

# 22 Cain, Abel and the Priesthood

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Priesthood is often defined in LDS circles as the power and authority to act in God's name. This definition of priesthood is correct but should be expanded in its meaning and understanding. Many assume that even God has priesthood. That being the case, the definition above would not necessarily be true. Therefore, the term 'priesthood' itself should be defined before moving forward.

Priest-hood is an "authority" given to, or placed upon an individual, hence the term 'hood.' This authority is the right to act as a priest, which is an earthly mediator or "*servant*." It is defined in the dictionary as "*a devoted and helpful follower or supporter*" for God's love and care for others. Priesthood is *the authority to represent God* (as a servant) in His love and salvation offered to man. Accepting this responsibility and sustained by those whom the individual will serve, the Lord promises his support and inspiration to those called and sustained. Enoch is told this when he questions his calling from God as a servant:

31 And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying: Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; *wherefore am I thy servant?*  
32 And the Lord said unto Enoch: Go forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good. (Moses 6:31-32).

Omnipotent and omniscient as God is, He has no priest-hood that He receives from someone else. He is Deity, thus the power is inherent within Him and His glory. This "inherent power" is the power, authority, knowledge, glory, and honor to rule as a God and creator in the eternities. This is the honor Satan sought for in the beginning, as recorded in scripture. Lucifer did not seek to take the place of Christ, but to obtain the Father's power and position. Thus, Satan sought to do away with the necessity of Christ and the Atonement. This he would do, as scripture explains, by saving everyone and consequently taking away their agency.

From the beginning, there has always been a conflict between legitimate priesthood authority and the illegitimate leader who rules or demands that "*right*" by confiscating the "*rites*" to rule. This exercise of pride was manifest in the pre-earth life as the Son of Morning sought for the Father's *honor* which is His *power*.

And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil—for, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, *Give me thine honor, which is my power;* and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency. (D&C 29:36)

And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem

all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; *wherefore give me thine honor.* (Moses 4:1)

The honor and power of God that Satan demanded included his position as the supreme ruler. Having failed in his endeavor, Satan and those that followed him were cast from the pre-earth abode to continue their work of spiritual destruction through temptation. In his misery, the devil seeks the misery of all mankind, as all humanity has the *potential* to obtain the power, glory and honor that he has lost for eternity.

Mormon records in 3 Nephi that the fall of the Nephite nation came because of the “temptations of Satan,” which temptations have been the same from the time of Cain. Mormon lists four primary temptations that Satan uses to overthrow the individual and the culture (a warning for our time and culture, Mormon and non-Mormon alike). Nephi gives the same four elements in prophecy for the last days (1 Nephi 22:23).

Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, (1) and to the puffing them up with pride, (2) tempting them to seek for power, and authority, (3) and riches, (4) and the vain things of the world. (3 Nephi 6:15)

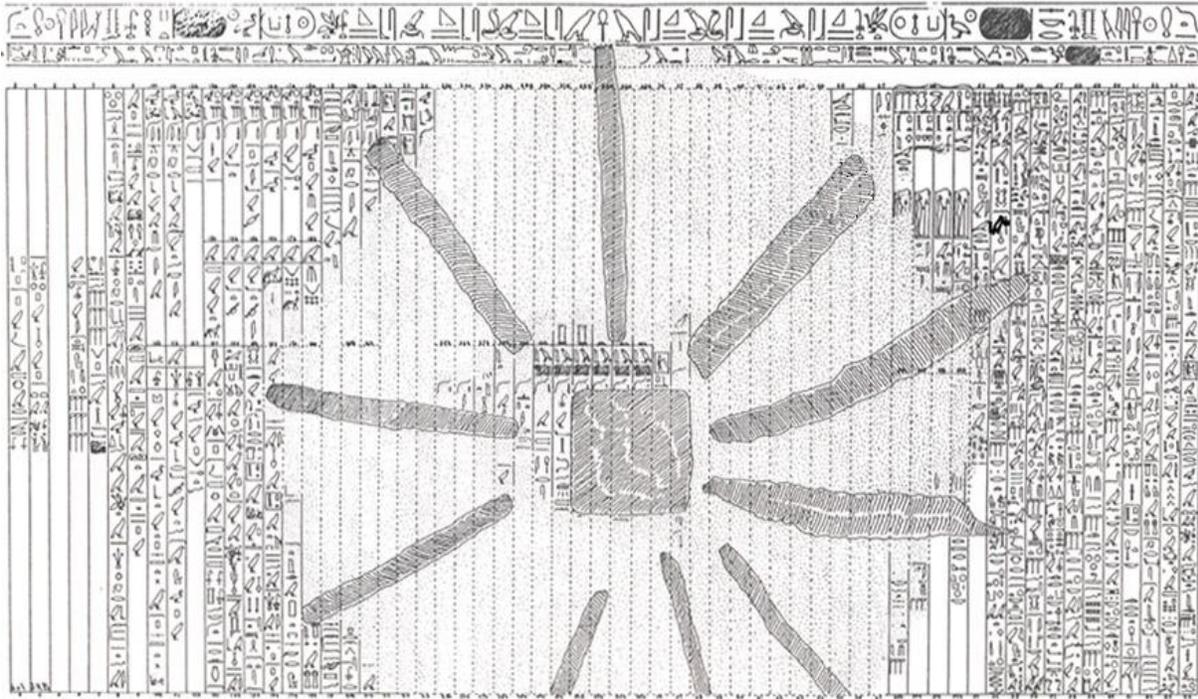
These temptations are innate tendencies of the ‘natural man’ in the attempt to satisfy the lusts and demands of the flesh. These are the temptations that Paul so often speaks of in the Epistles as he describes the battle that rages between the spirit and the flesh. These four character traits of spiritual depravity are the essential elements of today’s entertainment. Without these, there would be no mental captivity to draw the interest and money for the big screen, primetime television and so-called “reality shows” that steal life’s time and induce stupors of thought like a narcotic or drug that numbs the mind.

The great conflict between man and God described throughout scripture is connected to the four temptations listed above. These four elements become the moving force behind the person who *wants* to be the leader, competing with the legitimate priesthood authority whose right it is to reign as God’s mouthpiece on earth: Moses versus Pharaoh; Abraham versus Nimrod; and Christ versus Herod and the High Priest, etc. Like Satan in the pre-earth life, the conflict is between the one who *wants to rule* and the one who is *chosen to rule*. Often this conflict is between the older son (usually the firstborn son) who is not worthy for the responsibilities of the birthright, and the younger and more righteous sibling that is chosen to become the new patriarchal leader for the family. This is a pattern seen in the Old Testament and the many ancient texts that discuss pre-earth conflicts. This motif is seen in the sibling rivalries of Michael and Lucifer (Adam and Satan), Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Joseph and his brothers, Esau and Jacob, Laman and Nephi and others.

The Shabakah Stone is the oldest written document in the world. It is an Egyptian temple text dating to abt. 3500 b.c.e. which also makes it the oldest written religious instruction.<sup>1</sup> Inscribed on a large stone, the text outlines the ‘Memphite Theology’ that was performed as a play that included

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1. See: Gaster, Theodor H., *Thespis; Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East*. W.W. Norton Co, New York, New York. 1977. p. 399.



stage directions and dialogue. This drama, presented in the first ancient temples, focused on the pre-earth council of gods and the creation of the earth, and details the first conflict between the two sons of the creator over which son was to rule the new creation. In this text, as in other ancient epochs, the god finishes the creation and ponders the choice of which divine son to place in charge of the new world. The wicked son tries to usurp the authority bestowed upon the favored or "most beloved son" of the god of creation. This is the same motif which is outlined in Moses chapter four, which Joseph Smith would have known nothing about.

It appears within the text of Moses, that the conflict in the pre-earth was not just a conflict between Satan and Christ. Lucifer "*rebelled*" against God (not Christ) so by the "*power of mine Only Begotten* (the Melchizedek Authority) I caused that he should be cast down" (Moses 4:3). Satan's plan to save all, that 'not one soul would be lost,' was also motivated by the desire to *eliminate the necessity of the Atonement* and the need for a redeemer, effectively eliminating the role of Christ and the Gospel. Satan not only desired to take away the agency of man but also wanted the honor and glory of the Father. This act of pride, if fulfilled, would have placed Satan in a position that would be above that of Christ.

Almost singular to Mormonism is the doctrine of the pre-earth life and a grand council in heaven. However, there are many ancient texts that discuss the pre-earth existence that also speak of the conflict between Satan and Michael (the Archangel), who later becomes Adam. This confrontation is caused when Adam is chosen to be the first man to be placed on the earth and is given the authority to hold all the priesthood keys pertaining to all dispensations. Adam/Michael becomes the first prophet, priest and king to all mankind. One ancient text describes Satan's rebellion as he refused to recognize Adam as God's choice as the first father and head of the human race (see note # 13). After putting the breath of life into Adam, the Father required all spirits to recognize (sustain) and honor Adam as the father of our bodies and the keeper of all the authority and

priesthood keys. In this document Lucifer is irate, and argues that he was prepared and existed with a prior authority and position before Michael. Satan thought or felt that it was his (Lucifer's) right as an angel of power and position (D&C 76) to be the first man and patriarch on earth, legitimizing his right to rule over Michael and all of humanity. This same idea (that Lucifer felt it was his right to be the first man and patriarch; that he should rule over Michael because Michael was "younger" than he) is found in D&C 29:36.

Many of these texts go on to describe that with a body (created in the pre-earth environment) and priesthood keys, Michael (Adam) was given the responsibility and authority "by the power of Christ" to cast Satan out of the presence of our Father to the newly created earth. In the April 2000 General Conference, Elder Russell M. Nelson referred to an apocryphal document he read while visiting London.<sup>2</sup> This ancient non-canonical text, entitled "The Discourse on Abbatôn", stated that before Lucifer/Satan was cast down, Adam "removed the writing from his hand", which means he lost all his priesthood and authority.



In the statues of Egyptian pharaohs this 'writing in the hand' is seen as a rolled papyrus in the hand, and represents his legitimate ancestral right to reign as the prophet, priest, and king. In the Latter-day Saint vernacular this would be called a "line of authority." The "*Discourse*" explains that Satan's power to move about was restricted by limiting "his bounds to the horizon" (to this earth only). He also was cut from "shoulder to shoulder through to the vertebrae" with a sickle. These acts represent physical restrictions that would govern or limit the abilities that Satan could use against mankind.

A great part of the conflict between Adam and Satan was over who was chosen to become the 'grand patriarch', with the inherent right to hold and administer the keys of the priesthood by which the inhabitants of the world would receive glory and exaltation. One of the key responsibilities of the Arch-angel Michael is to "detect" and *control Satan* when he appears as an angel of light to the righteous as he did with Joseph Smith in D&C 128:20 [See also the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, where Satan appears as an angel of light and is detected by Michael]. Michael also holds the keys of the bottomless pit, and will eventually bind and cast Satan into outer darkness in the end time (D&C 88:112-115; Revelation 20:1-3).

Satan, who was cast out of heaven for rebellion, was bound to the same earth to which he should have come had he kept his first estate (Abraham 3:26). Though restricted in his abilities and limited by laws that govern his actions, Satan seeks the "misery of all mankind". Hence his plan to thwart the plan of salvation of which he will have no part.

18 And because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable forever, *he sought also the misery of all mankind*. Wherefore, he said unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil, who is the father of all lies, wherefore he said: Partake of the forbidden fruit, and ye shall not die, but ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. (2 Nephi 2:18)

After the earth was created and prepared for Adam and Eve, they were placed in the Garden of Eden to begin their 'physical' yet immortal life. After partaking of the 'forbidden fruit' from the

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2. "Ensign," May 2000, p. 84

Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, our first parents were cast or driven out of the security of their garden home. The first parents began a new life and lifestyle in the physical existence of mortality with all its pain, suffering, and eventual death. Having been blessed with the ability to have posterity, subdue the earth, and have dominion over every living thing, the first couple begin to fulfill their potential 'blessings' with the abilities given to them at the time of their creation (Moses 2: 27-29). Adam and Eve begin to labor for their sustenance as they subdue the earth, having dominion over the animals, and begin the process of multiplying and filling the earth.

