An examination of the spiritual and legal authority of the REORGANIZED CHURCH and the CHURCH IN UTAH

**SUCCESSION IN PRESIDENCY AND AUTHORITY**

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**CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT
GOD CHOSES PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP
Moses and Joseph Smith
Outline of Law of Succession
Prophet always has power to choose successor
None else is appointed
Election of prophet invalidates priesthood
"Appointed by Revelation"
"In thee and thy seed"

SUCCESSION of PRESIDENTS IN THE CHURCH IN UTAH
Introductory statement
"So long as we remain as we are"
Change in the order of the Twelve
Brigham Young elected
Brigham Young Successor?
Peter not first president
Brigham Transformed?
Brigham not appointed
Brigham not ordained
Ordination as apostle not enough
Joseph gives keys to the Twelve ?

**Succession of other presidents**
John Taylor
Wilford Woodroof
Lorenzo Snow
Joseph F. Smith
Heber J. Grant
George Albert Smith
David O. McKay
Succession in Utah Church\_ of God or man?
WHOM DID GOD APPOINT?

**Testimonies**
Brigham Young and Orson Hyde
James Whitehead
John G. Carter, Sr
Joseph Smith III
Lyman Wight
Discussion of testimonies
Consistent with patriarchal blessing, Joseph III

SUCCESSION OF PRESIDENTS IN THE REORGANIZED CHURCH
Briggs,Gurley, Marks- their authority
Reorganized Church denies authority of any of the factions to give or take away priesthood
Reorganized Church not a child of J.J. Strang
Revelations lead to true successor
Jason W. Briggs
Zenas H. Gurley
Joseph Smith III
Ordination of Joseph Smith III
Authority of ordination
William Marks raised up a blessing
"In thee and thy seed"
Joseph Smith III- Successor?

Other Presidents of the Reorganized Church
Frederick M. Smith
Israel A. Smith
William Wallace Smith
Who followed God’s Law of Successon?

REORGANIZED
Why added
Need for Reorganization
A new church emerges in Utah
Brigham rebaptizes and reordains

BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM
True fruits of Christian discipleship
Fruits of Brigham Young and the Church in Utah
Rebaptism
Adam-God Doctrine
Doctrine of Blood Atonement
Brigham Young not successor
Fruits of Joseph Smith III and the Reorganized Church

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

April 6, 1830, SIX YOUNG MEN MET at a farmhouse in accord with instruction received from God and organized the Church of Jesus Christ. Thus, by the power of God there was restored that which had been lost through ages of darkness and apostasy. Through the prophet Joseph Smith, God had spoken and once again his hand was set to the accomplishment of his purposes among men.

The ensuing years brought persecution, suffering, and untold hardships to those who chose to follow the Christ through his restored church; but like the Christians of the first century,

these modern disciples refused to deny the faith. They pressed forward with zeal to tell the world the good news of Christ at work in the latter days. As it was in the days of Christ so it was in this latter day, for their foremost persecutors were found among those believed by man to be spiritual leaders. In 1844, the young prophet paid the same price as many Christians before him; he was slain by the mob because he refused to be moved from the work God had commissioned him to do.

With the death of the prophet came confusion to many of the faithful who had followed Christ through the prophet’s leadership. Some men, aspiring to power and others with sincere convictions, aroseto claim leadership of God’s people. The church was divided. More than a century has now passed and two main bodies remain along with one or two smaller groups.

The largest of these includes the descendants of those who followed Brigham Young to the valleys of Utah where he publicly proclaimed the doctrine of polygamy and other doctrines unacceptable to many of the members of the original church. Throughout this brochure we shall refer to this body as the "Church in Utah."

The second largest of these groups includes the descendants of those who refused to believe that the prophet of God was ever connected with such doctrines. These remained where they were, true to their convictions, and sought such leadership as God would give them. In 1852, revolting against what they believed to be false doctrine and leadership, they reorganized the church on the basis of original teachings and commandments of god. In 1860 in accord with the revelation of God, Joseph Smith the son of the martyred prophet came to lead the church even as his father had led it before him.This group is known today as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. For the purpose of this brochure we shall refer to it as the "Reorganized Church."

Since the division of the church, each of the groups has made statements claiming to be the true follower of the Restoration movement. Unfortunately, bitterness and prejudice have often entered in - some have tried to prove their cause by defaming the characters of leading men in other groups. Such defamation of character has most frequently been based upon the testimony of one or more individuals who spoke only from memory. Almost without fail other men have arisen immediately to refute the charges with contradictory testimony.

Conflicting testimonies of men, unsupported by the Spirit of God, can only lead the reader into confusion of mind. Fortunately, if we are sincere in our search for truth , we do not have to depend upon such testimony- for Christ, not man , is the standard. Jesus warned of false prophets in the last days and said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." The true followers of Christ will be found consistent with him in doctrine and in obedience to the laws of God proclaimed through him. The fruits of his church cannot be measured in numbers of people, quantities of wealth, or in temporal gain. Their fruits can only be measured by their closeness to him and by the quality of their testimony for him.

The following study is presented with a sincere hope that, by the facts brought forth and with the ministry of God’s Spirit, men may be able to judge accurately "by their fruits" those who claim his divine authority, and thus give their lives to Christ through his work restored today. We sincerely ask that as you study this material you will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in leading you to that which God may reveal.

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The following publications are referred to and quoted in this brochure by the use of abbreviations. The bibliography further identifies these references books.

1. J.D. - *Journal of Discourses*2. M.S. - *The Latter -day Saints’ Millennial Star*3. T.S. -*The Times and Seasons*4. RDC- Doctrine and Covenants as published by the Reorganized Church
5. UDC- Doctrine and Covenants as published by the Church in Utah
6. H.C. - *History of the Church* as published by the Reorganized Church
7. DCH- *Documentary History* of the Church as published by the Church in Utah
8. C.C.H.- *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*9. PA- Complainants Abstract of Pleading and Evidence
10. H.R. - *The Historical Record*

**GOD CHOOSES PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP**

Basic to the entire movement of the Restoration is the firm conviction that God chose Joseph Smith, Jr., as the prophet-leader of latter-day Israel. God has always been concerned about his people and has been willing to speak and lead them whenever they would listen.

1. **God Chooses the Prophet**

Ancient Israel found herself in bondage to Egypt, and in ignorance of God’s will. In delivering her, God chose Moses who received divine instruction from Him and spoke in His name. He provided Israel with prophetic leadership. Exodus 3:1-10 tells the story of how God chose Moses and prepared the way before him. This story of the burning bush may seem like a fairy tale, but biblical history assures us it is true.

In latter days, as a result of the great apostasy centuries before, man once again was in bondage and suffered in ignorance. Man struggled to free himself of the life known in the ‘dark

ages.’ Under the leaders of the Reformation some progress was made, but man of himself was limited. God saw the calamities that were ahead for those who lived "by the precepts of men," and he moved in a wondrous way to choose one to lead his people. The story of the calling of Joseph Smith, Jr., while incredible to many, is no more amazing than the story of God speaking to Moses from the burning bush. Once again God provided prophetic leadership!

1. **God Chooses the Prophet’s Successor**

All groups in the Restoration movement accept Joseph Smith, Jr., as the first of the prophetic leaders of latter days. However, the choice of his successor has brought much confusion. No claim to successorship can be judged correct except it be consistent with the laws of God and the provisions made by him. Thus, before considering these claims we must first determine what these laws and provisions are. God’s word shall be the standard.

Just as the choosing of Moses is a precedent for the choosing of Joseph Smith, so also is the choosing of Joshua a precedent for the choosing of the successor to the latter-day prophet. Scripture (Numbers 27: 18- 23: Deuteronomy 34:9; and Joshua 1:1-15) establishes the method of this choice. God spoke to Moses and told him to (1) appoint Joshua, (2) to set him before the people, and (3) to lay hands upon him.

**The Law of Succession**

In addition to this precedent, God spoke directly to the restored church in these last days, clearly stating his law regarding successorship.1 We invite you to read it carefully. The wording of this revelation is so clear that it should not be necessary to enter into a detailed analysis. We present a brief outline of the points contained in it.

*Outline of the Law*

Authority

1) The elders receive a commandment
2) The commandment is a law for the church
3)The law is received through recognized authority
4)The authority is given to the one appointed.

Appointment

1) The one appointed is to receive the gift;
2) The gift is the power to receive revelations and commandments;
3) None other is appointed to the gift until *he* be taken, if *he* remains faithful
4) None other appointed to the gift except it be through *him*;
5) If the gift is taken away *he* shall not have power except to appoint another in *his* stead.

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1. RDC 43: 1,2: UDC 43: 1-7

*Safeguard*

1) This is the *law*, receive no other;
2) The law is a safeguard against deception

*Ordination*

1) The one appointed is ordained of God;
2) *He* is to come in at the gate;
3) *He* is to be ordained as before instructed;
4) He is to teach the revelations received and those which shall be received.

Some claim that the power to appoint his successor would only belong to the prophet in the event he went into transgression. Not so! God says clearly, "*And this ye shall know assuredly, that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me*." 2 This is followed by the definite command, "none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power, *except* to appoint another in his stead." 3 Thus, God removed any possibility of anyone legally succeeding the prophet unless specifically appointed by the prophet. "*None else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him*." Nothing can change that. Provision was made that even if the prophet went into transgresssion this would still be true. Without this provision men could have said that the Prophet had gone into transgression and had no power to appoint a successor and there would have been no sound basis for decision. However, it is plain that regardless of all else the prophet would have power to appoint his successor!

"And this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations, or commandments; and this I give unto you, *that you may not be*

*deceived*, that you may know they are not of me." 4 Thus the church is warned not to follow any man who *has not been appointed by the prophet as his successor*. This is a law!

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2) RDC 43: 1; UDC 43:3
3)RDC 43:2a; UDC 43:4
4)RDC 43:2b; UDC 43:5

It is hard to conceive a way in which God could have spoken more precisely. Though some claim this law was temporary and only valid in the formative years of the church there is no basis for such claim. No revelation of God has even been recorded and presented to his people which in any way alters this law. We call attention also to the fact that this law of God in latter days is completely consistent with the precedent set by him in former years. 5

The interpretation of this law as quoted in preceding paragraphs is in whole hearted agreement with the understanng of early leaders of the church. Thursday, August 8, 1844, at a meeting in which Sidney Rigdon made some claim to the right of successorship, Brigham Young gave the following clear statement of the law.

