

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

We are going to be talking about the Keys of the Kingdom. An almost obvious place to begin is this occasion of Jesus. He says, "I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." So here is a promise that some power is going to be given to Peter, which has something to do with sealing and unsealing events so that they are either bound or unbound in eternity. Now the kingdom, as used in this expression, is the Church of Jesus Christ. "I will give unto thee the Keys of the Church of Jesus Christ." The "Kingdom" is the Kingdom of God in Heaven. The Celestial Kingdom is the ultimate Kingdom, but the Church is the initial Kingdom. And we are now members of the kingdom. And the expression, keys, as used now in this time, was secretive. And what it symbolized was that they now had the control and the power, the rule. Now we preserve a little bit of this symbolism today. When some great personage comes to our city, the mayor gives him the key to the city, and it sort of symbolizes that he now has precedence and the city will do anything for his blessing and benefit that he wants them to do. He is held out in honor and dignity.

Well, there are two definitions: one of them is Priesthood and the other one is keys. Now our standard definition of Priesthood is: that it is the power and authority of God, delegated to man on earth to act in all things with salvation. Keys. The definition of keys is: that it is the right of presidency. It is the power to authorize the use of the Priesthood. It is the power to direct the manner in which priesthood will be used. So in order to do anything legitimately in the Church, two things are required. One is Priesthood and the other is keys.

All of us hold the Priesthood, and some people hold the keys. So the people who hold the keys authorize those, or direct those, who hold the Priesthood, to use it in a particular way or for a particular purpose. Now, Peter was promised the keys. And then seven or eight days later, when the apostles, when he with James and John, those three apostles, went to the top of Mount of Transfiguration, they received something that is called the Keys of the Kingdom of God. Now this gives them the right to preside over the Church. We know they received them from the statement of the prophets. When they came down off the Mount, they were told not to divulge what had taken place there. And Jesus, at a later time, apparently divulged it. And at a later time, he gave the keys to all of the Twelve. Now this is Matthew 16, 17 and 18. So here is a situation where Peter, James and John held the keys, and nine apostles did not. And then at a later date, these keys were given to all nine. This is most especially rare. It is said that all nine of them, or all twelve of them then had the power to bind on earth and seal in heaven.

Now something like that happened in this dispensation. Let us make ourselves a little chronology here. Let us start back with the days of Christ. In his day, he first gave the keys to Peter, James and John, and then to all of the twelve. Now when any vacancy was filled in the Council of the Twelve, the new incoming apostle would have also received the Keys of the Kingdom. And then, in due course, the apostles went. And so, we start

with Christ. And we have the instances where the keys are given to the apostles. And then we came to the point of the death of all of the apostles, excepting John who was translated and who quit ministering among the mortals, so he is taken out of the mortal sphere. So there is a break, and this break is the period of apostasy. This is the period when the gospel is not on the earth.

Now I think we are in the habit of erroneously extending the extent of the Christian faith out. Somebody says, "When was the apostasy complete?" and an ordinary answer for the people in the Church is that it was complete by 325 A.D., by the time of Constantine, and so on. Well, it was so obviously complete at that time that there is no question about it. But really, it was completed a long time before that. It was completed by the time that the apostles quit ministering among men, coupled with the period that would have succeeded that while there were still some legal administrators who can authorize to do something. It was complete when the keys went, because once the keys went there was nobody on earth left to authorize somebody to confer the priesthood on someone else. And it always takes two things: to take the Priesthood and to take the keys. And so any additional, supposed organization to the Priesthood, would not have been valid.

Well, in 1820, the Father and the Son now appeared to Joseph Smith. And they gave him knowledge and information, but no priesthood and no keys. And we go on a little farther, and we came to 1823. In 1823, Moroni comes and gives him more knowledge and information. Now, Moroni holds the keys of the stick of Ephraim, which means that he presides over and he controls and he directs the destiny of the plates and the Book of Mormon. And he gave those keys to Joseph Smith and I do not know when he gave them to him, but I suppose that he gave them to him when he gave him the plates, which was not at this time. Now when did he get the plates? Did he get them in 1827? Is that right? Let me get the facts straight here. All right, if he got the plates in 1827, which I guess is right, then we are at the point where he would have been given the keys of the stick of Ephraim, meaning the right to translate and control and govern that book. But that is not keys of the Priesthood in the strict and direct sense of the word.