1 And it came to pass that after I, the Lord God, had driven them out, that *Adam began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I the Lord had commanded him. And Eve, also, his wife, did labor with him.*

2 And Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto him sons and daughters, and *they began to multiply and to replenish the earth.* (Moses 5:1-2)

Expelled from the Garden of Eden, the gospel was introduced to Adam and Eve after three generations of their posterity were on the earth (Moses 5:1-3). Their children and grandchildren rejected the gospel (Moses 5:12, 13), being seduced by Satan's counterfeit "gospel" which was introduced at the same time. Nevertheless, understanding the plan of salvation, the primal parents continued to have hope in the children that were yet to be born.

16 And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to call upon God. And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said: *I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words.* But behold, Cain hearkened not, saying: Who is the Lord that I should know him? 17 And she again conceived and bare his brother Abel. And Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. (Moses 5:16-17)

## **Cain**

Chapter Five of the Book of Moses teaches that Cain and his brother Abel were the first sons born to Adam and Eve *after* they receive the gospel. Cain, the firstborn in the gospel, is now in first position to become the birthright son. Cain should also be the one chosen as the new patriarch (under his father Adam) and set apart to help administer the gospel to all of Adam's posterity, becoming their prophet, priest and king. Eve is excited about the birth of her son Cain because he will be raised in the gospel that his older brothers and sisters rejected and "believed it not" (vs. 12, 13). Cain is the first of Adam's posterity 'born in the covenant', unlike his older siblings, and he will be the first child to be taught the gospel from his youth. He will, in effect, go to primary, young men's, seminary, institute, family home evenings, and priesthood meetings with his father; thus Eve declares, "I have gotten a man from the Lord; *wherefore he may not reject his words*" (Moses 5:16) as his older brothers and sisters had done. Adam, and Eve especially, recognize that there is now offspring to carry on the patriarchal order and priesthood line. Cain should become the prophet, king and priest to the posterity of Adam, having all power, authority and possessions of his father Adam.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, as do the scriptures, that Cain held the priesthood, providing him the authority to function and officiate in its ordinances.<sup>3</sup> Cain received the priesthood from his father and no doubt participated in the ordinances of salvation and exaltation for himself. Cain and his brother Abel prepared themselves to officiate in all the ordinances of the priesthood. His righteousness and priesthood activity would be manifested to his father and to God as he participated in priesthood ordinances, which would include those of sacrifice. The priesthood responsibility that Adam held was an authority that functioned under both the Patriarchal and Melchizedek priesthoods. The lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, did not exist as a separate authority or responsibility at that time because each patriarch was responsible for their family's spiritual and temporal needs. Cain was the first in line to become the new *Grand Patriarch* to all of Adam's posterity, holding and having all of the priesthood keys and authorities of his father.

In scripture there are patriarchs (family fathers restricted to immediate family lines) and *Grand Patriarchs* (holding a responsibility for all their father's children in their extended family lines). The book of Genesis is the priesthood manual of the Patriarchal Priesthood. Every sealed patriarch and matriarch entered into 'that order of the priesthood' which was patriarchal, the father becoming the patriarch to his own immediate family. A father is naturally responsible for the temporal and spiritual wellbeing of his family. The *Grand Patriarch* held all the keys and authority necessary to provide the *temporal* (today's Aaronic) and *spiritual* (Melchizedek) welfare to *his father's* family, (the brothers, sisters and their children etc.) thus, becoming a prophet, priest and king for them as well as for his own family.

The Melchizedek authority given to man is the power inherent in Christ as the firstborn and anointed birthright son of God. This Melchizedek authority is called the "Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God" (D&C 107:3). Christ is the only begotten in the flesh and the firstborn of the spirit. This inherent power, plus his position as the firstborn and birthright son of God, uniquely qualifies Christ to provide for the temporal and spiritual welfare of all His Father in Heaven's children. Thus, only Christ can be the Savior. As the birthright and firstborn son, the Anointed Messiah provides for the *temporal welfare* (creator of the world) and the *spiritual welfare* (the Atonement and resurrection) of *all* the children of His Father.

That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God. (D&C 76:24)

This authority is inherent within Christ as the firstborn and birthright son, and the same responsibility and authority is bestowed on each of the birthright sons of Adam and Eve. This birthright and firstborn authority is "without father or mother" (JST Hebrews 7:3) which legitimately provides the necessary temporal and spiritual salvation outside a direct family line. Hence, the Melchizedek authority may function without father or mother, unlike one holding the patriarchal authority and priesthood only (D&C 107:39-41).

The *Grand Patriarchs* (those holding both Patriarchal and Melchizedek authority) are listed in scriptures as the first born of the first born: Adam, Seth, Enoch, etc., down to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim. The *Grand Patriarch's* authority to administer the gospel and its ordinances resides in the authority of Christ, the Firstborn, and is an authority to administer outside

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3. *TPJS*, pp. 58-59; 169

the immediate family for the benefit of his Father's children. The Melchizedek authority steps in as an aid to the family patriarch and becomes a substitute for the families that may not have a father or patriarch to provide for them. Hence the command throughout scripture to take care of the temporal and spiritual needs of the "fatherless, widows, and orphans."

The common element among the "fatherless, widows, and orphans" is the absence of a patriarch to physically and spiritually provide and protect. Thus the Melchizedek authority and responsibility is to provide for the temporal and spiritual needs of those who are without a patriarch or priesthood leader in the home. For this reason, the Melchizedek priesthood is given to the male, as this responsibility is to become an assistant—and a replacement if necessary—for the authority and responsibility of the father of the family.

The Patriarchal Law of Inheritance in the Old Testament put forth that the first '*righteous*' son would receive the birthright, becoming the Grand Patriarch with Melchizedek authority. The book of Genesis discusses both a *firstborn son* and a *birthright son*. In most cases, these should be the same son, but the birthright responsibility is to be passed to the first righteous son, as in the case of Jacob or Israel and his sons. Ruben was the firstborn son but Joseph became the birthright son. Esau was the firstborn son of Isaac, but Jacob became the birthright son. Ishmael was the firstborn of Abraham, but Isaac became the birthright son. The firstborn son of Joseph (who was sold into Egypt) was Manasseh, but the birthright son was Ephraim. Cain was the firstborn in the gospel (who had accepted it) but Abel was chosen to be the *Grand Patriarch*, the priesthood leader and birthright son. This righteous and chosen *Grand Patriarch* was to *lead and direct* his father's family as a *prophet*, stand as a *priest* in providing and *performing the ordinances* of salvation and exaltation that were required, and act in the responsibilities of a *king* in providing for the *temporal needs and the protection* of his father's family.

Eve, excited to see the patriarchal line in the birth of Cain declares: "I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words" as their previous sons and daughters had done. However, in the 'process of time,' "Cain hearkened not, saying: Who is the Lord that I should know him?" (Moses 5:16, 19) Eventually the '*rights*' and the '*rite*' of a *Grand Patriarch* was conferred to Abel, the more righteous second-born son in this gospel-centered home. This is made clear in Moses 5:20-21, as the "Lord had respect" for Abel's offering, and had "not respect" for Cain's sacrifice. Because of his faith, the service, sacrifice, and faithful priesthood activity of Abel was accepted by God as more righteous than the bloodless offerings Cain made without faith in Christ and at the behest of Satan (Moses 5:18).

It is important to understand that this is not the first time they offered sacrifice. They both had to prove themselves in priesthood activity over years of growing in either faith or pride. Of this particular offering the scripture states that it was "*in process of time*" that it came to pass that Cain brought the fruit of the ground" (Moses 5:19). This particular account in scripture is about the decision to choose another Grand Patriarch, someone who is qualified to carry on the priesthood authority and responsibility of the "birthright son" to provide for the temporal and spiritual welfare of all his father's posterity. It was now time to choose the righteous son who would become the prophet, priest, and king to all the posterity of Adam, and eventually to all of mankind.

The Prophet Joseph spoke of three priesthoods, one being the Patriarchal Priesthood as given anciently to the patriarchs and matriarchs (See *TPJS* p.323). Today, this priesthood is entered into by way of the sealing (marriage) ordinance, wherein one is anointed and blessed on earth to be a *prophet, priest and king* to their family.

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into *this order of the priesthood* [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; (D&C 131:1-2)

This "order of the priesthood" is intimately connected to the marriage and sealing ordinance of a husband and wife. This sealing is the entrance into that "order of the priesthood" or the "patriarchal priesthood", becoming a patriarch and matriarch to their family and posterity. Anciently, to become the birthright son, one must not only be sealed to a matriarch but also have the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood (the inherent authority of Christ) to function as the '*prophet, priest and king*' for all his father's posterity when a worthy patriarch may be absent.

Cain received the priesthood, as did his brother Abel. However, Cain, being the oldest son (after Adam and Eve had received the gospel), felt he was entitled (in his mind) to not only the double inheritance of the firstborn, but also the birthright authority to "rule" over all the posterity of his father. [Anciently, the firstborn son received a double portion of the inheritance as part of his responsibility to provide for the widows and orphans in the extended family.]

Cain, like his brother Abel, participated in and received all the blessings and ordinances of salvation and exaltation. This is something required to become Perdition (D&C 76:31-34) as described in Moses, chapter five. To emphasize again, this account of Cain and Abel is rehearsed in the scriptures because it was the time to choose the worthy son to be the Grand Patriarch of the family line for all mankind.

## **Oaths and Covenants**

It is generally taught that the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood has a singular reference to those young men and brethren who receive the priesthood in their respective quorums and orders. Let's expand the term of Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood into the definitions that the scriptures provide. There have been many articles published by L.D.S. authors and scholars about the meanings of the terms "oath" and also "covenant" which will not be reviewed at this time. It would be of greater benefit to provide the meanings of these words as defined by the original language and in the lexicons of the Bible. In the Old Testament, the word or words used to "*make, establish or enter*" into a covenant is comprised of two words: "karath b'irth" which literally translated means to "*cut a covenant.*" These two words are connected because anciently a sacrificial death or a cutting (symbolic or real) was involved in the making of a covenant. The cutting is the "oath" in the covenant making process. This 'cutting a covenant' may be seen in Genesis as Abraham receives the covenant from God that will significantly impact his descendants for the rest of time. Notice that the large animals are cut in two and the smaller were not, but no doubt their throats were cut. The word "oath" is the cutting that is implied in the making of a covenant anciently.

6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness. 7 And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. 8 And he said, Lord God, *whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?* 9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. 10 And *he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another:* but the birds divided he not. 11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. 12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. 13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. 17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that *passed between those pieces.* 18 In the same day the Lord *made (cut) a covenant* with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. (Genesis 15:6-18)

In verse eighteen above, it is the Lord that “cut a covenant” with Abram, symbolized by the animals that were cut in two. This cutting acted as a witness and token of that covenant, stressing the importance of obedience to the stipulations, with the implication of perpetuity. The covenant between Jacob and Laban in Genesis 31:51-55 is also ratified by a sacrifice on the mount. These two examples set an interpreting precedent for the ‘law of sacrifice’ that existed in the patriarchal period centuries before the Law of Moses was instituted. The patriarchal sacrifices represented the oath portion of the personal covenants that the individual was entering into with God. Each sacrifice was, by nature, establishing a commitment and covenant between God and the one offering the sacrifice. Through the ‘cutting of a covenant’ the initiate becomes indelibly connected to the Atonement and sacrifice of Christ, as the messenger explained to Adam when he was offering sacrifice:

7 And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.<sup>8</sup> Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore. (Moses 5:7-8)

In the Book of Ruth, Naomi is told by her daughter-in-law that she will remain with her:

16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:<sup>17</sup> Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: ***the Lord do so to me, and more also,*** if ought but death part thee and me. (Ruth 1:16-17)

Ruth is making a promise (i.e. a covenant) with Naomi to remain with her. In verse seventeen Ruth makes the statement, “*the Lord do so to me, and more*” and then states that only death will part her

from this promise to Naomi. This phrase “Lord do so to me and more” was, as Edward F. Campbell states in the *Anchor Bible Series* on *Ruth* an “oath formulary.”