"You can not fill the office of a prophet, seer, and revelator; God must do this. You are like children without a father, and sheep without a shepherd. You must not appoint a man at your head.....*You cannot take any man and put him at your head ; you would scatter the Saints to the four winds, you would sever the Priesthood*. So long as we remain as we are the heavenly Head is in constant co-operation with us; and if you go out of that course, God will have nothing to do with you...I repeat, No man can stand at our head except God reveals it from the heavens." 6

Brigham was very definite- the church could not select or elect a man at its head. The very act would "sever the Priesthood." Only one appointed by God in accord with his law could so lead! The church had already taken official action to state its position that the prophet or president is to be "appointed by revelation." 7

To further clarify the matter, God promised Joseph Smith that his blessing would "also be put upon the head of his posterity after him." Some have tried to interpret this simply to mean Joseph’s family was to have a place to live in the boarding house. Not so. This revelation does state that Joseph and his posterity should have this privilege, but this is not the blessing referred to. Why was Joseph given a place in this house at all? Because he was the prophetic leader of the church. This prophetic leadership was the only blessing Joseph had which if placed on the head of his posterity after him would fulfill the promise, "I say unto my servant Joseph, In thee, and in thy seed, shall the kindred of the earth be blessed." 8 The only reason his posterity should stand apart from others and merit a place from "generation to generation" in the boarding house was that God promised to place that same blessing of prophetic leadership on them.

Thus, as we summarize the instructions of God regarding successorship, we find that the successor to the prophet will

1) be appointed by the prophet,
2) be appointed by revelation,
3) be found among the posterity of Joseph Smith upon whom God has placed the blessing of prophetic leadership.

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5. Pages 9 and 10 of this brochure
6. MS 25: 231
7. RDC 99:6 ; UDC 102:9
8. RDC 107: 18c; UDC 124: 58

**SUCCESSION OF PRESIDENTS IN THE CHURCH IN UTAH**

Now with the clarity and precise statement of God’s law as our guide let us examine the actual facts of history as they concern the succession of presidency. The true successor to the restored church will be found to have been consistent in obedience to this law of God as well as all others. In this examination we lay aside pernicious insinuations and any attempt to defame the character of any man, for truth needs no such defense.

**Review of History**

As we have found, on August 8, 1844, Brigham Young charged the people to wait for a prophet appointed by God. He warned of dire results if they should elect a leader. He further said, *" So long as we remain as we are the heavenly Head is in constant co-operation with us; and if you go out of that course, God will have nothing to do with you*." In this he was correct, but let us see how the church was then and how it should have remained.

On that date the church was under the leadership of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles as a body. At that time there seems to have been some unity of thought among the Twelve. The Doctrine and Covenants proves this to be consistent with the law. In this Scripture 10 we find several significant points which serve as further guides. They are as follows:

1.The presidency of the church consists of three men, presiding high priests. The fact that these are chosen by the body does not deny that they are also appointed by revelation. It does imply common consent on the part of the people. They make their choice as a result of the revelation of God and appointment of the prophet as provided for in the law. 10

2.The twelve apostles are special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world; "*thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling*."

3. The twelve traveling councilors (apostles) form a *quorum* equal in authority and power to the *three presidents*. It does not say that any *one* member of the twelve has such power. It certainly does not say that any *one*, *two*, or *three* of those apostles are to become presidents of the church on the basis of the equality of authority and power to these two *quorums*.

4. The seventies form a quorum equal in authority and power to that of the twelve apostles.

5. In order for the decision of either of these three quorums to be of the same power and validity as the others, that decision must be unanimous; i.e., every member of the quorum must be agreed.

6. A majority of the quorum may render a decision when circumstances render it impossible for all to act. However, we note that if members are absent because they are in disagreement with the action of the quorum , the decision thus made would be less than unanimous and thus not of equal authority.

In the light of this instruction we see that it was quite proper for the quorum of twelve apostles to lead the church as a united body on August 8, 1844. At this very conference we find, "the question was put ‘*all in favor of supporting the Twelve in their calling*, (every quorum, man and woman, ) signify it by the uplifted hand;’ and the vote was unanimous, no hand being raised in the negative." 11 We see then that if the church was to remain as it was it would have had to remain under the leadership of the quorum of twelve as a body of apostles, united in their leadership, until the one appointed by God should come forth.

However, history shows it was not long before the church departed from this procedure. Whereas in the August, 1844, conference the vote had been to " *support the twelve in their calling*," by April 6, 1845, " Elder Phelps moved that this conference accept the Twelve as the first presidency and leaders of this church. Carried unanimously." 12 The Twelve being sustained "as the first presidency" clearly demonstrates this departure. The first presidency, by revelation, consisted of three men- the prophet and his two counselors. It was not to consist of eight, ten, or twelve men. Though this departure may be considered technical, any departure from God and his law is significant.

  9.RDC 104: 11: UDC 107:22-28
10. RDC 43: 1,2; also 99:6: UDC 43: 1-7 also 102: 9
11. Conference Minutes as recorded in the Times and Seasons, 5: 638
12. Conference Minutes as recorded in T.S., 6:869

**Change in the Order of the Quorum of Twelve**

Though the church continued from 1845 through the most of 1847 under the leadership of the quorum of twelve "as the first presidency,’ division had set in. In sincere protest against the growing apostasy of the church, three of the original twelve apostles withdrew from active participation. Some charge that these men apostatized, but we shall present much evidence to support the fact that it was Brigham Young and the larger body who truly apostatized. Apostasy can only be defined in terms of departure from original faith. Since Restoration faith was founded in Christ, it is departure from Christ and his teachings that will evidence the real apostates.

It is important to note that these three apostles did depart in honest protest against actions of that body and its leaders. This certainly had some effect upon the power and authority of the Twelve. However, other and more drastic changes were shaping up which were to have far-reaching effects upon the group traveling west to the valleys of Utah. Wilford Woodruff indicates his concern but also his willingness to shift responsibility.

"October 12 (1847), I had a question put to me by President Young, what my opinion was concerning one of the twelve apostles being appointed as the president of the church with his two counselors. I answered that a quorum like the twelve who had been appointed by revelation, confirmed by revelation from time to time\_ I thought it would require a revelation to change the order of that quorum. (But) Whatever the Lord inspires you to do in this matter, I am with you." 13 Woodruff was right\_ it would require *revelation* to lawfully change the order of the quorum of twelve! However, he was wrong in being willing to participate in such change on the supposition of *inspiration* having come to another. Even though his own intelligence and knowledge of God’s law told him *revelation* was required he was willing to move contrary to this simply because Brigham Young *suggested* it.

Others were also influenced to move against conscience and knowledge, for we find, "December 5, 1847, a council of Twelve met at Elder Orson Hyde’s house, and unanimously *elected* President brigham Young President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

"... on the 29th, the last day of the conference, the people confirmed the *election* of President Young as President of the Church, with Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards as his counselors. " 14 Thus there was a significant change in the order of the quorum of twelve in the Church in Utah.

**Brigham Young- Successor?**

History shows thatBrigham Young thus became the first president of the body of people who went west to Utah.However, was Brigham Young the true successor to the prophet Joseph Smith? If not, he and those who followed him departed from the authority of the Restoration!

Some claim he was the true successor because he was president of the quorum of twelve. In this claim they assume that Peter was president of the quorum of twelve apostles at the death of Jesus and also that he became the president of the church. The Scriptures offer no real basis for such assumption. While the Scriptures do refer to Peter as one of the outstanding men of the twleve apostles there is no direct reference to him as their president. The claim that he became president of the church is likewise without scriptural support.Acts 15: 6-20 records a time when the apostles and elders came together to consider a matter. Peter made his statement along with the others**;**however, he apparently did not have authority to make the decision, for we read, " And after they had held their peace, James answered..." 15 He then proceeded to make the decision which the church was to accept and follow. If Peter had been president of the church would his voice have been heard on the same basis as other apostles? If he had been president would he have depended upon one of lesser authority to make this important decision? This decision was not of local nature but had effect on the church in all places. The claim that Peter was president of the church is at best founded upon uncertainty and illogical procedure. This surely presents unstable grounds upon which to claim presidency for Brigham Young.

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13.C.C.H. 3:315; footnote No. 15
14.H.R. 8: 898
15.Bible, Acts 15: 13 ff.

Another claim made by some in the Church in Utah is that Brigham Young was transformed to sound like the prophet Joseph Smith. Elder William C. Staines related, "Brigham Young said, ‘ I will tell you who your leaders or guardians will be, the Twelve - I at their head.’ This was with a voice like the voice of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I thought it was he, and so did thousands who heard it. This was very satisfactory to the people, and a vote was taken *to sustain the Twelve in their office*, which with a few dissenting voices, was passed." 16

Wilford Woodruff said, " When Brigham Young arose and commenced speaking, as has been said, if I had not seen him with my own eyes, there is no one that could have convinced me that it was not Joseph Smith." 17

Elder Staines records no appointment of Brigham Young as prophet of the church. The result of this purported experience was not the immediate election of Brigham Young as president. To the contrary, " a vote was taken to sustain the Twelve in*their office*." 18 No matter how much the voice of Brigham Young sounded like Joseph Smith, the people voted to sustain the Twelve as a united body of men. They did not vote to accept one of the twelve, Brigham Young, as their president.

Wilford Woodruff also fails to note any appointment of Brigham Young. Though he claimed the voice sounded like Joseph’s there was no real transformatin, for Brigham still looked like himself. Relying upon the sound of one’s voice to determine God’s will rather than standing upon the clearly stated law He has given is inexcusable. Supposing Brigham did sound like Joseph; what did that prove? We do not charge trickery, but it is possible that Brigham could have assumed the voice for effect. Many men today make their living by assuming a number of different voices- imitating others. Brigham had been quite closely associated with Joseph and should have known well the inflection and tonal quality he would use in such a statement. This could even have been accidental. However, for the sake of discussion, suppose that Brigham’s change of voice was from a source not his own. Does that prove it was of God? Certainly not! Even transformation in its fullest sense does not prove this. Paul writing to the Corinthians said, " For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; *for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 19 We do not here infer that Brigham was a minister of Satan, but inasmuch as transformation is an instrument of deception used by Satan, we point out that any claim to successorship based upon such an experience is highly questionable.

In conclusion of this discussion on the claim of appointment by transformation, we note that the one man who should have known most about it refers to it as deception. Brigham Young stated, "Brother Carrington’s testimony proves to you that men’s eyes are liable to be deceived.

It may appear strange to some that he could not tell me from Joseph Smith; when I was speaking in the stand in Nauvoo during the October conference of 1844. Somebody came along and passed a finger over his eyes and he could not see anyone but Joseph Smith; until I got through addressing the congregation. 20 It is notable that Brigham Young never made claim to successorship on the basis of this purported experience!

We thus see that none of these claims are valid, for they are not verified by the Scriptures God gave concerning succession in church presidency. God does not provide a plan and then ignore it. Let us now examine the law and see how Brigham Young stands this test.