Now we continue on until May 15th, of 1829. And on that date, in connection with translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph and Oliver find out something about baptism and go pray about it; and John the Baptist comes. All right, John the Baptist gave them the keys; and this, of course, is Section 13 of the Doctrine and Covenants. And the keys that he gave them were the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood and of the preparatory gospel, so that they could do certain things initially. Now he conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood, but that is not a key. He also gave them the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood.

Well, shortly thereafter (and this is probably in June, we do not know the exact date, but this is probably June of 1829), when Peter, James, and John came. And when Peter, James, and John came and they confer upon Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood. They gave them the Keys of the Kingdom, the Keys of the Kingdom of God on earth. They gave them the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of time; and they gave them the Melchizedek Priesthood, as I said. Now did they give them something

else? I guess this is what they gave them. All right, they now had the Keys of the Kingdom; and as a consequence, they could organize the Church. And so on April the 6th, 1830, they organized the Church.

Now the other events take place that we do not know specifically about; we have to do a little surmising. We know when some things took place. We know, for instance, that on the 3rd, no, before we mention that, we know that on the 14th day of February, in 1835, they ordained apostles for the first time in this dispensation. Now the people that ordained these apostles were the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, one of whom is Oliver Cowdery. Then after the ordinations had been so performed, the ordinations were confirmed by the laying on of hands of the First Presidency, one of whom was Joseph Smith. So on the head of every apostle, was placed the hands of Oliver Cowdery and the hands of Joseph Smith. Now Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith got the keys back here from John the Baptist. They got the keys from Peter, James, and John; so they held them jointly. Two men on earth held the keys. This is the law of witnesses: that the Lord never sends one man alone to hold keys and power. He always sends two so that there will be two witnesses to bear record.

And on this day, Joseph and Oliver had been ordained, effectively, the first and second elders in the kingdom. Now they give to the apostles all of the keys that had been received up to that time. We are getting a comparable situation to what prevailed in the meridian of time, where people will hold keys and other people will hold additional ones.

And the additional ones came, apparently, later than this. At least on the 3rd of April in 1836, people came in the Kirtland Temple, again to Joseph and Oliver. Now who came, I do not know, excepting that Moses came, that Elias came and that Elijah came; and Moses gave two things. He gave the keys of the gathering of Israel, for one thing. And for a second thing, the keys of the leading of the 10 tribes from the land of the north. So that both of those things could now be accomplished. Elijah came and he brought the keys of the sealing power, and in accordance to the statement, "I will reveal unto thee the priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet." In other words, Elijah authorized the priesthood to be used to bind on earth and seal in heaven. Now it does not say in language that we ordinarily use, what Elias brought. But it is pretty clear what he brought and the fact of the matter is that the early brethren have taught this. He brought something that was called the gospel of Abraham. He did not bring the gospel of Christ, he brought the gospel of Abraham saying that, "In us and in our seed, all generations should be blessed." Now, what is the gospel, or in other words, the great commission that God gave Abraham? Well the commission or gospel that Abraham had was to provide posterity and seed (we talked about this a few days ago when we talked about the patriarchal order). So, for all practical purposes (and the brethren have said this), what Elias brought back was the keys that authorized plural marriage. Celestial Marriage is the key that Elijah brought back—the sealing power.

