

Selected Statements on
The Preparatory Gospel
and the Everlasting (Higher) Gospel

What is the Gospel?

Brigham Young

The Gospel of the Son of God that has been revealed is a plan or system of laws and ordinances, by strict obedience to which the people who inhabit this earth are assured that they may return again into the presence of the Father and the Son. [*Journal of Discourses* 13:233; *Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.1]

Spencer W. Kimball

Now, what is the gospel of which we speak? It is the power of God unto salvation; it is the code of laws and commandments which help us to become perfect, and the ordinances which constitute the entrance requirements.

The ordinances begin with baptism by immersion by proper authority for the remission of sins and for entrance into the earthly kingdom of God. It is followed by the reception of the Holy Ghost, which is promised to every person who qualifies. The priesthood is given, which opens further doors; the endowment is an indispensable feature in preparation for eternal life; and then, the sealing in the holy temple of a man and a woman for an eternal relationship. These are indispensable! No one can ever reach the heights of exaltation and eternal life without all of them. [*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.502]

Stephen L Richards

Can a man be a Christian without allying himself with a Christian church? Is it sufficient that one adopt the Christian virtues in his life -- be unselfish kind, considerate, long-suffering, patient, gentle, serving his fellow man after the pattern set by the Savior? Is this alone sufficient? There is no question that a man so living commands the utmost respect and esteem of good people. There is no question but that such a life is filled with happiness and satisfactions -- satisfactions that endure. Is all this good living of itself enough?

At this point I must introduce to my friends -- my fellow members of the Church are well acquainted with it -- a scripture from modern revelation, which brings clarity to our thinking. These are the words of the Lord to his Prophet: "And verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth my gospel receiveth me; and he that receiveth not my gospel receiveth not me." (D&C 39:5.)

Now if it is essential to receive the gospel in order to receive the Christ, what follows? To answer this we must understand and define the gospel. Is the gospel itself anything more than the sum total of the Savior's divine attributes and qualities? I think that all who give careful consideration to the scriptures and the works of

the Master will agree that it is. Perhaps the most famous of all definitions of the gospel is that given by Paul when he said: ". . . I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;..." (Romans 1:16.)

It is certainly not difficult to gather from the words, "power of God unto salvation," a meaning beyond that of a moral code for living based upon the attributes of the Savior. The gospel as a power unto salvation must embrace not only all the Christlike characteristics of living, but also the means essential to salvation. These indispensable means or essentials for salvation have been clearly set forth by the Savior on numerous occasions and in unmistakable terms. He prescribed ordinances and proclaimed their indispensable nature. He declared to John the Baptist who protested his application for baptism that baptism "becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (Matt. 3:13-16.) Time and again he and his apostles after him exhorted all to repentance and baptism and to faith, firm and abiding faith in him and the holy gospel.

If there should be any uncertainty in the mind of anyone professing to be Christian as to the essentiality of the gospel and its ordinances, it seems to me it should be completely resolved by the final charge to his disciples, given in almost the closing hours of his mortal life, when he uttered these portentous words: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:18-20.) [Conference Report, April 1959, p.52-54]

Harold B. Lee

What is the gospel then? . . . So often I hear my brethren saying something that I wish we would not say quite that way -- that the gospel is a way of life. It is not a way of life -- it is the way to eternal life. It is the science of salvation. [Conference Report, April 1959, p.68]

Bruce R. McConkie

What is the gospel? It is the plan of salvation; it is the way and means whereby fallen man may find place again in the heaven of heavens; it is the power of God whereby salvation comes. [*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p.628 - p.629]

Two Gospels

Bruce R. McConkie

There are two gospels -- the preparatory gospel and the fulness

of the everlasting gospel. There are two proclamations, two pronouncements of glad tidings, two messages of light and truth and power, which God has given to his people at one time or another. What the people receive at any given moment in time depends upon them. The Lord gives them all of his word, or only a portion, depending on "the heed and diligence which they give unto him." If all men had open hearts and receptive minds; if they desired righteousness and sought truth in preference to all else; if they conformed to every true principle they received -- all would accept the fulness of his gospel and join that church and kingdom which is always administered for the benefit and blessing of mankind. As it is written: "He that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full." (Alma 12:9-10.)