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16 Succession in the Presidency of the Church by B.H. Roberst, Second Edition, page 12
17. Ibid.
18. Conference Minutes as recorded in the T.S. 5: 638
19. Bible, II Corinthians 11:13-15
20. J.D. 5:57,58

God’s law is clear, " none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him [Joseph]" 21 The testimony of Brigham Young and his associates proves that he was not appointed by Joseph to be the legal successor. Lorenzo Snow, fourth president of the Church in Utah, testified in court, " Brigham Young took the Presidency of the Church after the death of Joseph Smith. *He was appointed* to the position and accepted *by the people*. That was one way he was made President. *He was not appointed by Joseph Smith as the President*... Brigham Young was never set apart by Joseph Smith as his successsor that I am aware of, and he does not claim that he was that I am aware of." 22 The personal testimony of Brigham Young agrees with Lorenzo Snow. He said ( June 3, 1860), " The brethren testify that brother Brigham is brother Joseph’s legal successor. *You never heard me say so*. I say that I am a good hand to keep the dogs and wolves out of the flock. I do not care a groat who rises up. *I do not think anything about being Joseph’s successor*. That is nothing that concerns me. " 23 Here is positive proof that *Brigham Young was never appointed by the prophet to serve as his successor* and that he never did claim that he was. Lorenzo Snow said, " He was appointed... by the people." This is clearly a violation of God’s law of successsion.

Another standard set by the law is "he that is ordained of me, shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received, and shall receive through him whom I have appointed." 24 Brigham Young was ordained as an apostle, but there is no record of his ever being ordained as president of the church. In regard to this he said, "Who ordained me as the First President of this Church on earth? I answer*, it is the choice of this people*, and that is suffiecient." 25 *Brigham Young did not claim successorship according to the law*, either by appointment or ordination. His only claim was "it is the choice of this people." We ask: When does the choice of the people take the place of the ordination commanded by God?

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21. RDC 43: 2; UDC 43:4
22.PA. pages 323, 324
23.J.D.8:69
24. RDC 43:2C; UDC 43:7
25. M.S. 16:442

There are those who say he did not need to be ordained as president of the church because he had been ordained as an apostle. Not so! God’s law of succession clearly states that "he that is ordained of me, shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before." 26

History shows that two of the later presidents of the Church in Utah recognized this as a necessity, for both Heber J. Grant and George Albert Smith were " set apart" as presidents of the church even though they were previously members of the quorum of twelve. Regarding the "setting apart" of Heber J. Grant we read, " With that ordinance, of course, he became the prophet, seer, translator, and revelator of the church." 27

Joseph Smith, Jr., who is referred to in revelation as an apostle, 28 saw the necessity of being ordained as President of the High Priesthood ( President of the Church).29 Of this event we read, "On the 26th I called a general assembly of the church, and was acknowledged as the president of the high priesthood, according to a previous ordination at a conference of high priests, elders,and members, held at Amherst, Ohio, on the 25th of January, 1832." 30 If Joseph Smith, Jr., found it necessary to observe this special ordination, it was certainly necessary that his legal successor do likewise.

Some try to explain away this need for ordination by claiming that Joseph Smith, Jr., had bestowed all the keys of the kingdom upon the heads of Brigham Young and others of the Twelve in private service prior to his death. There are a number of inconsistencies in such a claim and we note two of them here. First of all, if this was supposed to be in the nature of an ordination it was illegal, for God had commanded the church, " Every president of the high council, or General Congerence." 31 There is no record of such direction either by the high council or the General Conference, thus such ordination would have been contrary to God’s command.

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26. RDC 43:2c ; UDC 43:7
27. CCH 6:479
28. RDC 17: 1b; UDC 20: 2
29. RDC 104:42; UDC 107: 91,92
30. T.S. 5: 624
31. RDC 17:17; UDC 20:67

We also note that according to the belief of the Church in Utah it would have been impossible for Joseph to have bestowed all the keys of his priesthood on any other man. While the Reorganized Church does not accept their purported revelation on polygamy, they do and thus must be bound by its concepts. In it we find, " I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred." 32 If the Church in Utah believes this to be the word of God it should be plain that Joseph Smith could not have conferred " this power and the keys of this priesthood" upon Brigham Young or anyone else as long as he ( Joseph Smith, Jr. ) lived. Thus, this claim of the Church in Utah also fails!

The evidence is clear- Brigham Young did not become the successor to Joseph Smith, Jr., according to the legal procedures set forth by God! His rise to that position does not meet one of the requirements God provided as a "a law... that you may know they are not of me." 33 As stated positively by both Brigham Young and Lorenzo Snow, his only real claim was "it is the choice of this people." 34History proves this, for he was "elected" to this position.35 As predicted by Brigham Young on August 8, 1844, 36 this certainly did " scatter the Saints to the four winds." This being true we can reach only one conclusion-it also severed the priesthood as far as the Church in Utah is concerned!

**Succession of Other Presidents in the Church in Utah**

From the available history of the Church in Utah we present the following accounts of the succession of its remaining presidents.

**John Taylor**

" The council of twelve apostles continued its presidency of the church a little more than three years, up to the general semi-annual conference of the church held in October, 1880, when the regular council of the first presidency was reorganized, with John Taylor as president, and George Q.Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as his first and second counselors respectively." 37 This is a simple statement of fact. There was no claim to the effect that John Taylor was either ordained or set apart by special ceremony as president of the church. He was not appointed by his predecessor or there would have been no reason for the three-year delay in the assumption of his responsibility.

**Wilford Woodruff**

" The arrangement as to the presidency of the twelve apostles over the church, voted for at this conference, continued eighteen months, then the first presidency for the third time since the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith was reorganized at the general conference of the church held in April, 1889. Wilford Woodruff was sustained as president of the church with George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as his counselors." 38 Again, we find no reference to ordination or setting apart to this office. It is also apparent that he was not appointed by his predecessor.

**Lorenzo Snow**

"A short time before his death President Woodruff announced to his immediate associates in the administration of the church affairs, that ‘it was not the will of the Lord that in the future there should be a lenghy period elapse between the death of the president of the church and the reorganization of the first presidency. ...on the 13th of September, 1898....Lorenzo Snow, the president of the quorum of twelve apostles, was chosen president of the church, at a meeting of the apostles." 39 Although this indicates some change, no mention is made either of any special ordination or of any appointment by his predecessor.

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32. UDC 132:7
33. RDC 43:2b; UDC 43: 6,7
34. J.D. 8: 69; PA 323-324- Quoted on page 20
35. H.R. 8:898- Quoted on page 17
36 M.S.25: 231- Quoted on page 12
37. CCH 5:524
38. CCH 6:193
39. CCH 6: 356

**Joseph F. Smith**

"Following both the instructions of President Woodruff previously mentioned and the example in organizing the first presidency when Lorenzo Snow was chosen president...Seven days after the death of President Snow the organization was effected. ...Joseph F. Smith was chosen president.’40 It is apparent that a custom in selecting church presidents was being formed- however, there is no indication of any effort to follow God’s law in this matter.

**Heber J. Grant**

"In harmony with the recent policy followed by the church of promptly organizing the first presidency at the demise of a *president of the high priesthood of the church* who is also and always the president of the church, the quorum of twelve apostles met in the temple on the 23rd day of November, 1918, and Heber J. Grant was *nominated to be* , and was *set apart* as president of the Church."41

We pause to note that for the first time notation was made to the effect that a man was "*set apart*" as president of the church.No record is given of any of his predecessors in Utah having received this rite. Its importance is further emphasized by the accompanying statement, "*With that ordinance*, of course,he became the prophet, seer, translator, and revelator of the church." Mr. Grant apparently was the first of the presidents of the Church in Utah willing to recognize this part of God’s law.

**George Albert Smith**

"And now, as we go to press late, action is taken in which President George Albert Smith is sustained and set apart as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by unanimous vote at a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, held in Salt Lake Temple, Monday, May 21, 1945." 43

As in the case of Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith was " set apart" as president of the church. However, both of these men acted upon the vote of the quorum of twelve and thus served without the legal authority of their church until such time as the people had opportunity to officially accept them. The position of the Church in Utah is clearly stated, " ... any new officer of the Church *must be accepted by the people before he can act legitimately*." 44

**David O. McKay**

"Meeting in solemn assembly on the morning of April 9, 1951, the membership of the Church, voting by priesthood quorum and then as a whole, sustained President David O. McKay as the ninth president of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."45 It is notable that no mention is made in this account of any ordinance to "*set apart*" Mr. McKay as had been done in the case of Heber J. Grant and George Albert Smith.

**Of God or Man**

This is a most important question, for, if this succession of presidents was of God, then authority lies within that group. However, if *man’s ways were substituted for God’s laws their authority is of man - not of God.*

We have already shown that this succession was not in accord with God’s law. By his own statement and that of Lorenzo Snow we have established that *Brigham Young was not appointed to the gift of prophetic leadership by Joseph Smith*. We have quoted the precise law of God, "None else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him... And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that *you may know they are not of me*." 46 We need not judge Brigham Young or his assumption of leadership; the word of God does that!

However, there are those who say that this law of succession did not apply because it was only a temporary law given because of the time there were no apostles in the church. In their opinion, the ordination of apostles did away with God’s law. Where do they find any acknowledged revelation wherein the Lord revokes his law? Man has no right to assume that any law of God is of temporary nature unless God says so! Such an assumption places man’s opinion above God’s law.

History has also shown us that neither John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, or Joseph F. Smith was appointed by his predecessor. Whereas God commanded that any man chosen by him to occupy this position must be ordained to this very office, 47 mention is made of only two, Heber J. Grant and George Albert Smith, being so set apart. What of the others? Did they not think it important enough to inform the people of this ordinance, or did they ignore it?

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40. CCH 6:386
41.CCH 6: 479
42. IBID
43. Improvement Era, Vol. 48, No. 6, page 335
44. Improvement Era, Vol. 48, No 11, page 672
45. Improvement Era, Vol. 54, No. 5, page 324
46. RDC 43:2; UDC 43: 1-7
47. Ibid

We might continue to make comparisons and present more evidence of the fact that the succession of these men was not of God; however, perhaps it will suffice to quote the statement of one of these men, Joseph F. Smith, in this regard. His statement was made in the proceedings before *the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator from the State of Utah to Hold His Seat*. We quote from Vol. 1, page 368, of that record:

"Mr. Worthington: I wish you would explain a little more fully than you have about this matter of promotion- how it was that you came to take the place of Lorenzo Snow. I think you have told us there has been a custom, at least, of promotion.

"Mr. Smith: It has been the custom, since the death of Joseph Smith *that the president of the twelve succeeded to the presidency of the church*.

"Mr. Worthington: That has been from the beginning- that has been a rule that has been followed?

"Mr. Smith: It was the case with Brigham Young and his successors.

...

"Mr. Worthington: So that all the rewards that have come in that way have been simply following the custom of the church?

"Mr. Smith: That is correct, sir.

"Mr. Worthington: I understand you to say , however, that there is no law- no revelation or command- of the church in any way which requires that.