This solemn oath formulary appears only here and in eleven passages in Samuel and Kings. The first part of it was *presumably accompanied by a symbolic gesture, something like our index finger across the throat*. Deep behind this lay, in all probability, a ritual act involving the slaughter of animals, to whom the one swearing the oath equated himself. The slaughtered and split animals represent what the oath-taker invites God to do to him if he fails to keep the oath.<sup>4</sup>

The *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* defines the word “oath” as:

...an ancient and universal means of impressing this obligation on the responsible parties in an agreement or an investigation. The oath as a holy act was properly pronounced in a sacred place or administered by a holy person. An oath must be kept through to one’s hurt (Ps. 15:4) *The oath is accompanied by symbolic acts. The gesture of the oath was to raise the hand toward heaven...both hands, or the right hand. Sacrifices accompanied the oath in connection with a covenant*. In Jeremiah 34:18, those who break the covenant with the Lord are told that they will be made like the calf which they cut in two and passed between its parts. This suggests that the oath which bound the parties to a covenant may have stipulated in the conditional curse that the violator should be treated like the sacrificial animal.<sup>5</sup>

This ‘oath formulary’ has been passed down through the ages and has been participated in by almost all modern day youth. The familiar juvenile promise of secrecy is often accompanied with the well-known phrase “*cross my heart and hope to die*” by those involved. The crossing of the heart is not the cross of Christianity, but the ‘dividing asunder’ or the cutting in two—making a commitment to die before breaking the promise.

Zoram’s fears were silenced when Nephi promised “*with an oath* that he need not fear; that he should be a free man like unto us if he would go down in the wilderness with us” (1 Nephi 4:33). It would have been understood by Zoram that Nephi promised to put his life on the line with a symbolic act of death or sacrifice, ensuring the safety of Laban’s servant by oath and covenant.

This cutting and oath formulary will be discussed later in connection with Cain and the oaths that he entered into. The oaths of Cain are also discussed in the Book of Mormon, but should be viewed in respect to “secret oaths and combinations”, which differ from the “oaths and covenants” of the priesthood.

### **The Covenant Pattern**

A covenant is defined as “a solemn promise made binding by an oath, which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action. Such an action or ritual is recognized by both parties as the formal act which binds the actor to fulfill his promise.”

The covenant pattern found in the ancient Middle East and the ‘treaty pattern’ found in the Hittite records reflect the same elements in the covenantal process. These elements of the treaty covenant pattern are:

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4. Campbell, Edward F. Jr., *Anchor Bible: Ruth*, Vol. 7, Doubleday, 1975. p.74.

5. *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol 3, “Oath” New York, Abingdon Press, 1962. pp. 575-576.

- a. *The Preamble*: Lists the parties involved or opens with the statement: “These are the words of . . .” followed by the identification of the individuals involved, whether suzerain to vassal or God to man.
- b. *The Historical Prologue*: This consists of a description of the previous relationships between the two parties. Many Temples incorporated the Historical Prologue as the Creation epic.
- c. *The Stipulations*: Contain the obligations to which the vassal binds himself to in accepting the covenant.
- d. *The Deposit and Public Reading*: The covenant process is deposited, and then repeated at the Temple or sanctuary multiple times a year.
- e. *The Witnesses*: Ancient legal documents normally ended with a list of witnesses. Usually God or divine beings are invoked as witnesses and are mentioned beside those who are present.
- f. *The Blessings and Curses*: This consists of a list of goods and calamities which the divine witnesses were called upon to bring upon the individual for obedience and disobedience respectively.<sup>6</sup>

This covenant pattern is solemnized by the “oath” or the cutting (an actual sacrifice or symbolic act of death or cutting) would indicate that the covenant or promise was more important than death. This did not necessarily mean that the individual could be slain if he didn’t keep the stipulations, but that the commitment was more important than life itself. Antithetical to the sacred traditions are those secret combinations of ‘blood Atonement’ that would place the individual in peril of his life if the stipulations were not kept. Both righteous and unrighteous covenants existed with an oath or cutting, and are reflected in the scriptures as the ‘oath and covenant of the priesthood’ and ‘secret oaths and combinations’ respectively.

### **The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood**

Using the ancient treaty and covenant pattern as described above, it can be seen that the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood found in Section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants fits into this ancient pattern. Using the lettered elements of this covenant pattern, Section 84 may be viewed as an endowment or covenant of knowledge and power.

- a) *The Preamble*: Lists the parties involved or opens with the statement: “These are the words of . . .” followed by the identification of the individuals involved. Suzerain to vassal, or God to Man.

D&C 84:1-2, The “revelation and words” of Jesus Christ to Joseph Smith, the Elders and the Church.

- b) *The Historical Prologue*: This consists of a description of the previous relationships between the two parties. Many Temples incorporated the Historical Prologue as the Creation epic.

D&C 84:6-26, comprise the *Historical Prologue* which is the history of the priesthood including those patriarchs and prophets through which the authority passed. The purpose and loss of the

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6. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol 3, “Covenant” New York, Abingdon Press, 1962. pp. 214-215.

higher or greater Melchizedek Priesthood is outlined with the brief history of the Aaronic Order and when the Melchizedek would return.

- c) *The Stipulations*: Contain the obligations to which the vassal binds himself in accepting the covenant.

D&C 84:31-32, The *Stipulations* are outlined in the responsibility of the sons of Moses and of Aaron: “whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthods... and the magnifying their calling.”

- d) *The Deposit and Public Reading*: The covenant process is deposited, and then repeated at the Temple or sanctuary multiple times a year.

This whole section is a discussion about the Temple, the New Jerusalem and the endowment. Verses 19-22 discuss the ordinances of the priesthood that are required to receive the “mysteries” and how to pass through the veil into the “rest of the Lord” or the “fullness of his glory” as described in the text. This is a direct reference to the ordinances of Exaltation that can only be received in the Temple. The organization of the priesthood was to have a regular meeting at the Temple twice a year as required for all males in ancient Israel, which was to take place at Passover (April) and Yom Kippur (October).

- e) *The Witnesses*: Ancient legal documents normally ended with a list of witnesses. Usually the God or divine beings are invoked as witnesses and are mentioned beside those present.

The *Witnesses* of any ordinance are not just those present or designated, but also God and Angels.

- f) *The Blessings and Judgments*: This consists of a list of goods and calamities that the divine witnesses were called upon to bring upon the individual for obedience and disobedience respectively. This could be connected to life and or property

D&C 84:33-42, The Blessings and Judgments or Curses are discussed in verse 33, “For whoso (are) faithful are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.”

The two priesthods are the Melchizedek and the Aaronic. Each priesthood has connected to it particular laws that are promised to be kept by covenant. The Aaronic requires the temporal care of the church and membership through the laws of ‘sacrifice and the gospel.’ The Melchizedek order requires that one be obedient to the more spiritual laws of ‘virtue’ or that of being chaste in all relationships, and the ‘consecration’ of one’s life and blessings for the good of the whole. One who magnifies their responsibilities in these priesthods will receive the blessings stipulated by the covenant of obedience.

34 They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

35 And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; (D&C 84:34-35)

The obedient can have all the rights, powers (authorities) and privileges of the Melchizedek order just as with the Aaronic order. Included in these 'rights' is the covenant that they may become the "seed of Abraham and the elect of God." This oath and covenant of the priesthood also contains the opportunity and blessing of receiving Christ and the servants of Christ, who are the presidency of that 'greater priesthood.'

There exists in the Doctrine and Covenants a reverse line of authority, which is singularly unusual within scripture. This reverse line of authority is found in D&C 27:5-12. To quickly summarize, it begins with Moroni (abt. 400 A.D.) and moves to John the Baptist and his father of the Aaronic priesthood (abt. 30 A.D.). It then moves to Elijah (abt. 800 B.C.) and then to the patriarchs who are listed in an unusual reversed way: "And also with Joseph and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, your fathers, by whom the promises remain" (D&C 27:10), which push it back to about 1700 B.C. It continues back to "Michael, or Adam, the ancient of days" (abt. 4000 B.C.) and then concludes with the *presidency* of the authority of Christ in all ages, and perhaps even before this world: "And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you." (D&C 27:12). These are the servants responsible for the Melchizedek Order, it's ordinances, and endowments. Section 84 continues with the blessings of the initiate if he has magnified his responsibilities in these two priesthoods:

36 For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;  
37 And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;  
38 And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore, all that my Father hath shall be given unto him. (D&C 84:36-38)

By receiving the instruction from the servants of Christ, one may receive Him, and if the relationship with the Savior is acceptable, then the Father is also received (John 14:23). Verse 38 concludes that those righteous and valiant receive all that the Father hath. This would include becoming an heir and joint heir with Christ, as one qualified may pass through the veil and enter into the presence of the Father prepared to receive all that the Father hath.

This endowment of blessings is according to the "oath and covenant" of the priesthood which cannot be broken.

39 And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.  
40 Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. (D&C 84:39-40)

The actual Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood appears to be an endowment of power when understood correctly. Whenever the ordinances of exaltation are discussed, explained, or referred to in the scriptures, it is considered to be in 'real time' and not to become such by one's faithfulness. The reality is always described in scripture. Some would call this a 'calling and election, second anointing, more sure word of prophecy or sealing by the Holy Spirit of Promise.' Because of this, the "oath" (the cutting or cursing) is explained in the text.

41 But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come.  
42 And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye have received, which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice out of the heavens;

and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you. (D&C 84:41-42)

When this oath and covenant of the priesthood (endowment) is entered into, and one receives its fullness and “*altogether turneth there from,*” they “shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come” (D&C 84:41). These are they who become the sons of perdition, who knew God’s power and had been made partakers thereof (D&C 76:31). This is not referring to those who promised ‘to become such, *if*’ true and faithful in their obedience and change of character.

## **Back to Cain**

Joseph Smith, speaking of Adam, Cain and Abel, states, “if they offered sacrifices they must be authorized by ordination.”<sup>7</sup> The Prophet Joseph continues by teaching that “Cain, also being authorized to offer sacrifice” did so without the faith that was required of the righteous priesthood holder.<sup>8</sup>

Cain, after he received the priesthood and his endowment of power (“in process of time”), “hearkened not, saying Who is the Lord that I should know him” (Moses 5:16, 18), and “Cain loved Satan more than God.” As it came time to choose the new Grand Patriarch who would be the ‘birthright’ son, the character, desires, and priesthood activity of Cain and Abel were made manifest. As these sons of Adam offered sacrifice, their righteousness and worthiness became evident to Adam and the Lord.

19 And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

20 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering;

21 But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. Now Satan knew this, and it pleased him. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. (Moses 5:19-21)

Because of Cain’s attitude, pride, and wickedness the “Lord had not respect” for Cain’s offering. This statement would indicate that the deliberate disrespect by Cain's offering (he knew the rules) disqualified him from being the accepted and rightful priesthood authority. “Satan knew this” (v. 21) “and it pleased him” but Cain was “wroth” and he was depressed.