As is evident from the pure meaning of the words themselves, the fulness of the everlasting gospel has always existed and will continue to endure forever; the preparatory gospel, on the other hand, is not eternal in nature, but is something that goes before and makes people ready for the receipt of the fulness of saving truth. [*The Promised Messiah*, p.404]

Delbert L. Stapley

Among the many choice teachings given by the Savior in that inspiring Sermon on the Mount, is this important instruction:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate . .

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14.)

You will observe that I have quoted only the positive elements of this scripture. To enter the straight gate implies obedience to gospel requirements, and the narrow way that leads to life connotes additional requirements, rites, and ordinances for all who desire salvation and exaltation. . . .

I should like to ask, "What is the straight gate spoken of by the Savior by which we should enter?" Nephi, in the closing days of

his ministry, gave a great discourse to his people embodying much in the way of prophesying, and in it furnishes the most direct and comprehensive answer to this question by saying:

"For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost." (2 Nephi 31:17.) . . .

My brothers and sisters, we see from this that the function of the Holy Ghost to those who have received its bestowal is to guide in the narrow way to an understanding of what is required for eternal life and glory. Men, through faithfulness, must become worthy for ordination to the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, that priesthood after the order of the Son of God, which ordination and priesthood makes possible receiving the spiritual blessings of God's kingdom, for it is in the gospel ordinances officiated in by the authority of the Holy Priesthood that the powers of godliness are manifest unto men in the flesh. In this dispensation God has restored the keys, powers, and authorities to officiate in all the sacred ordinances with the right to seal and bind for time and all eternity both the living and the dead.

For the sacred purpose of obtaining the higher gospel ordinances and blessings, God has commanded that temples should be built wherein his people can receive their endowments and sealings, to prepare them for celestial glory. Worthy women, as worthy men, enjoy the privileges of temple ordinances and blessings, receiving them by the authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood. Both make covenants with God, and both accept obligations and responsibility; also pledge faithfulness and obedience to God. . . .

All who have repented and then been baptized and received the Holy Ghost by authorized servants of I God have entered in by the straight gate. The narrow way can only be followed by obedience and faithfulness to all the sacred ordinances and requirements of the higher gospel plan, obtained in the holy temples of God. [Conference Report, April 1955, p.65]

Two Priesthoods

Bruce R. McConkie

For our purposes here, the great distinction between the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood is this: The Melchizedek Priesthood administers the gospel in its everlasting fulness, but the Aaronic Priesthood administers the preparatory gospel only, which preparatory gospel is the law of Moses and includes the law of carnal commandments.[*The Promised Messiah*, p.410]

Joseph Smith was asked, "Was the Priesthood of Melchizedek taken away when Moses died?" He replied: "All Priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it. That portion which brought Moses to speak with God face to face was taken away; but that which brought the ministry of angels remained." (Teachings, pp. 180-81.) In other words, there is only one priesthood, but it comes in degrees; it is given partially or it is conferred in its fulness; it comes as the order of Aaron or as the order of Melchizedek. In this same sense, there is only one gospel,

one law, one system of salvation, and it comes in degrees. It is all the law of Christ. Salvation comes from no other source. He gives to men as much of his law as they are able to bear. If they can only bear up under the burdens of the lesser system, the schooling system, the preparatory gospel, that is all they receive. Men are given according to their desires and their deeds. [*The Mortal Messiah*, 1:73]

George Q. Cannon

Here is plainly pointed out to us as a people the future glory that God has in store for all those who receive and magnify the Priesthood. They are to receive the Father's Kingdom, and if they receive the Father's Kingdom, they are to receive all that the Father hath, for all that he hath will be given unto them. Can you conceive of this? Can any human being conceive of the immeasurable extent of the glory here promised--the immeasurable extent of exaltation here offered unto all those who receive the Priesthood of the Son of God, and who magnify it? . . .