"Mr. Smith: No; it is just simply a custom.

Joseph F. Smith was president of the Church in Utah when he made this statement and should have known how one became such. He positively admitted that it was only by "custom" that " the president of the twelve succeeded to the presidency of the church." When questioned further as to whether there was any law, revelation, or command that required this he answered plainly,"No; it is just simply a custom."

Nothing we could say would be any more definite than this statement.It is a fact that God gave a law of succession to protect his people from deception. History and the testimony of Joseph F. Smith provide positive evidence that the Church in Utah chose to ignore this law of God and substitute for it, "just simply a custom." By what right did the Church in Utah do this? By the kindest statement of fact that can be made we say the Church in Utah did materially depart from God’s law in the matter of succession. Thus, succession of its presidents is not of God but of the custom of man!

**WHOM DID GOD APPOINT?**

Early leaders of the Church in Utah bore conflicting testimonies as to whom God did appoint through the prophet Joseph Smith. Brigham Young said, "Did Joseph ordain any man to take his place? He did, Who was it? It was Hyrum, but, Hyrum fell as a martyr before Joseph did." 48

**Conflicting Testimonies**

Orson Hyde had a different story, for he said, "Now why did he say to the Twelve, On your shoulders will this responsibitlity rest, why did he not mention Brother Hyrum? The Spirit knew that Hyrum would be taken with him, and hence he did not mention his name."49 Both of these men were seeking to explain away the necessity of following the law of God. Each grasped at a straw; thus the conflict. Orson Hyde’s reasoning adequately debunks Brigham’s testimony, for God does know that which is to come and he would not be guilty of voiding his own careful instruction and preparation. We have already considered the inference that Joseph appointed the Twelve as a body and have found it to be invalid. These conflicting testimonies are evidence of the fact that the leaders of the Church in Utah were desperately trying to excuse themselves for their planned departure from God’s law.

This situation did not exist among the leaders of the Reorganized Church and its adherents. Among them we find strong testimonies consistent not only with each other but with God’s law.

The first three of these testimonies were sworn to in the United States Circuit Court. These are lengthy so we quote them in part only. The first is of JAMES WHITEHEAD, private secretary to Joseph Smith from 1842 until the martyrdom.

"I recollect a meeting that was held in the winter of 1843, at Nauvoo, Illinois, prior to Joseph Smith’s death, at which the appointment was made by him, Joseph Smith, of his successor*.His son Joseph was selected as his successor*.

"I became a member of the Reorganized Church at Alton, Illinois; ... and the reason I became a member was because I knew that Joseph Smith was the right man to lead that church; I knew he had been ordained and set apart by his father as his successor in office.

........

"I did not become a member earlier, because Joseph Smith was a boy about twelve(12) years old when he was ordained, and he was not to take his place as the President of the Church until the Lord called him; and he did not become president until 1860."50

Mr. Whitehead further testified to the fact that the church did take action as a body and agreed to the appointment of Joseph Smith III as the successor to his father without a negative vote being cast. He estimated that there were three thousand present on that occasion. He said a record was kept, but that it was taken to Salt Lake City.

We next consider the testimony of JOHN H. CARTER, SR.

"I am living in Utah County, about three miles from Provo City, on what is called Provo Bench. That is in Utah Territory. I came here the third of October, 1850..........I held an elder’s license in the original church, and held a high priest’s license and belonged to the High Council.

.........

"I was a member of the church at the time Joseph Smith was killed, and was there when Brigham Young took the lead, and was in the meeting when he was nominated and voted in, and so on up to his death- the death of Brigham Young.

....

"I was present at a meeting in the City of Nauvoo, in the State of Illinois, at which something was said or done about the successor of Joseph Smith.

....

"Joseph Smith came on the stand leading his son, young Joseph, and they sat him down on a bench at the prophet’s right hand, and Joseph got up and began to preach and talk to the people, and the question he said was asked by somebody, "If Joseph Smith should be killed or die, who would be his successor?’ And he turned around and said, pointing to his son, ‘There is the successor.’

.....

"I have always believed that ever since I heard Joseph say the words I have stated, .... and I believe it today just as strongly as I ever did, and it was under that belief that I followed President Young West."51

48. T.S. 5:683
49. T.S. 5:651
50. P.A., pages 27,28,31,33
51. P.A., pages 179-181

We now present portions of the testimony of this young man, JOSEPH SMITH III.

"About my selection by my father to be his successor in office, I remember of being called in his office, or into a room adjoining his office, and receiving the laying on of hands, and a prophetic blessing or setting apart, whatever it may be called. I remember that, and also remember that just before his departure for Carthage, with a number of others, I was called into a room in the Mansion House, and there again received the laying on of hands, and the blessing. I was also present at a meeting in the grove near the temple, and I remember my father laying his hands on my head, and saying to the people that this was his successor, or was to be his successor.

.......

"No, sir, I did not state that I was ordained by my father; I did not make that statement. I was not ordained by my father as his successor; according to my understanding of the word ‘ordain,’

I was not. I *was blessed by him and designated,*well in a*sense chosen*, and the word ‘ordain’ could not be applied in any other sense than by the act of pointing out or indicating only, and *he indicated or designated me as his successor*." 52

........

LYMAN WIGHT,an apostle under the martyr, gave further testimony of this appointment in a letter to the editors of the *Northern Islander*, a paper published in the interests of J.J. Strang who claimed to have been appointed by Joseph Smith to be his successor. Mr. Wight wrote:

"Now, Mr. Editor, if you had been present when Joseph called on me shortly after we came out of jail{ Liberty, Missouri} to lay hands with him on the head of a youth, and heard him cry aloud, ‘You are my successor when I depart,’ and heard the blessings poured on his head, - I say had you heard all this, and seen the tears streaming from his eyes, - you would not have been led by blind fanaticism, or a zeal without knowledge." 53

**Discussion of Testimonies**

The testimonies of these men agree- Joseph Smith, the martyr, appointed his son, Joseph Smith III, to be his successor. This is in absolute harmony with instructions and promised of God regarding those upon whom the gift of prophetic leadership would be placed. 54 However, some have attacked these testimonies on the basis that this young man waited so long to assume the duties of this appointment. A careful study of these testimonies reveals that "he was not to take his place as the President of the Church until the Lord called him." The church recognized the need not only for appointment but for revelation in the calling of the prophet. 55 History proves that this young man waited for this church by a power not his own.

Leading writers of the Church in Utah have often quoted only a portion of the testimony of Joseph Smith III and thus attempted to discredit him. One in particular quotes, "No, sir, I did not state that I was ordained by my father; I did not make that statement.I was NOT ordained by my father as his successor; according to my understanding of the word ‘ordain,’ I was not." The man then proceeds to try to prove that Joseph Smith III denied the testimony of the other witnesses and admitted that he was not appointed by his father. Not so! Had this writer quoted the rest of the testimony he would have lost his point completely. Joseph Smith III continued and bore strong testimony to the fact that he was "blessed," "chosen," and "designated" by his father as his successor.. . 56

52. P.A., pages 40,41,79
53. H.C. 2:789 ff.
54. RDC 107: 18; UDC 124: 57, 58; also see pages 12,13
55.RDC 99: 6; UDC 102:9
56.See page 30 of this brochure(this is retyped w/o pgs.numbered.)

His answer was an honest one based on definition of the word "ordain." The dictionary gives two definitions, one is " to appoint to a duty or office," while another is "to invest with ministerial function."57 This young man never claimed to have been ordained by his fther in the ssense of being invested with ministerial function. None of the testimonies quoted make such a claim. However, the point is made clear- *he was ordained in the sense of being appointed by his father to the duty and office of prophetic leader of the church*.

**Consistent with Patriarchal Blessing, Joseph III**

This appointment is certainly consistent with the patriarchal blessing of Joseph Smith III that was given by his grandfather while he was presiding patriarch of the church. We quote, "I lay my hands upon your head to bless you; your name is Joseph, and it is after the name of your father; you are Joseph the third; and you shall live, and after you are grown up, you shall search into the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Your heart shall be tender towards all, and your hand shall be open to relieve the poor. You shall be admired by everyone that beholds you, and you shall be an honor to your father and mother, and a comfort to your mother, and a help to your brothers*. You shall have power to carry out all that your father left undone when you become of age*."58 Thus we see that we have not only the testimonies of the appointment by his father but also the blessing of God (given under the hand of his grandfather) promising that he would have power to carry out the work left undone by his father.

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57. Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 5th. Edition, page 698
58. the Saints’ Herald, 56: 702

**SUCCESSION OF PRESIDENTS IN THE REORGANIZED CHURCH**

We have found that all consistent evidence points to the fact that God did appoint Joseph Smith III to be the lawful successor to his father. However, this is only the first step in meeting the requirements of successorship. As we preceed we must examine the charges made against the claim of the Reorganized Church as well as present the positive evidence of its validity.

**Briggs, Gurley, Marks - Their Authority**

Jason W. Briggs, Zenas H. Gurley, Sr.,and William Marks were key figures in the movement of the Reorganized church. We now consider some of the pernicious charges leveled against them by leaders of the Church in Utah.

One such charge is that because these men moved about from one faction to another following the martyrdom of Joseph Smith they lost their priesthood authority. Not so! The priesthood authority of a man *does not* depend upon which man or group of men he follows but rather upon *whether or not he follows Christ*. Only as a man continues to abide with Christ and in his doctrine can he remain close to the source of his priesthood authority. Apostasy in its most awful sense is not the result of a man or group of men ceasing to follow the leadership of other men- it is the result of their departure from Christ. Jason W. Briggs, Zenas H. Gurley, Sr., and William Maerks knew that to follow any man and be separated from Christ would sever their priesthood. Thus they severed connection with Brigham Young , J.J. Strang, and William Smith- for in each instance they believed that to have followed these men further would have meant separation from Christ. Ceasing to fellowship with these men and their adherents and remaining true to Christ was the only way that Briggs, Gurley, and Marks could have saved the priesthood authority God had given them.

**The Factions- and Authority**

Some writers for the Church in Utah have endeavored to make it seem that the Reorganized church agreed that for a man to join a cation was to surrender his priesthood authority. In their writing they refer simply to a "truth" expressed by an "officer of the Reorganized Church." They fail to note that this "officer" was John A. McIntosh, a district president in western Iowa. They make no mention of the fact that he had no authority to speak for the church but at best could voice his opinion as an individual. Contrary to the pruported statement of Mr. McIntosh, the Reorganized Church did take official action on this matter, and I quote:

"Resolved further, that a connection with those factions during the dark and cloudy day, does not necessarily invalidate the priesthood; holding as we do tht those factions could neither confer nor take away the priesthood." 59

For the sake of emphasis we point out that Briggs, Gurley, and Marks were never rebaptized into any other organization. They never did sever their allegiance with the cause of god which they had espoused. They did sever their connections with men and groups of men when they saw these men and their factions departing from Christ and his doctrines. Thus, rather than follow into apostasy, they remained men of God and became instruments in his hands!