Now we do not know when Michael and Gabriel and Raphael came, but we know they came. I said I did not know who came on this day; it is very possible that Raphael and

Gabriel also came on this day, and maybe Michael—I would not know. We do know one occasion when Michael did come, and that was on the banks of the Sesquehanna River, which raises the presumption from the historical outline of events, that he had at an earlier date than this. But this is just speculation; we do not know when they came. So they either came on that day or they came at some subsequent time. And the revelation recites that each conferred their keys, their power, their authority, their glory in line upon line and precept upon precept. Now you do a little figuring; and it is not too difficult to figure out that the rational, intelligent thing that Michael and Gabriel and Raphael would have brought back. But in any event, all of them came; and they all brought their keys and their powers and their authorities.

Well here is the situation, then, in which we have apostles who have the Keys of the Kingdom; and we now have some more people who hold some keys that the apostles do not hold. And so historically, what took place was that in the winter of 1843 and 44, and more particularly, in the months that were in the year 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois, when the Prophet was introducing the fullness of the endowment and was praying and teaching the apostles and the others, that he conferred upon all of the twelve all of the Keys of the Kingdom that had subsequently been received, with the result that they now held them all. And when he got through doing that, the language that he used was this: “I have now,” or, “You have now got the Keys of the Kingdom of God. And it is up to you to round up your shoulders and bear up the kingdom. And if you do not do it, you will be damned.”

Well, the next thing that happened here, and the only thing now that needed to happen, as far as the prophet was concerned, because he had finished his ministry, was for him to be martyred, which happened in June of 1844, shortly after all of the apostles got the keys. So here is the martyrdom. Now, I think it historically accurate that the first words that Brigham Young said about spiritual things on hearing of the martyrdom of the Prophet was, “The Keys of the Kingdom of God are here.” Well, the apostles were off on missions in the United States at the time; and so the word went out that they were to assemble back. Wasn’t it Parley P. Pratt who was the first one that got back? When he got back he found Sidney Rigdon who was disaffected, uniting with Emma Smith to make Sidney Rigdon the guardian of the Church. They had a meeting appointed. He prevailed upon them to put the meeting off. I think the meeting was not held until, I do not know, I think it was—I thought it—I had it in my mind that it was August the 20th.

Comment: August the eighth.

BRM: August eight? All right, this is when they held the meeting; the business that they were going to transact was to sustain the authorities of the Church, and the organization and order. Sidney Rigdon talked at an extended length at the initial meeting without inspiration, and the longer he talked, the more evident it was that he did not have inspiration. Brigham Young, incidentally, when he came back, made this very memorable statement, “I don’t care who leads the Church, all I want to know is what the Lord thinks about it.” And it was at this occasion that the Lord let Sidney know what he thought about

it. When Brigham Young got up to talk, this is when he was transfigured before the thousands of Israel. And they did not hear the voice of Brigham Young and they did not see the person of Brigham Young, but they heard the voice of the Prophet and they saw the person of the Prophet. So, miraculously, the Lord was letting the mantle of the Prophet descend upon Brigham Young. And when the vote was taken, it was unanimous.

Now there must have been somebody besides Sidney Rigdon there who disagreed, but everybody voted in favor of sustaining Brigham Young and the apostles. Well, they became, then, the First Presidency of the Church, acting as such until that organization was made a separate quorum again. And that occurred at Winter Quarters in 1847, after they had come west and Brigham Young and some of the others had gone back to Winter Quarters. And when they added the new members to the twelve, one of whom was the original Ezra Taft Benson, what they did was what they had done to all apostles. They gave them all of the Keys of the Kingdom of God so that every apostle held them all. And we have continued in that same way on down without intermission, so that every man who is ordained to the apostleship gets all of the Keys of the Kingdom of God; and this will continue. However, keys lie dormant in someone, in a manner of speaking, unless and until they become the senior apostle, because in their nature, keys are the right of presidency. And only one man can therefore exercise them in their full. And that is what is meant by this segment in Section 132, the seventh verse that, "These keys are only held by one man upon earth at a time." There is only one man who can exercise them in their full; but they lie dormant in somebody else.