God designed when He led Israel out of Egypt to make of that people a royal Priesthood--a kingdom of Kings and Priests. He designed to lead them forward under the guidance of the everlasting Priesthood, the Priesthood after the holy order of the Son of God--to lead them forward until they should behold the face of their God and see Him for themselves. But they would not. They hardened their hearts. They could not endure His presence. Moses, despite all the power which God gave him, and the revelations which He poured out upon him--Moses could not succeed in leading that people forward. They were a stiff-necked race; they were a rebellious race; they were an idolatrous race; they were hard in their hearts; and they would not have God to be their King. They wanted a lower order of affairs; they wanted lower laws, laws that were more in accordance with their fallen and carnal natures. Therefore according to those revelations which God has given unto us, He took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also, and the lesser Priesthood continued, the Priesthood of Aaron, a Priesthood that held the keys of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel, the gospel of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. He left that with them, and the law of carnal commandments which the Lord in His wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel until John [see D&C 84:23-27]. They were under this law during this long period. God raised up John as a forerunner to prepare the way for the fullness of the everlasting Gospel and the restoration of the Priesthood in its fullness, that Melchizedek Priesthood which Moses held, and through which he exercised such mighty power among the children of Israel. And it was God's design--if the people would have submitted to it, if they would have received the message that He sent unto them through John and afterwards through His beloved Son--to have restored the Kingdom even to Israel, and to have built up the Kingdom in great power and glory upon the earth. But instead of receiving the Gospel and the Melchizedek Priesthood, they actually destroyed the Son of God. But before they destroyed Him, they destroyed the heir of the Priesthood of Aaron, John the Baptist, who was a direct descendant of Aaron, and by virtue of this descent held the keys of that Priesthood, and exercised the authority and power thereof

among the Jews. Not content with rejecting the Son of God, they rejected even John, and the Aaronic Priesthood as well as the Melchizedek Priesthood was taken from the midst of the Jews, and they have remained without Priesthood having been withdrawn from their midst--the authority to officiate in the ordinances pertaining thereunto.

Now, this Priesthood which God has restored in these last days through Peter, James and John, is the Priesthood that continueth in the Church of God in all generations. The Church of God cannot be without it; for without it the power of Godliness is not made manifest to men in the flesh. A people can progress to a certain extent with the Aaronic Priesthood, but there is a limit to their progress. There are bounds beyond which they cannot pass. They cannot attain to the fullness of the glory of God the Eternal Father, without the presence of the Melchizedek Priesthood; for as I have read in your hearing, "This greater Priesthood administereth the Gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God; therefore in the ordinances thereof," [that is, in the ordinances of the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood] "the power of Godliness is manifest." This cannot be manifest without that higher Priesthood, without the power which accompanies it. "And without the ordinances thereof," the revelation continues, "and the authority of the Priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live." [D&C 84:19-22]

Without this Priesthood, without its ordinances, without its powers, without its gifts, "no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live." Therefore it is essential that, if a people should be exalted unto the presence of God, they should have this Melchizedek or greater Priesthood, and the ordinances thereof, by the means of which they are to be prepared, or they shall be prepared to enter into the presence of God the Father, and endure His presence. [*Journal of Discourses*, 25: 290-294]

The Preparatory Gospel

D&C 84:26-27

And the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel;

Which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.

Joseph Smith

The spirit of Elias is to prepare the way for a greater revelation of God, which is the Priesthood that Aaron was ordained unto. And when God sends a man into the world to prepare for a greater work, holding the keys of the power of Elias, it was called the doctrine of Elias, even from the early ages of the world.

John's mission was limited to preaching and baptizing; but what he did was legal; and when Jesus Christ came to any of John's disciples, He baptized them with fire and the Holy Ghost. . . .

John did not transcend his bounds, but faithfully performed that part belonging to his office; and every portion of the great building should be prepared right and assigned to its proper place; and it is necessary to know who holds the keys of power, and who does not, or we may be likely to be deceived.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44 p.336

That person who holds the keys of Elias hath a preparatory work. [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.336]

Bruce R. McConkie

On the other hand, the preparatory gospel is a lesser portion of the Lord's saving truths, a portion which prepares and schools

men for a future day when the fulness of the gospel may be received, a portion which of itself is not sufficient to seal men up unto eternal life or assure them an inheritance in the celestial world. The preparatory gospel “is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments.” (D. & C. 84:27.) It is a gospel system administered by the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood. When the power to bestow the Holy Ghost is enjoyed, which power is reserved for holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, then the fulness of the gospel is manifest. John the Baptist administered the preparatory gospel; Christ came with the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and restored the fulness of the gospel. (John 1:26-27; Acts 19:1-6.) [*Mormon Doctrine*, p.333]

What does a forerunner or an Elias do to prepare a people for Him who shall come after? He calls people to repentance and baptizes them in water “for the remission of sins,” which freedom from sin is actually obtained when the repentant person receives the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost. This was the mission of John. He acted in the power and authority of the Aaronic Priesthood. A forerunner preaches “the preparatory gospel”; the One who comes after preaches the fulness of the gospel. “The preparatory gospel . . . is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins.” (D&C 84:26-27.) This is the gospel administered by the law of Moses; it was as far as John’s authority

went.