Cain had prepared his offering under the direction of Satan (Moses 5:18) and therefore it was not an offering of righteousness. Again, the Prophet Joseph Smith gives added insight into this event by explaining that since Cain did not offer his “offering in righteousness, he was cursed.”<sup>9</sup> The Prophet Joseph continues:

Abel offered to God a sacrifice that was accepted, which was the firstlings of the flock. Cain offered of the fruit of the ground, and was not accepted, because he could not do it in faith, he could have no faith, or could not exercise faith contrary to the plan of heaven. It

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7. *TPJS*, p.169.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *TPJS*, p. 169

must be shedding the blood of the Only Begotten to atone for man. Cain could have no faith and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. But Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous. The mere shedding of the blood of beasts or offering anything else in sacrifice, could not procure a remission of sins, except it were performed *in faith of something to come*.<sup>10</sup>

The righteousness of Abel is discussed in a passage of scripture quoted by Joseph Smith about the offering of Abel by stating:

We read in Genesis 4:4, that Abel brought the firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof, and the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering. And, again “by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.” [Hebrews 11:4]<sup>11</sup>

Because of faith and righteousness, Abel, the younger brother of Cain, is chosen to be the Grand Patriarch. He is chosen and set-apart to assist his father in caring for the spiritual and temporal welfare of all his father Adam’s posterity (remember there were three generations alive before Adam received the gospel). Abel, now chosen to be the ‘prophet, priest and king’ to the family of his father, also becomes Cain’s priesthood and patriarchal leader. The scriptures summarize the calling of Abel and the rejection of Cain as the Grand Patriarch stating: “Now Satan knew this, and it pleased him. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell” (Moses 5:21).

The Lord addresses Cain giving him another chance to exhibit the faithful responsibility of the birthright son:

22 And the Lord said unto Cain: Why art thou wroth? Why is thy countenance fallen?  
23 If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted. And *if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door, and Satan desireth to have thee*; and except thou shalt hearken unto my commandments, I will *deliver thee up*, and it shall be unto thee *according to his desire*. And thou shalt rule over him. (Moses 5:22-23)

The Lord explains that if he (Cain) would remain faithful and ‘do well’ that he would still be accepted, while at the same time warning him that Satan desires to have control over him. It is explained to Cain that if he doesn’t keep and live up to the laws, commandments, and covenants he entered into—including no doubt the oath and covenant of the priesthood—he would be in Satan’s power. (See also D&C 104:5-9)

Character is of even greater importance than that of obedience to law, as all commandments are given to create the character that loves God and their fellow man. Cain’s question “Am I my brother’s keeper?” is descriptive of his inner nature and lack of worthiness for the responsibility of the temporal and spiritual welfare of all his brothers and sisters that he knew, and all the posterity of Adam that he would never know.

The attitude or character of loving God through obedience is more important than the performances of ordinances. Obedience and ordinances without a resulting character change is useless. Nonetheless obedience to the Lord’s commands and the connected ordinances are imperative in

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10. *TPJS*, pp.58, 59.

11. *TPJS*, p. 169.

that character change. In the example below, it is the individual's obedience and love of God that makes them worthy of the leadership, recognition and blessing of God in that calling.

22 And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. *Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.* (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

To “obey and hearken” *by natural inclination* is the character required to be accepted by God. It is the heart and character that is important, not the ordinance. The action of ordinances, such as sacrifice, baptism, and other ordinances are to assist in the necessary change of character by providing a hope of a future reality. Without the requisite change of character, however, ordinances are of no value or power. The ordinance that identified the Lord’s chosen people and seed of Abraham was the law of circumcision. The prophet Jeremiah explained that obedience to law without change of heart does not ensure acceptance by the Lord. Again, the ordinance means nothing without the change of heart and character. Obedience to this ‘law of ordinance’ *requires* the change of heart for the ordinance itself to be validated and accepted by God. The Lord explains through Jeremiah that being “uncircumcised in the heart” renders the circumcision of the lineage of Abraham worthless.

24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for *in these things I delight*, saith the Lord.

(This is the character of God and should be the character of those that love Him, for this is His delight.)

25 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that *I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised;*

(Without the change of heart, those who participate in ordinances will be condemned with those who have rejected God.)

26 Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and *all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.* (Jeremiah 9:24-26)

## **Perdition**

In Moses 5, the Savior explains that if he (Cain) continues down this path with Satan, he will become, “the father of his (Satan's) lies”, and “*thou shalt be called Perdition*; for thou wast also before the world” (Moses 5:24). Many assume that means Cain was perdition before he came to this earth. However, the last phrase could be understood differently when considering the whole picture. Cain ‘was before the world:’ he was in the Council of Heaven. The fact that he was born here on earth indicates that he chose not to follow Satan’s plan, i.e. he kept his ‘first estate’, and so was added upon and came to this ‘second estate’ of mortality (Abraham 3:26). Cain, like all

who are born on this earth, existed ‘before the world was’ and chose to participate in mortality and the plan of salvation. Because of that choice in the pre-earth life, Cain moved into this ‘second estate,’ coming to a knowledge of the gospel and receiving the fullness of the priesthood, participating and functioning in the ordinances. Only *because* he had taken upon himself the oath and covenant of the priesthood and received the fullness of the priesthood ordinances, (meaning his calling and election) could he become perdition as described in D&C 76. Cain eventually made spiritual decisions based on pride and followed Satan, and “altogether turned therefrom”, eventually committing murder and shedding innocent blood. Cain cannot receive a forgiveness of sins in this world or the world to come (D&C 132:27); therefore he may be called Perdition.

There are three “sons” that are discussed in scripture: 1) The “*sons of men*” are those who have not heard of, nor ever embraced, the gospel; 2) The “*sons of God*” are those who have accepted Christ, embraced the gospel, and are worthy to receive the ordinances and blessings of salvation and exaltation; and 3) The “*sons of perdition*” are those who have accepted the gospel and have known his “power and been made partakers thereof” (D&C 76:31), being guaranteed exaltation by ordinance and/or manifestation, only to then altogether turn from it (D&C 84:41).

Since Cain had participated in the fullness of the priesthood and knew the oaths and covenants, and the signs and tokens of the priesthood, he would become the father of his Satan’s lies. “For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation” (D&C 82:3). Cain qualified to be called “perdition” because he altogether turned from those exalting ordinances and promises. Because of this, he would not receive forgiveness in “this world or the world to come.”

The required process to become perdition is explained by the Lord in Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

31 Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power.

32 They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born;

33 For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity;

34 Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come—

35 Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame.

36 These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels—

37 And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power;

38 Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath. (Doctrine and Covenants 76:31-38)

The requirements to become perdition are listed in verses 31-35. They must:

- 1) “know my power”

- 2) “been made partakers thereof”
- 3) “suffered themselves to be overcome by the power of Satan”
- 4) “deny the truth”
- 5) “defy my power”
- 6) “denied the Holy Spirit after having received it”
- 7) “denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father”
- 8) “crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame”

These requirements make it clear that Cain would have to have “known the power of God and been made a partaker thereof.” Moses 5 explains that Cain suffered himself to be overcome by the power of Satan and cites each point from the above list, confirming that he is worthy of being called ‘perdition.’

The verses just quoted in Section 76 also list the cursing or consequences of becoming perdition. These are found in verses 32-34, 36-38, 44-46 of that same Section.

- 1) “It had been better for them never to have been born”
- 2) “They are vessels of wrath”
- 3) “Doomed to suffer the wrath of God”
- 4) “With the devil and his angels in eternity”
- 5) “No forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come”
- 6) “Go away into the lake of fire and brimstone”
- 7) “The only ones on whom the second death shall have any power”
- 8) “The only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath”

As Verse 34 makes clear, these sons of perdition shall not have “forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come.” This is the same phrase used in D&C 84:41 in relation to those who receive the ‘oath and covenant of the priesthood’ and ‘altogether turneth therefrom’, for they must also become sons of perdition. The requirements to receive the judgment of “not having forgiveness of sins in this world nor the world to come” would appear to be the same. Thus the “oath and covenant of the priesthood” is connected to the fulfilling of the endowment of power, where one would “know my power and been made partakers thereof” before qualifying for this judgment.

Verses 44-46, wraps up the vision of the sons of perdition in this Section.

44 Wherefore, he saves all except them—they shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with the devil and his angels in eternity, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, which is their torment—

45 And the end thereof, neither the place thereof, nor their torment, no man knows;

46 Neither was it revealed, neither is, neither will be revealed unto man, except to them who are made partakers thereof; (D&C 76:44-46)

Continuing to speak with Cain, the Lord not only counsels him, but prophesies that his covenant with Satan and his influence of evil will affect the rest of mankind. The Lord continues to warn Cain by prophecy, providing him an opportunity to repent and change:

25 And it shall be said in time to come—That these abominations were had from Cain; for he rejected the greater counsel which was had from God; and this is a cursing which I will put upon thee, except thou repent. (Moses 5:24-25.)

The Lord explains that “*these abominations*” will become the ‘oaths and combinations’ that would be passed to and through wicked men in the future. The Lord also states that this evil would be said to be “from Cain.” This is fulfilled and identified in the Book of Mormon as the abominations of Cain are directly attributed to him and his followers. These secret oaths and combinations ravaged the Nephite culture as the government fell into their hands due to the apathy of the righteous and the selling of the sacred for the spoils of wickedness.

15 And it came to pass that thus they did agree with Akish. And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain, who was a murderer from the beginning. (Ether 8:15)

26 Now behold, those secret oaths and covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton from the records which were delivered unto Helaman; but behold, they were put into the heart of Gadianton by that same being who did entice our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit.

27 Yea, that same being who did plot with Cain, that if he would murder his brother Abel it should not be known unto the world. And he did plot with Cain and his followers from that time forth. (Helaman 6:26-27)

It must be remembered that the definition of an “oath” is a ‘cutting’ or symbol of death. It can be seen in Moses that these oaths that Cain knew were instituted by Satan in the secret oaths and combinations. This could be done because Cain had at one time participated in covenant making with his father, and knew and understood the penalties of the covenant process and the consequences of the breaking of a covenant.

In verse 26 of Moses, chapter five, Abel had already been chosen as the birthright son and was now Cain's priesthood leader. Cain, in his pride, would not sustain the new patriarchal priesthood authority which his *younger* brother held. “Cain was wroth, and *listened not* any more to the voice of the Lord, *neither to Abel, his brother*, who walked in holiness before the Lord (Moses 5:26). In this he is mimicking the path Lucifer took in the pre-earth life, when Lucifer rejected Adam's (Michael's) priesthood authority and rebelled against the Father's Plan.

## **The Conspiracy**

Cain is not alone in his new religion and organization, but now joins forces with his wife and “his brethren.”

And Adam and his wife mourned before the Lord, because of *Cain and his brethren*. And it came to pass that Cain took one of his brothers' daughters to wife, and **they** loved Satan more than God (Moses 5:27-28).

A *conspiracy* of brothers and sisters working with Cain as their leader ('Master Mahan') plots and organizes the murder of Abel, the chosen priesthood leader and patriarch. This conspiracy with Cain and his "brethren" are mentioned in verse 27 and 29 of Moses, chapter five, and also mentioned in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.

27 Yea, that same being who did plot with Cain, that if he would murder his brother Abel it should not be known unto the world. And he did plot with ***Cain and his followers*** from that time forth. (Helaman 6:27)

16 And from Enoch to Abel, who was slain ***by the conspiracy*** of his brother, who received the priesthood by the commandments of God, by the hand of his father Adam, who was the first man. (D&C 84:16)

Cain convinced his brethren to rebel against their younger brother Abel who had been chosen as the priesthood leader. Cain reassured himself and his followers that they would be free from the authority and retribution of his father and brother. This promise of freedom from gospel standards and leadership was coupled with the promise of gain in power and wealth with the death of Abel. This was the pattern in the pre-earth councils as Lucifer convinces a third part of the hosts of heaven to rebel against the Father and His choice for the earthly priesthood keys and leadership. Satan's work of rebellion that began before this earth continues in mortality. It is often seen in the *rejection* of priesthood keys and authority, and in the unworthy seeking the power to exercise control and dominion over the souls of men.