**The Reorganized Church Not a Child of J.J. Strang**

Some charge that since the two branches which eventually became the strenthof the Reorganized Church were organized by men who later fellowshiped under the leadership of J.J. Strang, the Reorganized Church is but a child of J.J. Strang. Some have claimed that these branches were not even organized during the lifetime of the prophet.. It is true that the Yellowstone Branch was organized after the death of the martyr, but it was organized by men who had received their priesthood authority under his leadership. History also proves that the Beloit, Wisconsin, Branch was organized in 1843 by men sent out by the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. Both of these branches did worship with J.J. Strang and his adherents for a time; however, the members of thesebranches were not rebaptized and thus did not make a new allegiance with Strang. They did not sever their membership in the Church of Jesus Christ. As soon as members of the Yellowstone and Beloit, Wiscnosisn, branches found Strang teaching false doctrine and witnessed the path of departure from Jesus Christ, they and the men who had organized them ceased immediately to worship with this faction.

The facts are: (1)these branches were organized by men with priesthood authority by virtue of their ordination under the leadership of the martyred prophet;(2) these branches remained true to the teachings of Jesus Christ rather than continue fellowship with those who taught preverse doctrines. These things being true, the Reorganized Church is not a child of J.J. Strang- *it is a child of Jesus Christ*!

**Revelations Lead to the True Successor**

We have stated that God used Briggs, Gurley, and Marks as instruments for the accomplishing of his purposes. We now present historical facts about their work.

"Elder Jason W. Briggs relates that in October, 1851 , he atended a conference held at Palestine, Illinois, by Elder William Smith and others, and that there he became thoroughly satisfied that William Smith was wrong in his claims. This condition of things would naturally make a man anxious and thoughtful. Believing as he did that the faith he had espoused was of God, and yet repeatedly disappointed in and betrayed by supposed leaders, what should he do but cry unto God for more light? This he testifies he did, and that the Lord by his Spirit revealed to him that he must renounce former leaders, and also the thing just proclaimed at Palestine, which he asserts was polygamy, and the promise was given him that the Lord would send the seed of Joseph Smith to preside over the High Priesthood."60

When Jason Briggs faced the dilemma of false leadership he did just as the prophet had done in 1820, he turned to God in prayer. Just as God answered the prayer of the martyr in his need, so now he answered the prayer of Jason W. Briggs. It is not necessary to quote all of his revelation, but the following is important to our consideration.

"Therefore, let the elders whom I have ordained by the hand of my servant Joseph, or by the hand of those ordained by him, resist not this authority, nor faint in the discharge of duty, which is to preach my gospel as revealed in the record of the Jews , and the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; and cry repentance and remisson of sins through obedience to the gospel, and I will sustain them, and give them my Spirit; and in mine own due time will I call upon the seed of Jospeh Smith, and will bring one forth, and he shall be mighty and strong, and he shall preside over the high priesthood of my church; and then shall the quorums assemble, and the pure in heart shall gather, and Zion shall be reinhabited, as I said unto my servant Joseph Smith; after many days shall all these things be accomplished, saith the Spirit."61

This revelation is so important that we pause for consideration of it. We must not confuse this revelation with its statements referring to the seed of Joseph Smith as "one mighty and strong" with the "one mighty and strong" referred to in the Utah Doctrine and Covenants**.**62One writer has done thisin vain hope of proving his point. Though the Church in Utah refuses to accept the message to Jason Briggs, this revelation does stand on its own. One test of any revelation is whether the things predicted come to pass. In the portion of this revelation quoted are the following points:

1. The elders ordained by Joseph or by those ordained by him were commanded to continue to preach the gospel as contained in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants.

2. If they would do this God promised to sustain them and give them his spirit.

3. In his own due time God would bring forth one of the seed of Joseph Smith, who was to be mighty and strong, to preside over the high priesthood of the church.

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59. General Conference Resolutions( Reorganized Church) , April 11, 1866, 72, also H.C. 3: 433
60. H.C. 3: 200
61. H.C. 3: 201
62. UDC 85:7

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4. Then the quorums of the church would assemble,

5. *and* the *pure in heart* would gather, and *Zion be reinhabited*, "as I said unto my servant Joseph Smith."

These promises were all fulfilled. History shows us that many of the elders ordained by Joseph Smith and by those whom he ordained did continue to preach the gospel as taught in the Three Standard books as noted. There is likewise much evidence that God did sustain them and give them his Spirit. In 1860, God did raise up Joseph Smith III who came to the church by a power not his own and was accepted by the church as its leader. He was (1) "the seed of Joseph Smith," (2) " mighty and strong"- mighty in faith and strong in his devotion to Christ and the principles of righteousness; (3) instrumental in having the "quorums assemble" ; (4) the leader of the gathering of the "pure in heart; and (5) active in the fulfilling of the promise, "Zion shall be reinhabited." Under his leadership the church returned to the "land of Missouri ......which I have appointed." 63 Most certainly he did also "preside over the high priesthood."

The preceding is a summary, but let us examine further the statement , "and the pure in heart shall gather , and Zion shall be reinhabited, as I said unto my servant Joseph Smith." To understand this we must see just what the Lord said to Joseph Smith the martyr.

"Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered, they that remain and are pure in heart shall return and come to their inheritances; they and their children , with songs of everlasting joy; to build up the waste places of Zion." 64

In spite of the scattering of the Saints, Zion would not be moved. Also, some of whom God spoke that day (December 16, 1833 ) would return with their children to help " build up the waste places of Zion." these would be they who had remained and who were pure in heart. Undoubtedly there were some who remained who were not pure in heart and there were some who did not remain who were pure in heart, but the promise could only find fulfillment among those who met both conditions.

Further, in regard to that which the Lord had said to the martyr concerning this we find:

"Behold, I, the Lord, have brought you together that the promise might be fulfilled, that the faithful among you should be preserved and rejoice together in the land of Missouri.I, the Lord, promised the faithful and can not lie." 65

Here, then, is the precise promise of God to the faithful that they would be preserved and would yet" rejoice together in the land of Missouri." This promise could only be fulfulled among the very people who heard it from the lips of the prophet, for God was speaking to specific people. If the promise was not fulfilled, then Joseph Smith was a false prophet, but Joseph was not a false prophet. The promise God made through him was fulfilled, for many did return, under the leadership of Joseph Smith III, to "rejoice together in the land of Missouri."

While it is true that some did return, others did not. Why? God’s word gives the answer . "And the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away, and shall not inherit the land ." 66 The rebellious referred to here may have been good people in many ways, yet if they rebelled against the leadership of God’s chosen prophet by putting their trust in another man or set of men they could not return. Only through the leadership of Joseph Smith’s true successor could this promise be fulfilled!

The foregoing evidences the fact that (1) the revelation that came to Jason W. Briggs passes the test, for its promises were fulfilled, (2) the Lord did send in his own "due time" one of the "seed of Joseph Smith," Joseph smith III, and through this "one mighty and strong" fulfilled not only the promises made in the Briggs revelation but also those made through the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., concerning the "land of Missouri" and the return there to. In this we find a second strong evidence that Joseph Smith III was the true successor to the martyred prophet.

63. RDC 57: 1; 57: 1
64. RDC 98: 4g; UDC 101: 17
65. RDC 62: 2c; UDC 62:6
66. RDC 64: 7b; UDC 64:33

Zenas H. Gurley, Sr. ( not to be confused with another of the same name) , is the second of the men we are considering because of their importance to the work of God. He, too, had been deceived by the claims of men, but he retained a conviction of the validity of the Restoration movement. In his seeking for truth the revelation of God came to him in answer to his need. The voice of the Spirit spoke and said, "Rise up, cast off all that claim to be prophets,and go forth and preach the gospel, and say that God will raise up a prophet to complete his work." 67 A short time after this experience he heard of the revelation that had been received by Jason W. Briggs. He then enjoyed the following experience.

"About ten or fifteen days after I had heard of this revelation, while sitting by my evening fire, my boys came running into my room, declaring with great earnestness that their little sister

was up to Bro. Newkirk’s , speaking and singing in tongues........Immediately I went up, and when I was within one or two steps of the house, I paused..... I opened the door and went in. It appeared to me that the entire room was filled with the Holy Spirit. Shortly after I requested them all to join with me in asking the Lord to tell us who the successor of Joseph Smith was. I felt anxious to know that I might bear a faithful testimony. We spent a few moments in prayer, when the Holy Spirit declared, ‘*The successor of Joseph Smith is Joseph Smith, the son of Joseph Smith the Prophet*.’68 Thus, there came to this group of thefaithful who had remained further assurance of God’s leadership.

**Revelation to Joseph Smith III**

The events just referred to took place late in the fall of 1851, bringing much hope to those who were still earnestly seeking the mind and will of God. In June of 1852, they met to make formal declaration of their beliefs and to do as God had commanded, "cast off all that claim to be prophets," and wait the coming of the one chosen of God, "Joseph Smith, the son of Joseph Smith the Prophet."

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67.H.C. 3:206
68.H.C.3:207-208

Five years passed and though this man was of age he still did not come. In the fall of 1856 the people became anxious and made plans to convince the expected successor of his work. They sent two young men, Samuel Gurley and Edmund Briggs, to call upon Joseph Smith III. Their misson was not too successful, for they were rejected. However, their faith continued and they still believed that in " the due time of the Lord" Joseph would be called. here is a brief account of their visit.

"They found Young Joseph living on a farm near Nauvoo with his bride of a few months. Not more than three or four weeks before, the young man had been visited by George A. Smith, of Utah, and Erastus Snow. Now at his door were two more men with a most strange story. They said they had been commissioned from the Reorganized Church, at Zarahemla, Wisconsin, to deliver the word of the Lord to him." 69

Joseph received them and discussed the matter with them. Of the next day he said, "I gave them my answer which was this: What they came to bring might be the word of the Lord; I could not say that it was not. I had, however, no testimony that it was. that I was prepared to do what God required of me, if he would make it known to me what it was; that I believed that he could reveal himself if he would! 70 This was a reasonable attitude. Joseph Smith III was not one to jump at any opportunity that came to take leadership of a church; he was only concerned about God’s will. He sought the revelation of God and waited for it before taking any move.

Finally in 1859, he received his answer.

"During the year 1859 the question of my connection with my father’s work was finally determined. I became satisfied that it was my duty. The queries heretofore referred to were one by one being settled; until the final one, where and with whom should my life labor lie? was the only one left. This was determined by a similar manifestation to others that I had received to this effect: ‘ The Saints reorganizing at Zarahemla and other places, is the only organized portion of the church accepted by me. I have given them my Spirit and will continue to do so while they remain humble and faithful.’ "71

Joseph Smith III knew that he had been appointed by his father to become his successor and in recent years had received evidence from God that he was called to this work. Now, through revelation he was told who God’s people were - "The Saints reorganizing at Zarahemla and other places." Just as God had answered the prayer of his father when as a lad of fourteen he asked which church to join, God answered the prayer of this man when he asked which church he should lead. Note that God said that the Reorganization was " the only organized portion of the church accepted by me." This tells us that not only did God accept the Reorganized Church but he rejected all other organized portions of the church, which would include the faction led by Brigham Young!