No one is ever prepared for the Lord while he remains in his sins. The Lord does not save people in their sins, but from their sins. The plait of salvation is designed to enable men to free themselves from sin so they can, as clean and spotless beings, enter the presence of Him who is without sin. No one is ever prepared for the Lord until he confesses and forsakes his sins, until he repents, until he is baptized for the remission of sins. And the fact that John was to prepare “a people” for the Lord means that a people -- composed of a host of individuals -- had to set their houses in order, be baptized by him, and await patiently the coming of Him who would give them the Holy Ghost. When they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, sin and evil would be burned out of their souls as though by fire, and being thus clean, they would be fit candidates to be with the Lord they would be prepared for the Lord. [*The Mortal Messiah*, p.386-387]

The Everlasting (Higher) Gospel

Joseph Smith

The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the hearts of the children unto the fathers, even those who are in heaven. . . .

Now was this merely confined to the living, to settle difficulties with families on earth? By no means. It was a far greater work. Elijah! what would you do if you were here? Would you confine your work to the living alone? No: I would refer you to the Scriptures, where the subject is manifest: that is, without us, they could not be made perfect, nor we without them; the fathers without the children, nor the children without the fathers.

I wish you to understand this subject, for it is important; and if you receive it, this is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection; and here we want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those who dwell in heaven. This is the power of Elijah and the keys of the kingdom of Jehovah.

Let us suppose a case. Suppose the great God who dwells in heaven should reveal himself to Father Cutler here, by the opening heavens, and tell him, I offer up a decree that whatsoever you seal on earth with your decree, I will seal it in heaven; you have the power then; can it be taken off? No. Then what you seal on earth,

by the keys of Elijah, is sealed in heaven; and this is the power of Elijah, and this is the difference between the spirit and power of Elias and Elijah; for while the spirit of Elias is a forerunner, the power of Elijah is sufficient to make our calling and election sure; and the same doctrine, where we are exhorted to go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, &c. [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.338]

If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 308).

Ezra Taft Benson

When our Heavenly Father placed Adam and Eve on this earth, He did so with the purpose in mind of teaching them how to regain His presence. Our Father promised a Savior to redeem them from their fallen condition. He gave them the plan of salvation and told them to teach their children faith in Jesus Christ and repentance. Further, Adam and his posterity were commanded by God to be baptized, to receive the Holy Ghost, and to enter into the order of the Son of God. (See Moses 6.) To enter into the order of the Son of God is the equivalent today of entering into the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is only received in the house of the Lord.

Because Adam and Eve had complied with these requirements, God said to them, “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.)

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 Lord then appeared to them.

The vast congregation rose up and blessed Adam and called him Michael, the prince and archangel. The Lord himself declared Adam to be a prince forever over his own posterity.

Then Adam in his aged condition rose up and, being filled with the spirit of prophecy, predicted “whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation.” All this is recorded in section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants (verses 53-56).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that Adam blessed his posterity because “he wanted to bring them into the presence of God.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Joseph Fielding Smith ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book co., 1938, p. 159.)

How did Adam bring his descendants into the presence of the Lord?

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.

The order of priesthood spoken of in the scriptures is sometimes referred to as the patriarchal order because it came down from father to son.

But this order is otherwise described in modern revelation as an order of family government where a man and a 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.

If a couple are true to their covenants, they are entitled to the blessing of the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. These covenants today can only be entered into by going to the House of the Lord. Adam followed this order and brought his posterity into the presence of God. He is the great example for us to follow.

Enoch followed this pattern and brought the Saints of his day into the presence of God.

Noah and his son Shem likewise followed the same pattern after the flood.

Abraham, a righteous servant of God, desiring as he said, “to be a greater follower of righteousness,” sought for these same blessings. Speaking of the order of the priesthood, he said: “It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time...even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, our first father, through the fathers unto me.” (Abr. 1:2-3.)