Satan's goal is to destroy the eternal opportunities for the family of Adam, which he lost in the pre-earth "war in heaven." Some of the blessings that Satan lost were:

The priesthood,  
A physical body,  
The power to pro-create,  
The potential to become a son of God,  
The power to become a rightful heir of all that the father hath,  
Exaltation, and  
The Glory of God.

To destroy this for the family of Adam, Satan must set up his counterfeit organizations with his similar oaths and combinations. This requires someone who held the priesthood, has knowledge of the sacred ordinances, and has received their own endowment of power. Cain, in rejecting "the greater counsel which was had from God", is the prime candidate to carry on the war in heaven on earth for Satan.

When Cain and his followers entered into the oaths and combinations, Satan put them under oath using symbols of death or sacrifice to guarantee secrecy upon pain of death.

29 And Satan said unto Cain: Swear unto me ***by thy throat***, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy brethren ***by their heads***, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands.

30 And Satan sware unto Cain that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret. (Moses 5:29-30)

Joseph Smith taught: “In relation to the kingdom of God, the devil always sets up his kingdom at the very same time in opposition to God.”<sup>12</sup> When Adam taught the gospel of Jesus Christ to his children, “Satan came among them, saying: I am also a son of God” and Adam’s posterity refused to believe their father Adam (Moses 5:13). They could not see the Son of God that Adam taught about. Satan declaring himself a son of God and appearing as an angel of light (2 Nephi 9:9) convinced the posterity of Adam to reject their father’s teaching, with the result that they “loved Satan more than God” (Moses 5:13). As this passage in Moses teaches, Satan was there when the gospel was introduced and explained to Adam. In like manner, Satan was there when Adam’s sons received their ‘oath and covenant of the priesthood’ enabling him to set up (through Cain) *his* ‘secret oaths and combinations’ using the same signs, tokens, and penalties with which Cain was familiar.

In verse 29 above, it is seen that Cain and his followers “swear by their throats and by their heads” that if they tell it they shall surely die. These oaths of secrecy, ‘to swear by their heads and throats,’ is common in the Book of Mormon when the signs and tokens of the Gadianton organizations are discussed.

Ether:

14 And it came to pass that they all swore unto him, by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens, and also by the earth, and **by their heads**, that whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired **should lose his head**; and whoso should divulge whatsoever thing Akish made known unto them, the same should **lose his life**.<sup>15</sup> And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain, who was a murderer from the beginning.<sup>16</sup> And they were kept up by the power of the devil to administer these oaths unto the people, to keep them in darkness, to help such as sought power to gain power, and to murder, and to plunder, and to lie, and to commit all manner of wickedness and whoredoms.<sup>18</sup> And it came to pass that they formed a secret combination, even as they of old; which combination is most abominable and wicked above all, in the sight of God. (Ether 8:14-18)

Helaman:

21 But behold, Satan did stir up the hearts of the more part of the Nephites, insomuch that they did unite with those bands of robbers, and did enter into their covenants and their oaths, that they would protect and preserve one another in whatsoever difficult circumstances they should be placed, that they should not suffer for their murders, and their plunderings, and their stealings.<sup>22</sup> *They did have their signs, yea, their secret signs, and their secret words; and this that they might distinguish a brother* who had entered into the covenant, that whatsoever wickedness his brother should do he should not be injured by his brother, nor by those who did belong to his band, who had taken this covenant.<sup>23</sup> And thus they might murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country and also the laws of their God.<sup>24</sup> And

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12. *TPJS*, p. 365.

whosoever of those who belonged to their band should reveal unto the world of their wickedness and their abominations, should be tried, . . . according to the laws of their wickedness. . . 26 Now behold, those secret oaths and covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton from the records. . . but by that same being who did entice our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit—27 Yea, that same being who did plot with Cain, that if he would murder his brother Abel it should not be known unto the world. And he did plot with Cain and his followers from that time forth. (Helaman 6:21-24; 26, 27)

The ‘oaths and combinations’ described in the book of Mormon were established in the beginning by Satan as he teaches Cain and his followers the secrets of the Mahan principles. It should be explained again that there is a difference between ‘oath and covenant’ and ‘oaths and combinations.’ A ‘covenant’ is a promise of obedience and is made with God; it is between the covenant maker and God himself. Only two individuals are party to this covenant making process: God and the initiate. Salvation is an individual accomplishment, not a collective responsibility. Thus, collective righteousness or wickedness has no bearing on the eternal salvation of the individual. In the covenant between Man and God, the ‘oath’ implies that the covenant and promise of obedience is more sacred and important than death; not that he should lose his life if the covenant is broken.

In contrast, a ‘combination’ exists between a group of people or a mass of individuals. This covenant combination is one of *secrecy* rather than sacredness, and is administered to the masses and secured by oath for the protection of the ‘combination’. The *oath and covenant of the priesthood* is something that takes place between God and the individual as all must work out their own salvation. The *oath and combination* is for the benefit of the group. Each are collectively bound by the “oath.” The Covenant “oath” with God is one of sacrifice in similitude of the Only Begotten of the Father. The “combination and oath” administered by Satan include the symbols of the penalties for disobedience (“swear by their head and throats that they tell it not”), which is death.

Following their oath of obedience and silence, Satan binds himself and his power to those who follow his pattern. In Cain's story he swears “unto Cain that he (Satan) would do according to his (Cain’s) commands” (Moses 5:30). All was done in secrecy so that Cain’s ‘father may not know it.’

Cain revels in this new found knowledge and power and proclaims, “Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called *Master Mahan*, and he gloried in his wickedness” (Moses 5:31). It is interesting that in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Satan is called, in the Hebrew, “*Mas-te-mah*” (too close for coincidence). To *murder for gain* is the “*Mahan Principle*” and is not restricted to human life, but all of God’s creations. With the establishment of the secret oaths and combinations, Cain realizes the great benefit of this new organization and brags that he will now be able to ‘murder and get gain.’ This is the motivating force behind the conspiracy to murder Cain, for he supposes that the possessions of his brother Abel, as well as the leadership and authority, will now belong to him.

In this ‘conspiracy’ for ‘gain,’ Cain meets Abel: “And Cain went into the field, and Cain talked with Abel, his brother. And it came to pass that while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him” (Moses 5:32).

With the murder of his brother, *Cain gloried* in that which he had done, saying: *I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands*” (Moses 5:33). Free from the leadership of a younger brother, free from the priesthood responsibilities and its obligations of righteousness, free (he supposed) from the guilt and anger of being rejected by the Lord, Cain now believes that all his brother had (i.e. the double inheritance and the birthright) would become his. It cannot be forgotten that Cain felt that he should be the Grand Patriarch for his father’s family. One consequence of Abel being chosen as the Grand Patriarch is that the posterity of Abel would then fill that position throughout time. So Cain had much to gain with the death of his brother Abel. Not only did Cain believe his brother’s personal property would become his, he also believed Abel’s priesthood position would now belong to him and his posterity in perpetuity.

The ‘Law of Inheritance’ in the days of the Patriarchs stipulated that the eldest and firstborn and birthright son receive a “double portion” of all that his father had as part of his responsibility for the temporal welfare of his father's family (the fatherless, widows, orphans, etc). The birthright son could become not only a patriarch to his family through his marriage and sealing but also the Grand Patriarch by ordinance and the Melchizedek authority. Being the Grand Patriarch and birthright son (not necessarily the firstborn) placed his posterity into that birthright line forever. This is never more evident than in the Book of Mormon as Laman and Lemuel speak about Nephi, their younger brother, who becomes the ‘birthright’ son chosen by God. The concerns of Nephi’s brothers were no doubt some of the same concerns and worries Cain had when Abel was chosen as the birthright son and Grand Patriarch.

“Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: *Our younger brother thinks to rule over us; and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more because of his words. For behold, we will not have him to be our ruler; for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people.*” (2 Nephi 5:3.)

Having murdered his priesthood leader and the birthright son, the Lord questions Cain: “Where is Abel, thy brother?” In answer, Cain reveals the underlying philosophy of Satan and the Mahan Principle, which is opposite of the true priesthood's responsibility. “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” (Moses 5:34). In essence, he’s saying it's a dog-eat-dog world and survival of the fittest is the way of life. If this was the pride of Cain, it is no wonder that Abel was chosen as the new Grand Patriarch. The Mahan principle is to "murder and get gain," and to personally prosper at any and all costs. This is the same philosophical force that led to the Nephite destruction, as Mormon explains here:

Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. And thus Satan did lead away the hearts of the people to do all manner of iniquity. (3 Nephi 6:15-16)

These *four elements of pride* as explained by Mormon are the fundamental attitudes that led to the fall of the Nephites. The same attitudes led to the murder of Abel as described in Moses.

Seek for power,  
Seek for authority,

Seek for riches, and  
 Seek for the vain things of the world.

*Pride* lies at the foundation of the *Mahan Principle*. This philosophy and doctrine is in stark contrast to the priesthood, which exists to bless and serve others. In the endowment, one covenants to love God and one's fellow man. Instead of selfishness, the meek are selfless and seek not their own. Instead of personal security, the pure in heart sacrifice all. Instead of competition for gain, the merciful consecrate. The character of the righteous (one of "charity, the pure love of Christ") is the opposite of Cain:

And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (Moroni 7:45)

The basic differences between the philosophies of Satan and Babylon and that of God and the establishment of Zion are easily seen in scripture. Each has a Motive, Justification, Method Virtue, and a Power and Truth. These are reviewed and compared in their spiritual venue:

	<b>God and Zion</b>	<b>Satan and Babylon</b>
<b>Motive</b>	Consecration	Personal Gain
<b>Justification</b>	Love	Competition
<b>Method</b>	Upheavals of Nature	Violence
<b>Virtue</b>	Repentance	Denial of Guilt
<b>Power</b>	Choice and Agency	Compulsion
<b>Truth</b>	Seeking for Continual Light and Truth	Deception and Control of Knowledge

Cain confirms that the death of Abel came about because of Satan, plus his own "jealousy" of *his brother's possessions and priesthood position*. Cain declares to God: "Satan tempted me *because of my brother's flocks*: And I was wroth also; for *his offering thou didst accept and not mine*" (Moses 5:38). This verse lists two things of which Cain was tempted. First, the possessions of Abel (his flocks) and second, his priesthood position as Abel's offering and priesthood activity was accepted and Cain's was not. Abel was chosen and accepted by God to be the new priesthood leader for Adam's posterity. Cain had failed to learn and understand:

36 That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

37 That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion

upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. (D&C 121:36-37)

Scriptural history makes clear that the conflict between Cain and Abel is one of possession, power and priesthood. The rebellious and proud son tries to usurp the title of prophet, priest and king from the chosen younger brother. This is a pattern (the younger chosen over the elder) seen throughout the scriptures as priesthood authority and leadership positions are lost by the unworthy. When the wicked rule, they begin to exercise control and unrighteous dominion, not realizing that priesthood authority ends with their wickedness. The “authority” is to act in God’s name is not something the unrighteous can wield. Therefore, Cain is ‘left unto himself to kick against the pricks and fight against God’ (D&C 121:38).

As touched on previously, the motif of an unworthy firstborn losing his priesthood position to a second-born is repeated throughout the scriptures. Besides Lucifer and Michael in the pre-earth life and Cain and Abel, there is a conflict between Ham, the son of Noah, and the priesthood line that belongs to Shem that resulted in Ham's stealing a priesthood garment and imitating the priesthood ordinances. Ishmael and Isaac are separated by their mothers as they compete for the covenant blessings and the office of prophet, king, and priest. Esau, the elder brother of Jacob, should have had the birthright based on birth order. But Esau does not take the priesthood covenants seriously and sells the priesthood birthright to Jacob, who obtains the blessing from Isaac by wearing the Garments of the Priesthood (Genesis 27:15).