Many refuse to accept this as revelation just as many more in the world today refuse to accept as revelation that which came to the martyred prophet. However, just as the test of God’s revelation to Joseph Smith, Jr., has been in the fruits of his prophetic ministry, so also is the test of God’s revelation to his son, Joseph Smith III , to be found in the fruits of his prophetic ministry. We will discuss these later in this brochure.

**Ordination of Joseph Smith III**

Having received the revelation of God’s will, Joseph Smith III proceeded to fulfill his promise. April 6, 1860, he went to the conference of the Reorganixed Church held at Amboy, Illinois. He presented himself to the people and indicated his willingness to accept and serve as their leader if they so wished. His speech of acceptance 72 is a witness of his humility, faith, and devotion. In this he bore testimony that he came not of himself but by the influence of the Spirit. He pledged to follow no man or set of men but to " be dictated by the power that sent me." He attested his abhorrence of the doctrine of polygamy and said he could not believe that his father had anything to do with it. He stated his belief in "the doctrines of honesty and truth" and professed his faith in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants. He closed his remarks by saying, " if the same Spirit which prompts my coming, prompts my reception, I am with you."

Thus the son of the martyred prophet came at the command of God to lead the only portion of the church still acceptable to Him. In the congregation were those who had "remained" and were " pure in heart." These were to see the fulfillment of God’s promise, for they were under the leadership of this man of God, to return to "the land of Missouri" and "build up the waste places of Zion."

The church did receive him in the same spirit which prompted his coming. Accordingly he was ordained as President of the High Priesthood under the hands of Elders Zenas H. Gurley of the Quorum of Twelve and William Marks of the high priests.73 Since some take exception to the authority of this ordination we will consider it in some detail.

One charge is that there was no one present with authority to ordain him; i.e., they claim that all were of a lesser office and the lesser cannot ordain the higher. Since Zenas H. Gurley was ordained an apostle after the death of the marytr we will not argue his case. However, William Marks acted upon the authority received by ordination during the life of the martyred prophet. He was a high priest and President of the Nauvoo Stake when the prophet was murdered. Although some claim that he lost this priesthood and was excommunicated we cannot accept this, for it is yet to be seen whether or not Brigham Young had any authority to excommunicate this man. We have already seen that Brigham Young best fits in the category of those about which God warned, "you may know they are not of me." William Marks held the office of high priest and as such ordained the son of the prophet!

Now to the question: Does a high priest have authority to ordain the President of the High Priesthood? We turn to the ordination of Joseph Smith, Jr., for a precedent.

69. The Story of the Church (Reorganized), 1955 Edition, pages 427-428
70. The Story of the Church (Reorganized), 1955 Edition, page 429
71. H.C. 3:263
72. H.C. 3: 247-250
73. H.C. 3:251

"On the 26th I called a general council of the church, and was acknowledged as the president of the high priesthood, *according to a previous ordination at a conference of high priests*, elders, and members, held at Amgerst, Ohio, on the twenty-fifth of Janurary, 1832."74

There were no apostles in the church until 1835, thus the men who ordained the martyr as President of the High Priesthood held the same priesthood authority as did William Marks. If a high priest could ordain the martyr to this position, a man with the same office could certainly ordain Joseph Smith III. Brigham Young should have recognized such authority for he said, "Whoever is ordained to the office of Elder to a certain degree possesses the keys of the Melchisedec Priesthood; and suppose only one Elder should be left on the earth, could he go and set in order the kingdom of God? Yes, by revelation." 75 Years later, John A. Widstoe, a member of the Twelve in the Church in Utah wrote, "... if by any chance every man holding Priesthood should be destroyed, save one elder, it would be the duty and right of that one elder, under divine revelation, to *reorganize* the whole Church with all the grades of the Priesthood and its officers." 76

These things being true, it is evident that William Marks had authority to ordain the son of the martyr. Zenas Gurley and others had learned "that a command from God is authority to do all he requires, be it more or less."77

Though there have been some who have sought to destroy William Marks by public accusation and malicious charges, a vision to the prophet had promised Marks would be victorious. Joseph Smith the martyr recorded this vision as follows:

"I would just say to Brother Marks, that I saw in a vision while on the road, that whereas

he was closely pursued by an innumerable concourse of enemies and as they pressed upon him hard, as if they were about to devour him, and had seemingly obtained some degree of advantage over him, but about this time a chariot of fire came , and near the place, even the Angel of the Lord put forth his hand unto Brother Marks, and said unto him,’Thou art my son, come here,’ and immediately he was caught up in the chariot, and rode away triumphantly out of their midst. And again the Lord said, ‘*I will raise thee up for a blessing unto many people*.’ Now the particulars of the whole matter can not be written at this time, but the vision was evidently given to me *that I might know that the hand of the Lord would be on his behalf*." 78

Not long after the death of the martyr we see the course of events beginning to take place in fulfillment of this vision. The enemies of William Marks sought to devour him by leading him to paths that would have separated him from Christ. Had he followed any of them with their perverse doctrines, he would have been lost to the work of God. Certainly, William Marks along with many others was caught in the whirlpool of confusion resulting from the claims and counterclaims of would-be leaders following the death of the prophet. Satan used these false leaders as powers seeking to destroy the honest in heart. Thus William Marks went from one group to another temporarily deceived by the false claims of their leaders. Indeed he was "closely pursued by an innumerable concourse of enemies."

However , because of the purity of his heart and the sincerity of his desire, it was possible for the Lord to take him triumphantly away from their midst just when it would seem that he was about to be lost to the cause of God. As time went on, God’s promise, " I will raise thee up for a blessing unto many people, " was fulfilled, for out of the confusion and claims of false leaders the Lord raised William Marks to ordain Joseph Smith the son of the martyred prophet and become a source of strength to the church reorganized by diving command.

74. T.S. 5:624
75. J.D. 9:88
76. *A Rational Theology* by John A. Widstoe, 1952 Edition, page 103
77. *The Story of the Church* (Reorganized), 1955,Edition, page 414
78. M.S. 16:131

**"In Thee and Thy Seed......"**

As a final point of examination in the matter of Joseph Smith III and the claim of the Reorganized church that he was the true successor to the prophet Joseph Smith, we look to one more of the promises of God. We have already discussed this but again call your attention to these words of instruction to the church and promise to Joseph Smith and his posterity:

"For this anointing have I put upon his head, that *his blessing shall also be put upon the head of his posterity after him*; and as I said unto Abraham, concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph, *In thee, and in thy seed, shall the kindred of the earth be blessed*."79

We have seen that Joseph’s blessing was not merely a place in which to live( the boarding House) but rather the gift of prophetic leadership. Only as this blessing would be placed upon the head of this posterity after him could they become a blessing to the kindred of the earth.God’s promises are sure. With the calling and ordination of Joseph Smith III as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator the fulfillment of this great promise began.

**Joseph Smith III- Successor?**

As quoted in the preceding pages, evidence that Joseph Smith III was the true successor to his father is abundant. He qualified in every way, for he was:

1. appointed by the prophet( pages 28-32 this brochure)

2. sustained by revelation to the people ( pages 35-40)

3. called by God through revelation ( pages 40-41)

4. ordained as God had commanded ( pages 41-42)

5. the seed of Joseph Smith, the martyr ( pages 44-45)

Yes, on the basis of God’s law of succession, Joseph Smith III is found to be the true and rightful successor to the martyred prophet.

 **Other Presidents of the Reorganized Church**

**FREDERICK M. SMITH**

Following the death of Joseph Smith III in 1914, his son Frederick Madison Smith became President of the High Priesthood and the Church. Of this event we read, "As Joseph Smith grew older, he became increasingly concerned that the church might not be scattered and confused at his death as it had in 1844. He made careful plans that all should be left in order and that all should understand that he had been directed to choose his son, Frederick M. Smith, as his successor. He even prepared and left for the instruction of the priesthood of the church a careful ‘Letter of Instruction’ (March, 1913) explaining in detail the procedure that should be followed in event of his death." 80 " The church then turned to his son, and he was ordained President of the High Priesthood of the church May, 1915." 81

It is readily seen that this man, too, fulfilled the qualifications of successorship set up in God’s law. He was appointed by the preceding prophet, this appointment was by revelation, he was of the posterity of Joseph Smith and was ordained to this specific work as God had commanded.

**ISRAEL A. SMITH**

At the death of Frederick M. Smith in 1946, Israel A. Smith, his brother, became the prophetic leader of the church.

"In accordance with the law of the church, as found in the Doctrine and Covenants, ... and in harmony with the precedents whereby both Joseph Smith III and his son Fredierick M. Smith were selected, Israel A. Smith had been named by Frederick M. Smith to be his successor in a statement made to the Joint Council of First Presidency, Quorum of Twelve Apostles and Presiding Bishopric on October 20, 1938."82

Accordingly, Israel A. Smith was accepted by the people and ordained President of the High Priesthood, April 6, 1946. Some, through misunderstanding, have tried to limit us by saying that our presidents had to come by lineage from father to eldest son, and so on. A careful study of the

law as previously discussed shows that the Lord did not say from father to son but, speaking to Joseph the martyr, said, "In thee and in thy seed." 83

79.RDC 107: 18; UDC 124:56-58; see also pages 12-13 of this brochure
80. The *Story of the Church* ( Reorganized), 1955 Edition, page 576
81. *Ibid*, page 577
82. *The Story of the Church* (Reorganized), 1955 Edition, page 583
83. RDC 107: 18; UDC 124: 58

As has been the case with all of the presidents of the Reorganized Church, Israel A. Smith became president of the church as a result of appointment by his predecessor and was ordained in keeping with God’s law . He was , of course, one of the "seed" of the martyred prophet. The humble spirit of his prophetic leadership evidenced the divinity of his call to all who were acquainted with him.

**W.WALLACE SMITH**

Israel A. Smith passed away on June 14, 1958. However, like his father he had left a letter containing the appointment of his successor. He made it clear that William Wallace Smith was appointed by revelation. He stated that he had received evidence of this in 1947 when William Wallace Smith was ordained an Apostle. Further evidence came with the calling and ordination of this man as a member of the First Presidency in 1950. By 1952 the nature of the revelation was so clear that Israel A. Smith prepared the document appointing his successor and had it witnessed by President F. Henry Edwards and Bishop G. L. DeLapp.