Now this situation will continue on earth until a day, which is not far distant, which is the day of Adam-Ondi-Ahman. And on that day, Christ will return in secret and in private, preliminary and preparatory to the great and dreadful day when he will come to take vengeance upon the wicked and to save the redeemed. And when he comes to Adam-Ondi-Ahman, there will assemble before Him all of the people, of all ages, who held the Keys of the Kingdom. And they will make an accounting of their stewardship; and he will take back the keys. Now he has given the keys to people so that they can use the Priesthood to reign in His place and stead as His representative. And the chief person that he has given keys to is Adam, in that he put Adam at the head; and Adam presides over all dispensations and holds the keys of all the dispensations that there are, with Joseph Smith holding them for this dispensation, other people holding them for other dispensations.

So at Adam-Ondi-Ahman, the fellow who is there presiding, and over whom and to whom 10,000 x 10,000 are ministering and thousands and thousands are ministering before is Adam. And the record says that they bring Christ to Adam; and Adam gives back to Christ the keys. And Christ, of course, is the supreme head over Adam. And then, having the keys, Christ has completed the formalities that are required incident to reigning personally upon the earth. And according to whatever time-schedule He has, He then comes and reigns personally upon the earth, and not through delegated authority. And this is the same principle that Paul said about the apostles. He said there would be apostles in the Church: "Til we all came to a unity of the faith." Well when we get the unity of the faith during the millennium, there will not be the occasion for somebody to

be an especial witness and go out and convert the world; and so the apostolic need does not exist like it does now. And anyway, the keys will have been given back; and people will exercise dominion in the Church by direct delegation from the Lord. And there will not be these representatives to act in his place and in his stead, because he will be reigning personally upon the earth. Now this is somewhat the doctrine of the Keys of the Kingdom and I have not taken time this morning, which we might have done, to read any of the passages involved. But the passages are in Matthew 16, 17 and 18. As far as the old dispensation is concerned, they are in Sections 13, 27:5-6; 12-13, they are in Section 81, the first two verses, and incidentally, these are the verses that say that these keys are always held by the First Presidency of the Church, which made Peter, James, and John the First Presidency for their day. They are, in Section 110, Moses and Elias coming, they are in 112, where it talks about the apostles having the keys and acting under the direction of the presidency and holding also the keys of the dispensation. In Section 128, where the prophet makes the summary and the listing and in 132, where these things are said about one man on earth only, at a time, holding the keys. Well, this is just a little fragmentary explanation about the Keys of the Kingdom, and I thought our approach might be, as I indicated, that I would say this much and then we would discuss whatever portion of the subject, in more detail, that you would like to discuss. We have only got today to spend on this.

Comment: There is one question to update. Through the dispensation of the fullness of time, could you explain that more? It sounds to me as though he told Peter, James and John that . . . (inaudible) . . . would have that information then.

BRM: No, they did not have it then, and this is something that is totally beyond me to comprehend, but for same reason, Peter, James and John held and conferred in this day, upon Joseph and Oliver, the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of time.

Comment: Even though they didn't, themselves, exercise . . . (inaudible)?

BRM: Well, they had a different dispensation. This is a whole separate dispensation from theirs. Now, in Section 27 and in Section 128, the language is used that they held and gave to Joseph and Oliver the keys of dispensation. I would like to know why they held them and where they got them and I do not know any explanation other than the revelation just said they had them and that they brought them back.

Comment: What is the role of the Assistant President of the Church in reference to the Council of the Twelve?

BRM: We had this initial arrangement in the early days of the church, in which the Lord, who had three witnesses; had Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. And so Joseph Smith became the President of the Church, and Oliver Cowdery became either the assistant or the associate, depending on how you want to use the term. And then when Oliver Cowdery fell from his position, Hyrum Smith was ordained to everything that Oliver Cowdery had. And so he became the associate President of the Church. Now, if Joseph Smith had been killed and Hyrum had remained, he would have headed the church; he

was the associate president of the kingdom. But they both went in Carthage Jail and so automatically, the keys went to the Twelve, and Brigham Young, being the senior man, did preside over all others. Now apparently, we do not need that same organization today that we had then. And that was set up in order to have witnesses to stand, to testify to all the world that the keys actually came.