Jacob's sons wrestle with jealousy when Joseph, the first-born righteous son of his second wife, receives the birthright and patriarchal responsibility instead of Reuben (the firstborn son of the first wife), who was unworthy. [The line of authority goes not from first born of the first wife to the second born, but from the firstborn of the first wife to the firstborn of the second wife. Concubinal children follow the natural children.] Jacob gives this authority to Joseph as he gives him the garment of the priesthood, described as the coat of many colors or 'pieces' (Genesis 37:4). Solomon and Adonijah in 1 Kings 1 also strive for the kingship. In the Book of Mormon, Laman and Lemuel, having lost the birthright due to wickedness, constantly murmured that Nephi, their younger brother, sought to rule over them and bind them down (1 Nephi 15:36).

The conflict lies between the ‘oath and covenant of the priesthood’ (God trying to establish Zion), and the oaths and combinations of Satan (using the pride of the natural man to build up Babylon). The battle continues between Babylon and Zion, the flesh and the spirit, ignorance and light and truth; between the individual remaining a ‘son of man’ or becoming a ‘son of God’ by receiving the endowed blessings of posterity, priesthood and inheritance that are promised by an Eternal Father to the obedient and faithful. The covenants and laws that will instill the power of this promise of Abraham upon the faithful are the very covenants that Satan tempts all to break. For, as was the case with Cain, when one fails to live up to the covenants they have made with God, they will be in Satan’s power. These covenant blessings have counterfeit counterparts in the oaths and combinations inspired by Satan. The devil seeks to destroy the priesthood of God and usurp God’s power by setting up his counterfeit priesthoods to be like the Most High.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*

14 *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.* (Isaiah 14:12-14)

This is the goal of Satan and the foundation of the struggle that led to the murder of Abel by his wicked elder brother Cain.

Joseph Smith taught about the origin of sin (see also Moses 6:55) and the character and vanity of man stating:

...that Satan was generally blamed of the evils which we did, but if he was the cause of all our wickedness, men could not be condemned. The devil could not compel mankind to do evil; all was voluntary. Those who resisted the Spirit of God, would be liable to be led into temptation, and then the association of heaven would be withdrawn from those who refused to be made partakers of such great glory. God would not exert any compulsory means, and the devil could not: and such ideas as were entertained by many were absurd. The creature was made subject to vanity. ...all are subjected to vanity while they travel through the crooked paths and difficulties which surround them. Where is the man that is free from vanity? (*TPJS*. p. 187)

Cain murdered his priesthood leader, Abel, in order that he (Cain) and his descendants would have that right to rule over all of humanity. His pride took control, which led to the first murder for gain, seeking the unrighteous exercise control, dominion and power over the souls of the children of men. And thus: "Amen to the priesthood or authority of that man" (D&C 121:37).

Following Cain's response to the Lord's questions about Abel's whereabouts ("Am I my brother's keeper?"), The Lord responds:

35 And the Lord said: What hast thou done? *The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground.*

36 And now thou shalt be cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.

37 When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. (Moses 5:35-37)

Many mistakenly assume that skin color was part of the curse of Cain, but these verses make clear that that is not the case. The curse was one of livelihood, lifestyle, and restricted opportunity.

Cain was a "tiller of the ground" (Moses 5:17). A farmer depends on the fruits of the earth to receive his sustenance, his life and livelihood. A farmer is anchored to the land he tends in order to prepare the soil, plant, weed, and harvest. The agrarian cultures realized better than any that their life and livelihood depend upon the grace of God, understanding that the God of nature bestows the blessings of rain, weather and a bountiful harvest. Thus the judgments of God affected the livelihood and very lifestyle of Cain. The implication in scripture is that he is "cursed from the earth" because the earth "opened her mouth to receive (his) brother's blood" therefore the earth "shall not henceforth yield her strength" (Moses 5:36, 37). With the loss of his livelihood, the Lord

further addresses the lifestyle of Cain: “A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth” (Moses 5:37). Cain essentially no longer has a place he can call home, and can no longer live the sedentary lifestyle to which he had grown accustomed.

The bands of Gadianton and Kishkumen in the Book of Mormon seemed to be forced into the lifestyle of Cain after they entered into the same secret oaths and combinations established by Satan and Cain. Once recognized in the community, they would be forced to flee to the wilderness (Helaman 2:11; 3 Nephi 1:27). The Gadianton bands, having no real home or livelihood, could only exist by theft, murder and robbery. They had to live in the wilderness, hiding in different places and wandering for survival rather than living in cities. When robbery was not an option they began to starve (3 Nephi 4:1-5) because their lifestyle could not allow for the development of agriculture by the sweat for their brow. This lifestyle continued until they gained control of the government and judges.

Cain’s response to the consequences of his actions is first one of fear: “*My punishment is greater than I can bear*” (Moses 5:38). He continues by stating that:

39 Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the Lord, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that he that findeth me will slay me, because of mine iniquities, for these things are not hid from the Lord.

40 And I the Lord said unto him: Whosoever slayeth thee, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And I the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

41 And Cain was shut out from the presence of the Lord, and *with his wife and many of his brethren* dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. (Moses 5:39-41)

The phrase “*driven me out from the face of the Lord, and from thy face shall I be hid*” is Cain’s recognition that the priesthood rights and blessings are now lost. The consequence and explanatory phrase in verse 41, “*And Cain was shut out from the presence of the Lord,*” again implies this loss of the blessings and rights of the priesthood (see D&C 84:21-22).

## **Priesthood Restrictions**

Traditions and interpretations have taught (in theory, policy and practice) that an ordination to the ‘greater priesthood’ is a requirement to participate in the ordinances that symbolize the passing through the veil and entering into the presence of God. However, women do not need to hold Melchizedek authority to participate in these ordinances or endowments that are administered by the priesthood. The passage of scripture that has been used to restrict participation based on priesthood could be read and understood differently. Viewed within a contextual deliberation, these verses focus on the fact that the priesthood is *necessary for the ‘administration’* of the blessings described—not that the priesthood is necessary to *participate* in the blessings, as in the case of women.

19 And **this greater priesthood *administereth the gospel*** and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

20 Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

21 And *without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood*, [to administer the ordinances] *the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh;*

22 For without this [the ordinances and authority to administer] no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. (D&C 84:19-22)

Instead of saying that being ordained to the priesthood is necessary to participate in these ordinances, these verses explain that the priesthood is required to administer the gospel and its ordinances to others. This alternate reading may then imply that Cain and his posterity may have lost the right to administrate, but not necessarily the right to participate in these ordinances.

The loss of priesthood rights is not singular to Cain and his posterity. This Section (84) of the Doctrine and Covenants also teaches that the Children of Israel, because of their conscious rejection of the greater priesthood blessings, also lost the right to priesthood administration. The verses above about the priesthood continue below and explain that Israel lost more than just the ‘greater priesthood.’

23 Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God;

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

25 Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; (D&C 84:23-25)

The Old Testament explains that even the ‘lesser priesthood’ which remained, was restricted to the males of a *single family line*: The Levites. When Moses came down from the mount, he found that the Children of Israel had fallen away from the Lord and in their nakedness began the worldly worship of the golden calf.

25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies);

26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. (Exodus 32:25-26)

Because the Sons of Levi chose to be on the Lord’s side amid the wickedness and choice of all the other tribes of Israel, they were selected by the Lord to bear the ministry and priesthood. Like Cain and his posterity, all the other children of Jacob except for the sons of Levi were restricted from holding priesthood responsibilities.

Before the priesthood was restricted and limited to the Levites, the responsibility of priesthood service fell upon the firstborn of each individual family to minister temporally and spiritually, as previously explained. This ancient responsibility of service was patterned after the patriarchal priesthood and authority.

12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore, the Levites shall be mine;

13 Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord.

41 And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am the Lord) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel.

45 ...and the Levites shall be mine: I am the Lord. (Numbers 3:12-13, 41, 45)

Thus the Levites were chosen to hold the priesthood, which was *to serve and administer* to the Children of Israel. All the other children of Jacob were *restricted from the administration and outward performance* of sacrifice and other ordinances. Although they were restricted from the responsibility of service for the spiritual welfare of others (administrating), they were not excluded from participating in the ordinances for their own spiritual wellbeing.

In seeking to obtain the priesthood position of Grand Patriarch for himself and his posterity, Cain and his descendants also lost the 'right to' priesthood administration. Abraham explains in his book that this lineage of Cain came through the flood at the time of Noah, as the wife of Ham (Egyptus) was a descendent of Cain. Through her, the blood of Cain and the curse of priesthood restriction was preserved through the flood and remained after the time of Noah.

21 Now this *king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth.* 22 From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land. 23 The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden; 24 When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, *from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land.* 25 Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal. 26 Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, *but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.* 27 Now, Pharaoh being *of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood*, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry; (Abraham 1:21-27)

The mark of Cain was *not* the curse but a sign of the curse. This "mark" (whatever it was) existed for recognition, and in the case of Cain, as a sign or mark for the *blessing of protection*. After Cain voiced his concern for his life saying, "he that findeth me will slay me" (Moses 5:39) the Lord responded with a form of protection for him: "And I the Lord said unto him: Whosoever slayeth thee, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And I the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him" (Moses 5:40).

The dark skin may or may not be the "mark" placed upon Cain. However, *hundreds of years later* the land of Canaan, where the descendants of Cain presumably lived, became a climatically difficult and unpleasant place to live, which may have caused the genetic adaptation of a darker

skin to appear. It must be remembered that the “mark” (whatever it might be) was a mark for survival and protection, not a curse connected to the murder.

6 And again the Lord said unto me: Look; and I looked towards the north, and I beheld the people of Canaan, which dwelt in tents.

7 And the Lord said unto me: Prophecy; and I prophesied, saying: Behold the people of Canaan, which are numerous, shall go forth in battle array against the people of Shum, and shall slay them that they shall utterly be destroyed; and the people of Canaan shall divide themselves in the land, and the land shall be barren and unfruitful, and none other people shall dwell there but the people of Canaan;

8 For behold, *the Lord shall curse the land with much heat, and the barrenness thereof shall go forth forever; and there was a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people.* (Moses 7:6-8)

There is nothing that proves that the descendants of Cain lived in the land of Canaan. However, the curses of Cain and the verses above imply that the posterity of Cain may have lived in Canaan. Remember that Abraham gives us insight about the curse; namely the loss of priesthood and its connection to the people and blood of those who lived in Canaan prior to the flood. At least one was righteous enough to believe and marry Ham, the son of Noah:

This king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the *blood of the Canaanites* by birth. From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land. Now, *Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood...* (Abraham 1:21, 22, 27)

### The Burden of Cain and the Land of Canaan

The burden of Cain is seen in the history that follows as Enoch speaks of the lineage of Cain and identifies aspects of the punishments a millennium later:

Moses 5, To Cain	Moses 7, Enoch
When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. (Moses 5:37)	The land shall be barren and unfruitful. (Moses 7:7) The Lord shall curse the land with much heat and the barrenness thereof shall go forth forever. (Moses 7:8)
A fugitive and a vagabond shall thou be in the earth. (Moses 5:37)	And I beheld the people of Canaan, which dwelt in tents. (Moses 7:6) (Tents imply a constant movement.)
Cain (and his family) was shut out from the presence of the Lord. (Moses 5:41)	None other people shall dwell there but the people of Canaan. (Moses 7:7) They (the people of Canaan) were despised among all people. (Moses 7:8)

Moses 5, To Cain	Moses 7, Enoch
All of them had covenanted with Satan; for they kept not the commandments of God, and it displeased God, and he ministered not unto them. (Moses 5:52)	And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent. (Moses 7:12)

It appears from the textual evidence in Moses and Abraham that those who were cursed by the Lord in consequence of the conspiracy and murder of Abel may have lived in the land of Canaan.

The Doctrine and Covenants reveal a statement from the Lord about those who threaten to harm or destroy the priesthood line that was set apart in the council in heaven:

16 Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them.

17 But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves.

18 And those who swear falsely against my servants, that they might bring them into bondage and death—

19 Wo unto them; because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house.

20 Their basket shall not be full, their houses and their barns shall perish, and they themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them.