This document was presented to the councils and quorums of the priesthood and the delegates at the General Conference of the Church on October 6, 1958. through the process of common consent it was accepted as the mind and will of the lord. Accordingly, William Wallace Smith was ordained on that date as President of the High Priesthood of the church.

Once again, as in the case of every President of the Reorganized Church , God and his church honored and followed completely the law of succession revealed so many years before. William Wallace Smith was appointed by God through Israel A. Smith. He was accepted by the people and ordained as God has commanded.

**Who Followed God’s Law of Succession**

History brings the undeniable proof that the Reorganized Church has respected and followed God’s law of succession throughout its existence. Each of its presidents has been appointed by the preceding prophet, sustained by revelation, ordained as commanded of God, and been of the seed of Joseph Smith.

History likewise proves that the Church in Utah has ignored this law and substituted what one of its presidents, Joseph F. Smith, called "just simply a custom." 84

We could rest our case at this point, for any church that continues without the prophetic leadership God has promised- that substitutes man-made custom for God’s law- shows itself to be less than the Church of Jesus Christ. However, there are other matters of importance to be considered, other tests to be applied.

84.. See pages 26-27 this brochure

**REORGANIZED**

False concepts are prevalent among members of the Church in Utah because the church under the leadership of the "seed" of Joseph Smith, Jr., added the word "Reorganized" to the name of the church. We consider the matter here.

**Why Added**

When God commanded the people to renounce former leaders 85 and promised to raise up a prophet to lead them, the widely publicized doctrines of the Church in Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young had brought much disgrace and dishonor on the name of Joseph Smith, Jr., and the church Christ founded through him. There had to be some distinction between the Church in Utah and the group who had remained true to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Judge Sherman, of the Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio, having studied all the evidences presented in his court in the Kirtland Temple suit gave this verdict, " That the Church in Utah... has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances , and usages of the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." 86

Many of the people of the original church recognized this. Something had to be done. If the church was to be saved as it was restored, it had to be organized again according to its original "faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances, usages." The formation of the Reorganized Church was not the beginning of a new church but rather a reorganization of the original church according to its original doctrines.

**Need for Reorganization**

The need for reorganization referred to in the previous paragraphs was apparent even to the Church in Utah. History records that they took action accordingly. We quote portions of the evidence of this.

85. See page 39 this brochure
86. Journal Entry, Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio, Monday, February 23, 1880

"....we now, having it in contemplation soon to *reorganize the Church* according to the original pattern, with a First Presidency and Patriarch, feel that it will be the privilege of the Twelve, ere long, to spread abroad among the nations." 87 "I met in council with the First Presidency and members of the Twelve....We were then instructed to assist in *reorganizing* the different quorums here." 88

"We have *rebaptised* many of them, and have *reorganized* the church." 89

Yes, they, too, saw the need for reorganization and they reorganized the church according to the dictates of their leaders in that day.

**A New Church Emerges in Utah**

Althought leaders of the Church in Utah have consistently accused the Reorganized Church of organizing a new church, this is not true. When the facts are studied, it becomes evident that it is the Church in Utah which as Judge Sherman said "has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, law, ordinances and usages of the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." The Church in Utah indeed introduced new and strange doctrines- doctrines that had never been publicly taught or accepted by the original church. The introduction of the doctrines and the resulting departure from original faith present ample evidence that it was the Church in Utah which emerged as a new church.

**Rebaptism and Reordination**

We further note that Brigham Young required rebaptism of many who came to Utah and also reordained at least part of the priesthood. We look at the record.

"Friday, Aug. 6...*On this day the Twelve were rebaptized.* .....President Young went down into the water and baptized all his brethren of the Twelve present. He then confirmed us, and sealed upon us our Apostleship, and all the keys, powers, and blessings belonging to that office....

"Sunday, Aug. 8.... The whole camp of Israel renewed their covenants before the Lord by baptism. There were 224 baptized this morning, making 284 rebaptized during the last three days." 90

Modern apologists of the Church in Utah have tried to reconcile the fact of rebaptism and reordination by simply saying that the records had been lost and thus it was necessary so that all things might be done in order. This is not the reason Brigham gave, for he said, "I will refer again to the brethren and sisters who have lately come over the plains. My counsel to them today, is , as it has been on former occasions to all who have come into these valleys, Go and be baptized for the remission of sins, repenting of all your wanderings.... If any of you inquire what is the necessity of your being baptized, as you have not committed any sins, I answer, it is necessary to fulfill all righteousness." 91 Nothing was said of lost records. The demand was plain, "Go and be baptized for the remission of sins." According to the Bible, there is no repentance left for those who fall away after once being baptized with authority, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and so on. 92 To say that baptism was necessary for those who had been baptized under the leadership of Joseph Smith is to deny the authority of the Restoration. If these people had been true to their trust they did not need rebaptism; and if they had not, it would avail them nothing.

Why did Brigham Young reordain the apostles and seal on them again all the "keys, powers, and blessings that belong to that office"? Everyone knew who the apostles were, No lost record could demand this reordination. there was no need for it unless these men had lost their authority! If they had lost their priesthood this ordinance was still useless, for he who ordained them was as far from God as they. It is not too much to say that evidence points to the fact that Brigham Young, sensing his own lack of authority, sought to fain this by putting his stamp on all who followed him .

Since the Reorganized Church is the true continuation of the original church no rebaptism was required for those who had been baptized under the authority of the Restoration. It is true that some requested and were granted the right of rebaptism, but the church held that rebaptism was merely "a matter of conscience." 93 Likewise, members of the priesthood functioned under their original ordinations without having someone seal it upon them again.

87.M.S. 10:86
88. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, page 407, date, February 12, 1848
89.*Ibid*, page 432- this is a letter from Parley P. Pratt to Brigham Young written from San Francisco, California, August 28, 1851
90. H.R. 9: 87- recorded statements of Wilford Woodruff
91. J.D. 2:8
92. Hebrews 6: 4-6
93. H.C. 3:433

**BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM**

What are the fruits of any man or church commissioned of God? Men who have concern for temporal wealth and numerical strength have classified such wealth and strength as the fruits of true servants of God. But these are not the standards of Christ . Truth is his standard! Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 95

The fruits of Jesus Christ can be found in his gospel and what happens in the lives of men who follow him. The true successor to the leadership of Christ’s church on earth, and the church itself, will never be found promulgating doctrines perverse to the teachings of the Master. The Apostle Paul warned the early church, " Though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." 96

94. Bible, Matthew 7:16
95. Bible, John 8:31,32

**Fruits of Brigham Young and the Church in Utah**

The doctrines taught by Brigham Young and his successors stand as their fruits. These are evidence of departure from truth and loss of authority. For a more thorough study of the doctrines coming out of the Church in Utah we refer you to brochures on each which are available to interested students. We present a *brief* discussion of some of these doctrines at this time. We do wish to make it clear that although the Church in Utah has endeavored to connect the name of Joseph Smith, Jr., with some of these doctrines, the Reorganized Church has never found evidence of this as fact. We cannot see why any group of people would want to charge an innocent man of God, whom they claim to respect, with originating teachings so contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ. We can provide, for those who wish it, abundant evidence of his innocence. However, what Joseph Smith did or did not teach is not so important as what Christ taught. The Church of Jesus Christ could not and can not apostatize from Joseph Smith; *it can only apostatize from Jesus Christ*!

Modern apologists have endeavored to explain away many of the doctrinal departures of Brigham Young. However, if we are to make any serious study of these things, we must let Brigham Young speak for himself. He does this quite plainly.

**Rebaptism**

We have already shown that Brigham Young taught that rebaptism of those already baptized under the authority of the Restoration was essential to "fulfill all righteousness." This rebaptism was quite different from that taught by the Apostle Paul 97 wherein he caused some to be rebaptized who had not been baptized by one having authority. Rebaptism as taught and practiced by Brigham Young was indeed a new doctrine, one that had neither been taught by the Christian church of the New Testament or the Christian church as restored in 1830. Rebaptism as taught and practiced under Brigham Young was a departure from the doctrine of Jesus Christ and a step on the road of apostasy.

**Adam-God**

As previously noted, brochures have already been prepared and filled with authentic quotations proving the extent to which Brigham Young taught this and other doctrines that will be noted here. We urge you to read these brochures and check their references. Compare them with the teachings of Christ as found in the Scriptures. No one can do this for you. We do not ask that you read only the portions we quote- we want you to read the entire articles from which the quotations come.

Brigham Young did teach that Adam is our God! He said, "Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, .... When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a *celestial body*, and brought Eve, *one of his wives*, with him. He helped to make and organize this world...*He is our* Father *and our* God, *and the only God with whom we have to do*. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing, must hear it, and *will know it sooner or later*." 98

The Church in Utah has tried to reconcile this by saying Brigham did not mean Adam was God in the sense of one to be worshiped, but rather that he was father in the sense of being the first of the human race. Not so! We leave the interpretation of this doctrine to Brigham Young and his adherents in the day it was taught. We quote from an editorial printed in the *Millennial Star* in 1855:

"If the Lord God has ever withdrawn from Father Adam the authority here{Gen. 1:28} bestowed upon him, He has not seen fit to make it known....From the time he received his

commission in the Garden of Eden, he has been laboring diligently to fulfill the instructions there given him....concerning his dominions, and to bring them under subjection to his will. *This will be fully accomplished when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is the God of the whole earth*. Then will the words of the Prophet Brigham , when speaking of Adam, be fully realized -’*He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do*.’Having now observed how Adam the first man became a God, we inquire why may not millions of his children receive the same Godlike knowledge and power?"99

Brigham Young knew that this doctrine was corrupt and could not be supported from the word of God. He flaunted his stand before the entire Christian world and said,

"*You may read and believe what you please as to what is found written in the Bible*. Adam was made from the dust of *an* earth, but not the dust of this earth." 100

Indeed, this is false and perverse doctrine, leading men away from Christ. It is part of the *fruit of Brigham Young*. It is not the fruit of a prophet of God!

**Blood Atonement**

Before we quote concerning this, we say that we do not charge the Church in Utah with having ever officially accepted this teaching of their "prophet" Brigham Young. Though the Church in Utah has tried to soften the harshness of this doctrine by saying that it referred only to atonement by the blood of Jesus Christ, we again let Brigham speak for himself. His statement stands on its own.

"Let me suppose a case. Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife, and put a javelin through both of them, you would be justified, *and they would atone for their sins, and be received into the kingdom of God.* ....

"There is not a man or woman, who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, *your own blood must atone for it.* " 101

96. Bible, Galatians 1:8
97. Bible, Acts 19: 1-6
98. J.D. 1:50, dated April 9, 1852; also found in M.S. 15: 769-770
99. M.S. 17: 195; dated March 31, 1855
100. J.D. 3:319; dated April 20, 1856
101. J.D. 3: 247

This teaching is completely contrary to the doctrines of Christ as found in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants. We quote two as examples.