So Abraham declared: “I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers.” (Abr. 1:4.)

Moses taught this order of priesthood to his people and “sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God;

“But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory.

“Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy

Priesthood also.” (D&C 84:23-25.)

We learn through the Joseph Smith Translation that the Lord further instructed Moses: “I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order, and the ordinances thereof.” (JST Ex. 34:1; italics added.)

This higher priesthood, with its attendant ordinances, was taken from Israel till the time of Jesus Christ. [“What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children About the Temple,” *Ensign* 15 [August 1985]: 8-10]

John Taylor

Then Peter, James and John appeared and conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the Melchizedek Priesthood, which, as you all know, differs from that of the Aaronic. The Melchizedek Priesthood, which, as you all know, differs from that

of the Aaronic. The Melchizedek Priesthood, according to the Scriptures, is after the order of the Son of God, and after the power of an endless life. It places men in communication with God our Heavenly Father, whereby through its influence, ordinance, powers and blessings, they can approach the presence of God, the Eternal Father, and come, as it was said by one of old, "To the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." It is that Priesthood through the Gospel, that brings life and immortality to light, that places man in a position whereby he can obtain, through faithfulness and adherence to the laws of God, all the rich blessings associated with the eternal worlds, of which we are allowed to partake while we dwell here upon the earth, or hereafter in the heavens. [*Journal of Discourses*, 25:178]

Joseph Fielding Smith

- Those who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom are those who are members of the Church of the Firstborn; in other words, those who keep all the commandments of the Lord. There will be many who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who shall never become members of the Church of the Firstborn.

The higher ordinances in the temple of God pertain to exaltation in the celestial kingdom.... In order to receive this blessing, one must keep the full law, must abide the law by which that kingdom is governed; for, "He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory."

So being ordained an elder, or a high priest, or an apostle, or even President of the Church, is not the thing that brings the exaltation, but obedience to the laws and the ordinances and the covenants required of those who desire to become members of the Church of the Firstborn, as these are administered in the house of the Lord. To become a member of the Church of the Firstborn, as I understand it, is to become one of the inner circle. We are all members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by being baptized and confirmed, and there are many who seem to be content to remain such without obtaining the privileges of exaltation.

The Lord has made it possible for us to become members of the Church of the Firstborn, by receiving the blessings of the house of the Lord and overcoming all things. Thus we become heirs, "priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory," who shall "dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever," with full exaltation. Are such blessings worth having?

I have said that only one man at a time on the earth holds the keys of this sealing power of the priesthood, but he may, and does, delegate power to others, and they officiate under his direction in the temples of the Lord. No man can officiate in these sealing ordinances until he receives the authority to do so by being set apart by the one who holds the keys, notwithstanding he may hold the priesthood. All the authority exercised in the temples is then, after all, the authority centered in one man. He has the power and calls upon others to officiate, and they seal upon us the keys and powers which,

through our obedience, entitle us to become sons and daughters and members of the Church of the Firstborn, receiving all things in the kingdom. This is what we can get in the temple, so that we become members of the family, sons and daughters of God, not servants. [*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:41-43]

- Joseph Smith, the Prophet, said: "Elijah was the last prophet that held the keys of the priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the priesthood, in order that all the ordinances may be attended to in righteousness. It is true that the Savior had authority and power to bestow this blessing; but the sons of Levi were too prejudiced. 'And I will send Elijah the Prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord,' etc. Why send Elijah? Because he holds the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the priesthood: and without the authority is given, the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness." . . .

The higher ordinances, the greater blessings which are essential to exaltation in the kingdom of God, and which can only be obtained in certain places, no man has a right to perform except as he receives the authority to do it from the one who holds the keys. It makes no difference how great an office you have, what position in the Church you hold, you cannot officiate unless the keys, the sealing power, is there back of it. That is the thing that counts, and that is why Elijah came; that is why Moses came, for he also held keys of the priesthood; that is why they (Moses and Elijah) conferred upon the heads of Peter, James, and John, in that dispensation, these privileges or these powers, these keys, that they might go forth and perform this labor; and that is why they (Moses and Elijah) came to the Prophet Joseph Smith [*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:129]