Fathers

Abraham began his record declaring that he sought for “the blessings of the fathers” (Abraham 1:2). Although he was a rightful heir to these blessings, the link to them had been removed due to the apostate condition of his own immediate “fathers.” It appears that Abraham learned from “the records of the fathers” that “there was greater happiness and rest and peace” than he possessed (Abraham 1:2, 31). He identified himself as “a follower of righteousness” who desired to possess greater knowledge and to be “a greater follower of righteousness,” which he identified as one who is “a father of many nations” and a “prince of peace.” Thus he said he became a “High Priest, holding *the right* belonging to *the fathers*.” He explained, “It was conferred upon me from *the fathers*; it came down from *the fathers*, from the beginning of time, yea even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or *first father*, through *the fathers* unto me. I sought for mine appointment unto *the Priesthood* according to the appointment of God unto *the fathers* concerning the seed” (Abraham 1:2–4; emphasis added).<sup>11</sup> All of which is to say that Abraham sought after and received the promises bestowed within the priesthood made to the fathers that they would continue to have seed in and after the resurrection.

Tracing these blessings back to Abraham’s righteous fathers leads to father Adam. Adam and Eve knew of the fulness of the gospel and taught it to their children (see Moses 5:1–12). Because our first parents were faithful in all things God said to Adam, “Thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity” (Moses 6:67), referring to “*the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God*” (D&C 107:3; emphasis in the original).



Regarding the blessings and promises to the fathers, President Ezra Taft Benson said:

To enter into the order of the Son of God is the equivalent today of entering in to the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is only received in the house of the Lord. . . .

Three years before Adam's death, a great event occurred. He took his son Seth, his grandson Enos, and other high priests who were his direct-line descendants, with others of his righteous posterity, into a valley called Adam-ondi-Ahman. There Adam gave to these righteous descendants his last blessing. . . .

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that Adam blessed his posterity because "he wanted to bring them into the presence of God."

President Benson then asked, "How did Adam bring his descendants into the presence of the Lord?" To which he responded:

The answer: Adam and his descendants entered into the priesthood order of God. Today we would say they went to the House of the Lord and received their blessings.

But this order is otherwise described in modern revelation as an order of family government where a man and woman enter into a covenant with God—just as did Adam and Eve—to be sealed for eternity, to have posterity, and to do the will and work of God throughout their mortality.<sup>12</sup>

On April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, "Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham" to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (D&C 110:12). This refers to the priesthood authority and keys given to Abraham and those that held that authority and keys after him to the time of the dispensation of Moses. The promises of eternal marriage, eternal family relationships, and eternal seed needed to be dispensed anew to Abraham and his posterity just as it had been dispensed earlier to Adam, Enoch, and Noah in their respective dispensations. Elias restored that gospel, or rather restored the opportunity to enter into the covenant of Abraham for those living in this dispensation. "Thus all promises made to Abraham relative to his seed—the endless continuation of his family

and his eternal relationship with his wife Sarah—are granted to all who receive that same gospel.”<sup>13</sup>

As to what is involved in receiving these promises, Elder Bruce R. McConkie observed:

Joseph Smith says that in the temple of God there is an order of priesthood that is patriarchal. “Go to the temple,” he says, “and find out about this order.” So I went to the temple, and I took my wife with me, and we kneeled at the altar. There on that occasion we entered, the two of us, into an “order of the priesthood.” When we did it, we had sealed upon us, on a conditional basis, every blessing that God promised Father Abraham—the blessings of exaltation and eternal increase. The name of that order of priesthood, which is patriarchal in nature, because Abraham was a natural patriarch to his posterity, is the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage.<sup>14</sup>

This is the promise made to the fathers for which Abraham sought. Or to state it another way, he sought the promise to become one of those that are fathers in eternity.

Abraham referred to this priesthood for which he sought as even that which “came down from *the fathers*, from the beginning