"But God commandeth his love toward us , in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." 102

"And since man had fallen, he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atoneth for their sins." 103

A prayerful study of this whole matter leads one to the conclusion that in this doctrine Brigham Young set his own personal power or leadership against the word of God and his Son Jesus Christ.Instruction had been given to the elders in the original church as follows:

"If any man writes to you, or preaches to you, doctrines contrary to the Bible, the Book of Mormon, or the book of Doctrine and Covenants, set him down as an impostor." 104

If those who went to Utah had not so soon forgotten the martyred prophet, and had remembered this instruction given shortly before his death, they would have set Brigham Young down as an impostor as soon as he taught this perverse doctrine, for it is indeed contrary to the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants.

In the doctrine of blood atonement we find another of the fruits of Brigham Young; fruits that could not have come from the true successor to the prophet Joseph Smith.

**Polygamy**

Brigham Young also vigorously taught and practiced the doctrine of polygamy. In later years he declared that he was the first in the church to receive information from God about this. He said,

"While we were in England ( in 1839 and 1840) I think, the Lord manifested to me by vision and his Spirit, things that I did not then understand . I never opened my mouth to anyone concerning them until I returned to Nauvoo. Joseph had never mentioned this- polygamy. There had never been a thought of it in the church that I ever knew anything about at the time: but I had this for myself and I kept it to myself." 105

This doctrine and its implications are so far reaching that we cannot discuss it in detail here. We again invite you to read the comprehensive brochures prepared on this subject. The Scriptures show that this is another perverse doctrine. Brigham Young and those who followed him in teaching it surely fall into the group which the Apostle Paul called accursed when he said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." 106

It is true that some false teachers were introducing this doctrine privately among the people of the church prior to the death of the prophet. However, Joseph Smith moved vigorously against them. As late as February, 1844, just a few months before his death, Joseph and his brother Hyrum printed a public notice cutting Hyrum Brown off from the church for "preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines. " 107

Since the prophet felt so strongly about this doctrine that he excommuniated men for teaching it prior to his death, it is only logical to conclude that had he lived he would have done the same with Brigham Young when he taught it.

More evidence could be presented but this should suffice to stamp Brigham Young for all that he was and also what he was not. Jesus said, in warning us of false prophets of the last days. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." 108

As we conclude the refutation of the claim that Brigham Young was the true successor of the prophet Joseph Smith, we present the following points in summation:

1. He was not appointed by Joseph Smith as his successor(see page 20 of this brochure)

102. Bible, Romans 5:8,9
103. Book of Mormon, Alma 13:46 (Reorganized Church Edition); Alma 22: 14 ( Utah Edition)
104. T.S. 5:490
105. Deseret News, July 1, 1874
106. Bible, Galatians 1:8
107. T.S. 5:423
108. Bible, Matthew 7:18

2. He made no claim to successorship other than "It is the choice of this people." ( See page 20)

3. He was not ordained as President of the High Priesthood (see page 20 )

4. He rebaptized his followers ( seee pages 49-51)

5. He reordained the leading ministers of his church (see page 50-51)

6. He taught new and perverse doctrines( see pages 53-57)

As found in the decision of the Court of Common Pleas in Lake County, Ohio: under the leadership of Brigham Young, " ... *the Church in Utah... materially and largely departed from the* *faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances, and usages of the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*." 109

It is evident that Judge Philips of the United States Circuit Court at Kansas City, Missouri, was correct when he reached the decision that, "*There can be no question of the fact that Brigham Young’s assumed presidency was a bold and bald usurpation....Brigham Young’s assumption of this office* (under the claim of something like a transfiguration) *was itself a departure from the law of the church*."110

We do not further consider the successors of Brigham Young, for we agree with him in his statement of August 8, 1844. We believe that his "election" 111 and bold usurpation of the presidency did "sever the Priesthood." 112 The fact that the Church in Utah, under the leadership of these successors, has continued the promulgation of many of the perverse doctrines he taught is evidence of this.

**Fruits of Joseph Smith III and the Reorganized Church**

Nothing can be found in the teachings that have come to the church under the leadership of Joseph Smith III and his successors (each of them the "seed" of Jospeh Smith the prophet) that can be construed by any means as being perverse to the doctrines and gospels of Jesus Christ.

109. This brochure, page 48
110. Federal Reporter, Vol. 60, page 951
111. This brochure, page 17
112. Ibid, page 12

The ministry of Joseph Smith III was one of love and humility. Under his leadership the "pure in heart" who remain did return to Zion. Through this man, God was able to fulfill his commitment made to the Saints as they were driven from Zion in 1833. Thus one of the fruits by which the world can judge this man is that God used him in fulfilling prophetic promise to the people.

Another of the fruits of this good man is seen in the evidence of the power of God that found residence within his life and caused men of all faiths to respect him. At his death the Kansas City Journal for December 12, 1914, paid this fine tribute to him.

"He was the Prophet, but first of all he was the Christian gentleman and the good citizen. As such he lived; as such he died; and as such he will be remembered by all outside the household of his faith. His followers themselves can have no legacy of remembrance more honorable than this appraisement....

"Kindly, cheerful, loyal to his own creed, tolerant of those of others, standing for modesty, simplicity, good citizenship, embodying in his private and public life all the virtues which adorn a character worthy of emulation - such is the revelation which Joseph Smith leaves to the world, as the real interpretation of an ecclesiastical message translated into terms of human character."

Such are the fruits by which this godly man is known!

Whereas under the leadership of Brigham Young, the Church in Utah received only one communication which they consider of sufficient importance to be classed as revelation and included in their Doctrine and Covenants, the Reorganized church under leadership of Joseph Smith III received seventeen revelations. these were presented to the quorums of the church and the body of delegates assembled in General Conference. They were received by them as revelations from God and accordingly placed in the Doctrine and Covenants in the same manner in which the revelations to his father had been presented and received. 113

The fruits of this man’s life mark him plainly as the prophet anad humble servant of God, the true successor to his father.

113. RDC Sections 114-131 inclusive with the exception of 123

So much has been covered in this discussion that it is well to pause at its close and briefly review the evidences found herein. They are as follows:

1. God set the plan for succession of prophetic leadership of Israel as he spoke to Moses and told him to appoint Joshua his successor.

2. The unusual experience at the burning bush that called Moses to lead former day Israel was equaled in latter days as God spoke to Joseph Smith, Jr., and called him to lead latter-day Israel.

3. God’s law of succession, given for direction to his people in latter days, is clear. Briefly it is this: the successor to the prophet will be (a) appointed by the prophet , (b) sustained by revelation, (c) chosen by the people, and (d) ordained as President of the High Priesthood.

4. God promised that Joseph Smith’s blessing of prophetic leadership would be placed on the head of his posterity after him that through him and his seed the kindred of the earth will be blessed.

5. None of the leaders of the Church in Utah have been of the seed of Joseph Smith and thus do not come within the promise of God.

6. The Reorganized Church has always been blessed with the prophetic leadership of the "seed" of the prophet martyr.

7. The power and authority of the twelve Apostles as a united body is equal to the power and authority of the first Presidency, but the duties of their calling differ.

8. The Church in Utah has not at any time followed the law of succession of prophetic leadership given by God. By the testimony of one of their presidents, Joseph F. Smith, we find that succession is not a matter of God’s law to them but is "simply a custom."

9. The Reorganized Church humbly acknowledges that God has given such a law and gratefully thanks him for continuing to choose and appoint its leaders in accord with that law.

10. Brigham Young said that if the people put a man at their head, they would "scatter the saints to the four winds" and "sever the priesthood." If he was correct then the fact that the people elected him as their president ( put him at their head) helped scatter the people and severed the priesthood.

11. The true succession of prophetic leadership and authority has come through the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints whose headquarters are and have been for years at Independence, Missouri, the City of Zion designated in numerous revelations.

This succession has come as God’s law has been followed. Its divinity can be seen in the literal fulfillment of prophecy, the continuous teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the persistent effort and stable growth of his church as it builds up the kingdom of God.

In closing this brochure we thank God for the testimony of his Spirit that has led us in our search for truth. We pray that this same Spirit may bless all who read and study these evidences.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

A. Publications referred to in this tract by abbreviation:

1. J.D.- *Journal of Discourses*\_ published by authority of the Church in Utah. The first volume contains a "Letter from the First Presidency" Which states that these "Journals" contain a faithful reporting of "the public Sermons, Discourses, Lectures, & c., delivered by the Presidency, the Twelve, and others in this city" (Salt Lake City). From the same letter we find that the "Journals" were published in England, "for the benefit of the Saints at large." The complete set contains 26 volumes.

2. M.S. - *The Latter - day Saints Millennial Star*- published by the authority of the church in Utah. These volumes were published in England and often contained reprints from the Journal of Discourses.

3. T.S.-*The Times and Seasons*- published by the original church. There are six volumes, all of which were published in Nauvoo beginning in the fall of 1839.

4. RDC- The Doctrine and Covenants - this refers to the edition as published by the Reorganized Church.

5. UDC- The Doctrine and Covenants- this refers to the edition as published by the 6. Reorganized Church.

6. H.C. - *History of the Church* - this is a four -volume history published by the Reorganized Church. It was written and compiled by President Joseph Smith and Apostle Heman C. Smith of that Church.

7. DCH- *Documentary History of the Church*- this name is used by way of reference to a history which the Church in Utha claims was written by Joseph Smith, Jr. this seven volume history is published by the Church in Utah.

8. CCH- *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*- this is a six volume history written by B.H. Roberts and published by the Church in Utah.

9. P.A. - Complainants Abstract of Pleading and Evidence- this was presented by the Reorganized church as complainant "In the Circuit Court of the United Stated, Western District of Missouri, Western Division, at Kansas City." This is published by the Church.

10. H.R.\_ *The Historical Record*-published by Andrew Jensen, former Historian of the church in Utah . The title page states that this is "A Monthly Periodical Devoted Exclusively to Historical, Biographical, Chronological, and Statistical Matters."

B. Other publications quoted in this brochure:

1. *Succession in the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints-* written by B. H. Roberts and published in Salt Lake City.

2. *Improvement Era* - a present day monthly periodical published by the Church in Utah.

3. *The Saints’Herald -*The official weekly magazine published by the Reorganized Church.

4. *The Story of the Church* - a one volume history of the church by Inez Smith Davis. This is published by the Reorganized Church.

5.*A Rational Theology* - written by the late Apostle John Widstoe of the Church in Utah and published in Salt Lake City.

6. *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* - edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt , published for the author and proprietor by Russell Brothers in New York City.

7. *The Deseret News*- a newspaper printed in Salt Lake City- this is essentially a newspaper printed under the auspices of the Church in Utah.

8. *Federal Reporter*-contains "Cases Argued and Determined in the Circuit court of Appeals, and Circuit and District Courts of the United States."