21 *They shall not have right to the priesthood, nor their posterity after them from generation to generation.*

(D&C 121:16-21)

It can be seen from the above verses that those who “shall lift up the heel against mine anointed” (those foreordained to be priesthood leaders) shall “be severed from the ordinances of mine house” and shall “not have right to the priesthood, nor their posterity after them from generation to generation.”

Perhaps the most controversial of Cain's burden was the loss of priesthood rights for his posterity from "generation to generation". But the murder of Abel didn't affect just one person. Abel's righteous posterity were foreordained to be the patriarchs throughout gospel history. The prophet Joseph Smith taught that the patriarchs were foreordained before this earth.<sup>13</sup> It was Abel, the father of this Grand Patriarchal family line, ordained in the pre-earth council, that Cain murdered. He murdered the rightful priesthood leader, Abel, (before he had posterity) thinking to secure for himself and his descendants this priesthood and leadership position throughout time. The sin of “conspiring” to murder the anointed priesthood leader for the sake of position and control for himself and his posterity is what led to the restriction of Cain pertaining to the priesthood.

That Abel died before any of his pre-earth promised patriarchal posterity were born into mortality is inferred from the birth and naming of Seth:

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13. *TPJS*, p.365.

2 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and he called his name Seth. And Adam glorified the name of God; for he said: *God hath appointed me another seed*, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

3 And God revealed himself unto Seth, and he rebelled not, but offered an acceptable sacrifice, like unto his brother Abel. And to him also was born a son, and he called his name Enos. (Moses 6:2-3)

Seth now becomes the replacement for Abel, as Adam declares above. The fact that the priesthood is traced through Abel's line in the Doctrine and Covenants establishes the importance of the Levirate Law of Marriage.

### **The Levirate Law**

The Old Testament outlines what is called the Levirate Law of Marriage. This Levirate Law states that if a birthright son marries and dies before he has sired a son to whom the birthright and patriarchal authority can pass, his brother's obligation is to marry his widow to provide him that son. The firstborn son of the widow via the brother is considered the sealed descendant and heir of the deceased first husband (meaning, the birthright brother and his widow). The child of this union is then in place to inherit a double portion of his grandfather's possessions as the new and legitimate patriarchal replacement for the first husband of his mother. This thereby continues the patriarchal line in its proper order. The patriarchal priesthood is based on a "*matrilineal patriarchy*."

15 Every thing that *openeth the matrix* in all flesh, which they bring unto the Lord, *whether it be of men or beasts*, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. (Numbers 18:15)

The birthright is vested in the firstborn son ***of the wife of the firstborn son*** [even though he may be dead] (Numbers 3:12) if sired by the brother-in-law or father-in-law (the lineage must be from the blood of the previous patriarch; her father-in-law). This explains what is going on and the reason for the somewhat risqué story of Tamar and Judah. The proper order and authority to be the patriarch is *matrilineal* through the wife of the firstborn son. Hence, the children are sealed to the father through the mother. In a "Matrilineal Patriarchy", only the mother can declare who the birthright son is (as in the case of Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Tamar, etc) since only the mother knows who her firstborn son is and who the father really is. This means that the birthright son and patriarch is chosen by the mother (the matriarch), and ordained and set apart by the father (or patriarch, as in the case of Jacob and Esau and many others). How the Levirate Law of Marriage works within a matrilineal patriarchy is explained in the passage below:

5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.

6 And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth *shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead*, that his name be not put out of Israel.

7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.

8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her;  
9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.  
10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.  
(Deuteronomy 25:5-10)

Though first described in Deuteronomy, this law is evident in the patriarchal narratives found in Genesis. As mentioned above, the Levirate Law is important in the stories of Tamar and Judah (Genesis 38), as well as Ruth and Boaz, and is an integral element in the narrative of Cain and Abel and the priesthood.

Patriarchal lineage (through the Matriarch) seems to play a part in almost all the narratives found in Genesis and even the rest of the Old Testament. The question of the Lord to Cain on the whereabouts of his brother Abel initiated this meaningful response from the Lord: "The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground" (Moses 5:35). The blood that cries for justice is best explained in light of the Aramaic Genesis.

The Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible is called the Targum, and it has the oldest, best, and most complete translations of the Old Testament. In these older manuscripts and translations, the word "blood" is rendered as "bloods" (plural or dual) and should be translated to mean '*bloods*' (bloodline) of the deceased, or the "*descendants that would have been born*" cry from the ground that swallowed, not just blood, but the bloodline and *seed* of Abel. A note in the Targum *Pseudo-Johathan* reads:

"Ps.-J. differs from all the Targums in its rendering of the phrase "your brother's blood." Onq. Reads: "The voice of the blood of the descendants who would have come forth from you brother," which is essentially the same as the paraphrase which we find in the Pal. Tgs. They take the plur. "*dmy*" "bloods," of HT to refer to Abel's descendants. This midrashic interpretation is well known"<sup>14</sup>

A connection between one's descendants and their blood crying from the ground is seen in the Book of Mormon:

40 Yea, why do ye build up your secret abominations to get gain, and cause that widows should mourn before the Lord, and also orphans to mourn before the Lord, and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground, for vengeance upon your heads? (Mormon 8:40)

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "*every man* who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world *was ordained* to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven *before this world was*."<sup>15</sup> This would mean that Abel was ordained before he came here, plus all of those righteous and valiant spirits who would become the Grand Patriarchs for the family of Adam through Abel.

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14. See footnote #24 in "Notes, Chapter 4," of The Aramaic Bible, Volume 1B, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, Translated and Notes by Michael Maher, M.S.C., The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987, p. 33.

15. *TPJS*. p.365.

Thus, in the oldest translations of Genesis, it is the “bloods” or “descendants” that were to come through the patriarchal line of Abel that cry from the ground for justice.

Under Levirate Law, Seth, the new priesthood line (in name only) becomes a *replacement for Abel*. Moses, chapter six teaches that at the birth of Seth, Adam stated: “God hath appointed me *another seed, instead of Abel*, whom Cain slew” (Moses 6:2). “Seth,” in Hebrew means “replacement or substitute” as described by Adam. Seth then marries the widow of Abel (following the Levirate Law of Marriage) and the firstborn son of that union, Enos, is considered the “sealed” descendent and priesthood line of Abel and his wife, even though he was sired by Seth. This is why *the priesthood line is traced through Abel* in the Doctrine and Covenants:

14 Which Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah;

15 And from Noah till Enoch, through the lineage of their fathers;

16 And *from Enoch to Abel*, who was slain by the conspiracy of his brother, who received the priesthood by the commandments of God, by the hand of his father Adam, who was the first man. (D&C 84:14-16.)

There is only one way that the priesthood patriarchal line could be traced back through Abel, and that is if Seth became the “*replacement*” for Abel.

Keeping this in mind, remember that Joseph Smith taught, in so many words, that the ‘*descendants of Cain would not have the opportunity to hold the priesthood until the seed of Abel* (the “bloods” or fore-ordained patriarchal descendants that cried from the ground) *had a chance to come to the earth.*” In other words, since Cain murdered Abel in order that his (Cain’s) posterity would become the priesthood line, Cain’s descendants were banned from priesthood administration until the foreordained posterity of Abel had a chance to come to the earth and fulfill their responsibility in that patriarchal line.

The teachings of Joseph Smith on the subject are varied in detail but overall express the same idea. Collectively, the rendered idea would be: ‘The seed of Cain would not be able to hold the priesthood until the seed of Abel had an opportunity to come to the earth and fulfill their responsibility as the Grand Patriarchs.’ As explained, this could only happen by way of the Levirate Law.

President George Q. Cannon remarked that the prophet taught this doctrine: That the seed of Cain could not receive the priesthood nor act in any of the offices of the priesthood until the seed of Abel should come forward and take precedence over Cain’s offspring.<sup>16</sup>

Joseph Fielding Smith concludes from this teaching of the Prophet Joseph that: “The promise was given that this curse, or restriction, will be removed, when the time comes . . . when Abel will have posterity.”<sup>17</sup> The reasoning for this conclusion is published in *The Way to Perfection*, chapters 15, 16. Joseph Fielding Smith believed that the birth of Abel’s posterity would have to take place elsewhere and in a distant future. Obviously unaware of the purpose and origin of the Levirate Law, it would be difficult to assume anything else. As a careful study of the scriptures makes clear,

16. Smith, Joseph Fielding, *The Way to Perfection* [Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949], 110 - 111.

17. Smith, Joseph Fielding, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, [Deseret Book Co., 1957-1966], 2: 177.

the possibility of Abel having posterity after he was murdered could only be accomplished through his 'replacement,' Seth, according to Levirate Law. Elder Smith continues:

Since Cain slew his brother Abel in order to obtain all the rights of priesthood to descend through his lineage, the Lord decreed that the children of Cain should not have the privilege of bearing the priesthood until Abel had posterity who could have the priesthood and that will have to be in the far distant future. When this is accomplished [on some other world] then the restrictions will be removed from the children of Cain<sup>18</sup>

Again, the implication is that the seed of Cain cannot hold the priesthood until the seed of Abel have a chance to fulfill the responsibilities of their fore-ordination in the pre-earth council. Wilford Woodruff recorded the teachings of Brigham Young in his journal when he addressed this subject in a meeting.

The Lord said, I will not kill Cain, but I will put a mark upon him... it is the decree of God that that mark shall remain upon the seed of Cain until the seed of Abel shall be redeemed, and Cain shall not receive the Priesthood, until the time of that redemption . . . but the day will come when all that race will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have.<sup>19</sup>

Many might question: "Is the loss of these blessings fair for those spirits who are the descendants of Cain? Could it be that those spirits in the pre-earth life wanted to participate in the plan of salvation so much that they agreed to come through that line? Or perhaps, could these spirits be more valiant and faithful, willing to sacrifice earthly opportunities to provide greater blessings for others, with the promise of fulfillment at a later time?" Some individuals have concluded that perhaps the spirits that will come through the line of Cain were somehow less valiant or neutral in the war in heaven. This belief or teaching is ridiculous. President Brigham Young reported on the teachings of Joseph Smith in a meeting held on Christmas Day 1869, in Salt Lake City and stated:

Joseph Smith had declared that the Negroes were not neutral in heaven, for all the spirits took sides, but the posterity of Cain are black because he (Cain) committed murder. He killed Abel and God set a mark upon his posterity. But the spirits are pure (i.e. innocent See D & C 93:38) that enter their tabernacles and there will be a chance for the redemption of all the children of Adam, except the sons of perdition.<sup>20</sup>

As stated earlier, Enos, born of Abel's wife and his replacement Seth under Levirate Law, is the recognized descendant of Abel. That means that under the Levirate Law, the list of patriarchs in the Old Testament would be the seed of Abel (Remember in D&C 84 the priesthood line is traced back through Abel). This patriarchal line must be remembered in order to understand the timing of the revelation of 1978 that gave the priesthood to all worthy male members. The partial list begins with: Adam, Seth, Enos. Since the Doctrine and Covenants trace the patriarchal priesthood line through Abel, it reads somewhat differently. Under the Levirate Law it would descend in this order: Adam, Abel, Enos (the Levirate son of Seth), followed by the standard Grand Patriarchal list. Seth was in his right, and by his righteousness functioned as a patriarch. The Levirate son,

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18. *Ibid.* 2: 188.

19. *History of Wilford Woodruff*, p. 351. Also quoted in: Smith's, *The Way to Perfection*, p. 106.

20. "Journal History", Dec. 25, 1869. quoted in Smith's, *The Way to Perfection*, p. 105.

Enos, was also his posterity but was connected or sealed to Adam through the wife of Abel. The key individuals in this Grand Patriarchal line are listed below; however, a complete list of patriarchs may be found in Genesis Chapter Eleven. This partial list includes: Adam, Seth (Abel) Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem . . . Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim.