*As families receive the gospel, they will be blessed with the same promises made to Abraham.*  
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of time, yea even from the beginning, or *before* the foundation of the earth” (Abraham 1:3; emphasis added). In Abraham’s discussion of his desire to receive “the right belonging to the fathers,” it is notable that he referred to that right in context of the “first father.” That is, he explained that it is “the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or *first father*” (Abraham 1:2–3; emphasis added). Abraham’s record appears to affirm that the name “Adam,” given to the first man, literally means “first father.” If so, the title, “first father,” apparently, has greater significance than simply referring to the first man on this earth. Adding to Abraham’s explanation, Brigham Young taught, “In the first place the name of the man is given, a new name, Adam, signifying the first man, or Eve, the first woman. Adam’s name was more ancient than he was. It was the name of a man long before him, who enjoyed the Priesthood.”<sup>15</sup> There are many explanations that might be given discussing to whom Brigham Young referred as having been more ancient than Adam or Eve. It is clear that Adam was known as Michael the archangel before his mortal sojourn (D&C 27:11). From Brigham Young’s explanation, it appears that the new name of Adam was given to Michael in mortality because he had become the “first father” of those born into mortality upon this earth. It is probable that the name was given to Michael to emphasize that, as the first father of the human family, he was symbolic of the more ancient “first father.” No further explanation is available as to whom that man was, who was more ancient than Adam, whose name signifies “first father.” Within the boundaries of that which is appropriate, it is possible that the name Adam refers to God the Father as a perfect and glorified man, who is the “first father.” If so, then Abraham’s explanation that the right belonging to the fathers traces back to the first father, “even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth” (Abraham 1:3), indicates that he sought to be blessed with the opportunity to become as God, the Eternal Father.<sup>16</sup>

## The Right Belonging to the Fathers

It is clear from Abraham’s record that he understood the promises made to the fathers could only be obtained if one became “a

rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers” (Abraham 1:2). The Old Testament record gives considerable attention to genealogy of the early fathers, delineating that Adam begat Seth, who begat Enos, who begat Cainan, and so forth (see Genesis 5:1–32). The long lists of fathers in the genealogical record of the Old Testament have a very important purpose regarding priesthood (see Ezra 2:61–62). The Lord made clear to the Prophet Joseph Smith that the genealogical lists in Genesis were ancient priesthood lines of authority. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that the same listing of names enumerating who begat who in the Old Testament is also the line of authority within a patriarchal order of priesthood. “The order of this priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son,” he clarified, “and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promises were made. This order was instituted in the days of Adam, and came down in the following manner: From Adam to Seth, who was ordained by Adam. . .” (D&C 107:40–42). The Prophet then gave an account of how each succeeding generational head received the priesthood. In other words, Adam ordained his posterity to the priesthood generation after generation. That is, Adam ordained his grandson Enos, great-grandson Cainan, great-great-grandson Mahalaleel, as well as third, fourth, and fifth great-grandsons Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah. In turn, Seth ordained Methuselah’s son, Lamech, and Methuselah ordained his grandson Noah. (See D&C 107:44–53; compare Genesis 5:3–32; Moses 6:10–25; also see D&C 84:6–16.) That the priesthood was made available to the early fathers is also made clear in the Prophet Joseph Smith’s translation of the hypocephalus that accompanies the Book of Abraham. He indicated that one of the figures in the Egyptian papyri represents “God, sitting upon his throne, clothed with power and authority; with a crown of eternal light upon his head; representing also the grand Keywords of the Holy Priesthood, as revealed to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as also to Seth, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and all to whom the Priesthood was revealed” (Abraham Facsimile 2:3).



*The Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple is one of many temples where Saints can seek for the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. (Photo by Matt Reier, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.)*

Further, the Prophet taught that these early patriarchs, Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, “were all high priests” (D&C 107:53). Thus, although focus on family history and genealogy is important, there was a more important purpose in the genealogical lists. The lists provided the means to ascertain who had rightful claim to the priesthood. False priests in Abraham’s day claimed that they had rights to the priesthood. Indeed, Abraham reported that his own father had been led astray by their claims: “Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have right to the priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim to it from Noah through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry” (Abraham 1:27). However, “the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs,” provided Abraham the line of true priesthood bearers (Abraham 1:31). Equally important, and perhaps more so, the records gave the lineage of those that held the priesthood keys within the patriarchal order, which is the authorization to preside over the family units within the priesthood. Thus the seemingly boring chapters of genealogy in the Old Testament actually provided the means

to many, who lived anciently, to avoid deception of those that would “fain claim” the priesthood (Abraham 1:27, see vv. 25–27, 31).

## Summary and Application

Today Saints seek for the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. That is, we seek for the same blessings that Abraham sought for and received. By receiving the covenant in houses of the Lord, we tread in Abrahamic footsteps as the promises made to Abraham are bestowed upon us. We become greater followers of righteousness, possess greater knowledge, and become rightful heirs, holding the right belonging to the fathers (see Abraham 1:2).