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches how this patriarchal priesthood was to be transferred through the ages. In Section 107, it describes how this process was to take place from father to son:

40 The order of this priesthood [patriarchal] was confirmed to be handed down from father to son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promises were made.

41 This order was instituted in the days of Adam, and came down by lineage in the following manner:

42 From Adam to Seth, who was ordained by Adam at the age of sixty-nine years, and was blessed by him three years previous to his (Adam's) death, and received the promise of God by his father, that his posterity should be the chosen of the Lord, and that they should be preserved unto the end of the earth; (D&C 107:40-42)

The Book of Mormon contains interesting insights into the lineage of Joseph who was sold into Egypt, bringing this Grand Patriarchal line into the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times and the family of Joseph Smith.

6 For Joseph truly testified, saying: A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.

7 Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will *I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins*; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers.

8 And I will give unto him a commandment that he shall do none other work, save the work which I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes; for he shall do my work.

9 And he shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel.

10 And Moses will I raise up, to deliver thy people out of the land of Egypt.

11 But a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins—and not to the bringing forth my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them.

13 And out of weakness he shall be made strong, in that day when my work shall commence among all my people, unto the restoring thee, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.

14 And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise, which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins, shall be fulfilled. Behold, I am sure of the fulfilling of this promise;

15 And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation. (2 Nephi 3:6-11, 13-15)

These verses teach that Joseph who was sold into Egypt would have a descendent that would become an instrument in the hands of the Lord and would do a great work of restoration. It is revealed in this passage that the name of this *direct line* seer would be Joseph, and that he would be *named after his father*. This, without question or argument, is speaking of Joseph Smith Jr. and his father Joseph Smith Sr.

The Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. is not the Patriarch in this dispensation, but his father is. Joseph Smith Sr. is the direct line and descendent of the Grand Patriarchs, and is therefore one of this line foreordained to come through Abel. Joseph Smith Sr. and the rest of the patriarchal line were the “bloods” (descendants) that cried from the ground when their father Abel was murdered to stop that lineage.

The Prophet Joseph Smith blesses his Father in this Patriarchal Priesthood and declares his lineage to be that of the Patriarchs of old:

Thus spoke the Seer, and these are the words which fell from his lips while the visions of the Almighty were open to his view, saying:

Blessed of the Lord is my father, for he shall stand in the midst of his posterity and shall be comforted by their blessings when he is old and bowed down with years, and shall be called a prince over them, and shall be numbered among those who *hold the right of Patriarchal Priesthood, even the keys of that ministry: for he shall assemble together his posterity like unto Adam*; and the assembly which he called shall be an example for my father . . .

So shall it be with my father: he shall be called a prince over his posterity, *holding the keys of the patriarchal priesthood over the kingdom of God on earth, even the Church of the Latter-day Saints, and he shall sit in the general assembly of Patriarchs, even in council with the Ancient of Days when he shall sit and all the Patriarchs* with him and shall enjoy his right and authority under the direction of the Ancient of Days. (TPJS. p. 38)

Joseph then gives his brother Hyrum a blessing indicating that this priesthood continues through him:

He shall stand in the tracks of his father and be *numbered among those who hold the right of Patriarchal Priesthood*, even the Evangelical Priesthood and power shall be upon him, that in his old age his name may be magnified on the earth. (TPJS. p. 40)

Following the death of his father, Joseph Smith received a revelation calling Hyrum Smith to succeed his father. This is not done by ordinance or blessing alone, but “*by right*” (D&C 124:91), or the ‘rights of the fathers’ as discussed by Abraham (Abraham 1:2-4).

91 ...that my servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, *which was appointed unto him by his father, by blessing and also by right*;

92 That *from henceforth he shall hold the keys of the patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people*,

93 That whoever he blesses shall be blessed, and whoever he curses shall be cursed; that whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

94 And from this time forth I appoint unto him that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph;  
95 That he may act in concert also with my servant Joseph; and that he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph...  
96 That my servant Hyrum may bear record of the things which I shall show unto him, that his name may be had in honorable remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever. (D&C 124:91-96)

Hyrum Smith was ordained and set apart by *ordinance, blessing and by right* to be the patriarch of the church. This is the ‘right’ that continued from Abel through his posterity, which included the Smith family. This calling is addressed in an article in BYU Studies.

A January 1841 revelation called Hyrum Smith to succeed his father, Joseph Smith Sr., as Patriarch (D&C 124:91-96). The revelation said that Joseph Smith Sr., the first Patriarch, who died in September 1840, had appointed Hyrum to “the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, which was appointed unto him [Hyrum] by his father, by blessing and also by right,” implying a chain of Smith family authority over patriarchal blessings, going from the departing Patriarch to his eldest son. In keeping with those words, when Brigham Young ordained John Smith, Hyrum’s son, President Young said he acted in the stead of the martyred Hyrum, who had the authority to appoint and ordain the next Patriarch. The tradition of fathers ordaining sons persisted down to 1932, when death prevented Hyrum G. Smith from ordaining his son Eldred as Patriarch.<sup>21</sup>

Speaking at BYU, Patriarch Eldred G. Smith was introduced in these words:

Patriarch Eldred G. Smith was born in Lehi, Utah. He is the great-great-great-grandson of Joseph Smith, Sr., the first Presiding Patriarch of the Church. This is the only office in the Church that follows the patriarchal line from father to son, and Elder Smith is the seventh Presiding Patriarch of the Church since it was organized in 1830. (“BYU Speeches of the Year,” 1964. p. 1)

The year of 1978 will be remembered by almost all who were alive at that time. It was one of those events that people ask: What were you doing when you heard the announcement? The announcement has become a “Declaration” in the Doctrine and Covenants and canonized as scripture. The declaration changed the doctrine of the Church that had been based on revelation and scripture. Prophet and President Spencer W. Kimball received the revelation that opened all the doors to all those who are worthy.

June 8, 1978

Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God’s eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

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21. “BYU Studies,” vol. 36 (1996-97), Number 4--1996-97.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that *the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood*, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. (Official Declaration - 2)

The revelation about the priesthood was given in June of 1978 and was read to the church on September 30, 1978 at the October General Conference. Within a year of that announcement another prophetic event happened. President N. Eldon Tanner, under the direction of President Kimball, read a letter to the Church:

Because of the large increase in the number of stake patriarchs and the availability of patriarchal service throughout the world, we now designate Elder Eldred G. Smith as a Patriarch Emeritus, which means that he is honorably relieved of all duties and responsibilities pertaining to the office of Patriarch to the Church.<sup>22</sup>

The release of Eldred G. Smith as Patriarch to the Church took place *at virtually the same time the priesthood was made available to all worthy males*. President Kimball's inspiration and timing was incredible, as these events unfolded according to the prophecy of Joseph Smith: *'that the seed of Cain would not be able to hold the Priesthood until the Seed of Abel (the patriarchal seed) had a chance to come to the earth and fulfill their responsibility.'* That the Revelation on the Priesthood in 1978 happened in concert with the release of Patriarch Smith was no accident, even if the connection was not fully understood. The important thing to remember is that the change came about not because of pressure or petition but because of revelation and the fulfillment of prophecy. It could have happened no other way.

There were changes made to the Grand Patriarchal Priesthood and Order during the days of Moses. The children of Israel had lived and functioned under this patriarchal law and order during the time of Moses until the time came that the masses were too great to be administered to by family heads alone. Moses was taught by Jethro, his father-in-law, how the Melchizedek Priesthood functioned, and an organization was set up to administer to the needs of the masses more effectively. The Patriarchal priesthood continued to exist in the background within the family but the Melchizedek authority became the administrative authority of the priesthood.

In the same manner, with the growth of the church and the explosion of membership that ensued, it was determined that the duties of the Church Patriarch could best be administered by the Melchizedek authority (which holds all the keys). And with that, the seed of Abel finished fulfilling their responsibility, as Joseph had said.

The Melchizedek authority holds all necessary keys to function in all responsibilities of all priesthoods. Joseph Smith taught that there were three priesthoods: The Melchizedek, the Patriarchal, and the Aaronic. (*TPJS*, p. 323). The Doctrine and Covenants explain that the Greater Priesthood holds all the keys to officiate in all lesser offices:

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22. *Conference Report*, October, 1979

17 But as a high priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood has authority to officiate in all the lesser offices, he may officiate in the office of bishop when no literal descendant of Aaron can be found, provided he is called and set apart and ordained unto this power by the hands of the Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

18 The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—

19 To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. (D&C 107:17-19)

91 And again, the duty of the President of the office of the High Priesthood is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses—

92 Behold, here is wisdom; yea, to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet, having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church. (D&C 107:91-92)

The restoration of priesthood blessings and administration that took place in 1978 was because the descendants of Abel had faithfully fulfilled their responsibilities. The statements of Joseph Smith and the scriptures bears witness that the time was right and that the change was done under the inspiration and direction from the Lord. It doesn't matter if President Kimball knew of Joseph's statements and the Levirate Law or not. The inspiration and revelation was there when needed.

The significance of the timing can easily be understood by those familiar with the Scriptures, church history, and the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Old Testament and the laws that governed the *Patriarchal Period* such as the levirate law need to be considered in light of these events, for God is the same today, yesterday, and forever. The revelation of 1978 and the prophecy of Joseph Smith and the release of Patriarch Smith all bear testimony of the divinity of this Restored Church and Priesthood Leadership. Even without many understanding the related events of 1978-1979, the Lord fulfilled the prophecies of Joseph Smith while maintaining the integrity of the Laws established in the Patriarchal Age, as explained in the scriptures.

To recap: The blessing of the priesthood to all worthy male members was not due to pressure on the church, from without or from within. It was revelatory in nature and prophesied by Joseph Smith. Earlier contradictory statements made by many general authorities and teachers were simple misunderstandings and misinterpretations of both scripture and the statements made by the Prophet Joseph. Many teachers and even leaders may not have understood the doctrines of the Patriarchal period and how they impacted the true and living Church of Jesus Christ today. The changes made in the Church about priesthood worthiness in 1978 were made by divine will and under divine law, fulfilling prophecy and revelation. These events and all others, from the first man to the last, were taken into consideration when the plan was prepared and presented and the patriarchs were set apart in the pre-earth councils before the foundation of this world.

In summary, the priesthood organization is established for the administration of the Gospel. It is an organization and responsibility of service. The priesthood does not honor the man but the man honors the priesthood. There is no "power" other than the authorization to serve others through the priesthood organization. Cain lost the right to *administer* the ordinances of the Gospel to others, for this is the power or *authority* of the priesthood. According to scripture, Cain and his posterity lost the right of administration, not the right of participation. Many of the past statements from

leaders and teachers have proven that there were misunderstandings about the *policies and doctrines* affecting the seed of Cain. It was a doctrine (according to the interpretation of scripture) that the seed of Cain should not hold the authority to administer the gospel. Under the assumption and general understanding that the seed of Cain were black, it became a policy that those with a dark skin color should not hold the priesthood. It was known that not all of similar skin color were the seed of Cain, but, unable to determine who was or was not a descendent of Cain (right or wrong), the policy was created to maintain the doctrine. Priesthood restriction was not because of prejudice against any person or race because of skin color any more than all of the tribes and families of Israel being excluded from the same authorized administration. What if it was believed that the seed of Cain had red hair and were freckled faced? What then would have been the policy and restriction?

Genetic and ancestral lines throughout the Old Testament period have been constrained and restricted from priesthood authority. Restrictions from the service of *administration* should not impact or prevent individual *participation* in a relationship with Christ and the Atonement. The important thing to remember is that any restrictions on 'holding' the priesthood, whether by race, family, or time, have nothing to do with individual or personal righteousness. Nor does skin color have anything to do with the worthiness or the potential for salvation and exaltation. For the 'Lord looks not upon the outward appearance, but upon the heart.'