In addition, the term “the fathers” appears to refer not only to those that were earthly fathers, but also as a title, or at least a description of those that have been given the promise of eternal seed. That is, to be recognized as a “father” has reference to having received the blessings of exaltation. In other words, a “father” is one who has been sealed up to eternal life by having his marriage sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. Thus for Elijah to reveal the priesthood and to plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers is to have the blessings of exaltation and eternal seed revealed anew in this dispensation. Such was the Lord’s design from before the beginning of the restoration of the gospel.

Revelations of the Restoration teach that those who receive the gospel in latter days are “heirs according to the covenant” (D&C 52:2). We are given words to ponder that “through the lineage of [our] fathers . . . [we] are heirs, according to the flesh” (D&C 86:8–9). That is, the Lord testified, “This promise is yours because ye are of Abraham” (D&C 132:30). Thus, those who accept the gospel and enter into the covenant of Abraham have a right to all of the promises made to our ancient fathers.

Similar to the safety found in records of the patriarchal order of priesthood ordinations anciently, today we have security in the unbroken line of authority from the Prophet Joseph Smith to the current President of the Church. Any claims that fall outside that line of authority are like the false claims of the Pharaohs and their priests in

Abraham's day. Likewise, by placing our trust in the unbroken line of Presidents of the Church, we can find protection against deception while seeking the promises made to the fathers.

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## Notes

1. The author's personal notes of the talk given by Dr. Richard O. Cowan, Language Training Mission, Provo, Utah, August 7, 1973.

2. The reference to "our bibles" apparently refers to the King James Translation of the Bible.

3. Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1958), 12–16; Elder Bruce R. McConkie, "The Promises Made to the Fathers," *Studies in Scripture, volume 3: The Old Testament*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985), 47–62; H. Donl Peterson, *The Pearl of Great Price: A History and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987); Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1969); Richard Draper, S. Kent Brown, and Michael D. Rhodes, *The Pearl of Great Price: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005); Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 1:32; Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler, *Revelations of the Restoration: A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000).

4. Smith and Sjodahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, 16; emphasis in the original. The promises to the fathers were often explained as promises made to those that did not hear the gospel in mortality having an opportunity to receive vicarious ordinances of salvation performed in their behalf by their posterity. For examples of this idea being perpetuated, see references to the teachings of Joseph Fielding Smith and John A. Widtsoe regarding salvation for the dead excerpted and included as commentary in the *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, 2001), 7–8.

5. Bruce R. McConkie, "The Promises Made to the Fathers," 52. Also see D&C 27:10, which identifies "Joseph and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, your fathers, by whom the promises remain."

6. *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, ed. George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 102 [May 16, 1843]. Joseph Smith, *History*



of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1949), 5:391.

7. Hagar bore Abraham Ishmael (Genesis 16:1–4, 15–16), and Keturah bore Abraham six sons following Sarah's death (see Genesis 25:1–4).

8. The Lord revealed that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob “have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods” (D&C 132:37). Thus it must be that Abraham has been resurrected.

9. *Gospel Doctrine: Sermons and Writings of President Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1939, 1986), 461.

10. The author is aware that Samuel Brown has written taking exception to the teachings of resurrected beings begetting, conceiving, and giving birth to premortal spirits and disagrees with Brown's proposal. See Samuel M. Brown, “Believing Adoption,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2013): 45–65.

11. It is evident that Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek. Melchizedek is identified as a great high priest and the king of Salem (see Genesis 14:18; Alma 13:17–19). Indeed, the priesthood “is called the Melchizedek Priesthood . . . because Melchizedek was such a great high priest” (D&C 107:2). Melchizedek blessed Abraham and although it is not included in scriptural texts, it is very likely that he also received the keys to direct the priesthood from Melchizedek (see Genesis 14:18).

12. Ezra Taft Benson, “What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, August, 1985, 8–9.

13. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler, *Revelations of the Restoration: A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 892.

14. Bruce R. McConkie, “Eternal Family Concept,” address given at Priesthood Genealogical Research Seminar, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, June 23, 1967.

15. *An Intimate Chronicle*, 238.

16. Our “Father” in heaven is the supreme Father of fathers. He set the course that we might become fathers as he is. In Spanish, “mothers” are included in the term “los padres,” which can be translated as either “fathers” or “parents.” I believe that this is the case in the English term “fathers.” It may refer to parents, the unit of husband and wife, father and mother, who have entered into this order of the priesthood, or the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, which opens the door to the promises made to the fathers to have eternal increase. For a discussion on our potential to become like God, see “Becoming Like God,” <https://www.lds.org/topics/becoming-like-god?lang=eng&query=become+god>.