Comment: Did Joseph Smith and Hyrum serve as President of the Church at the same time?

BRM: Not as President, but Hyrum served as Associate President, he is just next to the Prophet.

Comment: Why was it necessary for him to die as well then?

BRM: Well apparently, both witnesses had to die. Now I can't explain why all these things, we just read them and both of them apparently had to die because it did transpire. But they, the two that did die, are the two that held the keys. And both of them sealed their witness with their blood. And I guess it must have been as important for Hyrum Smith to die as it was for Joseph. Now I cannot even explain why Joseph had to die, but the statements were made that he did have to die and did have to seal his testimony, so I just guess it necessarily had to be so.

Comment: Then was it Oliver who would have gone had he not . . . (inaudible)?

BRM: Without any question, it would have been Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, if he had remained faithful. And that is what the Brethren have proved on that subject. You say, is a privilege of martyrdom. Well, that is a pretty strange way to use language, but on the other hand, out of it grew the exaltation and glory that they will have. And so Hyrum inherited the privilege of martyrdom that once Oliver Cowdery would have had.

Comment: The questions about Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, are these not some of the angels talked about in the Revelations of John?

BRM: Well, these are talked about in a lot of places, except Raphael. He is not talked about in any place except the Apocrypha. We know who Michael is. We know who Gabriel is. We do not know who Raphael is, so I will put it on the board. I do not know who he was, but he had to be either Enoch, or somebody from Enoch's dispensation. And the reason that this is so, is just obvious. You can take every one of the Biblical dispensations and you can identify who came from that dispensation, and you can't identify a living soul that came from Enoch's dispensation. But we know the principle that somebody came from every one. And so, just by a pure process of elimination, you have to conclude that it was either Enoch or someone who held the keys in his dispensation. And since I do not know who it was . . . (inaudible) . . . you cannot vote.

Comment: Does the need for Peter, James and John to bring the keys of the dispensation . . . (inaudible) . . . consideration when Moses gave the keys of that dispensation to Peter, James and John?

BRM: This would have been precisely the same thing operating over again. Here in this dispensation, first Christ promises them to Peter, then they go up on the Mount of Transfiguration and Moses and Elijah come and give the keys of their dispensation to Peter, James and John. Now what did they give? Well, nobody cares what they gave. The prophet says they gave them the Keys of the Kingdom of God. He says, Moses, Elijah and Christ gave them the Keys of the Kingdom of God. All right, without record telling us what Moses and Elijah gave, we just automatically know what they gave. We know they gave the same things that they gave over here. So Moses told Peter, James—gave Peter, James and John the power to gather Israel, and Elijah gave them the sealing power. And yet, those people came again and conferred them. Now somebody will think; why is it that Christ did not do it all? Why is it that somebody from all these dispensations came in our day? Well, this is one of the most dramatic teaching techniques that the Lord could have devised. Sure, he could have sent one man to give all the keys in this day and nobody would have really caught the vision that he was drawing every dispensation of the past into one and centering all things in the Church today. But by going to the trouble of picking somebody up from every dispensation of the past, where distinctive keys were held, and having that individual bring them today, he has made this really the dispensation of the fullness of dispensations; because all the dispensations of the past flow into this one, through that arrangement.

Comment: You made the suggestion that Elias was Noah; and inasmuch as Gabriel is Noah, also, did they, in those two capacities, restore different keys when they came?

BRM: Well, now let me, we did not take in this class the lesson Elias, but I put a—were you in the other class? I put a listing on the board in the other one. It is true that he, Gabriel, is Elias, but on the other hand, John the Revelator is Elias. You could read it bluntly in the Revelation. This is something that is applied to a number of individuals. It is applied to John the Revelator, it is applied to Noah. You can begin reading the principle, and pretty soon, you will tie it to everyone. And when somebody brings back these keys, he is acting as part of the fulfillment of the prophecy that Elias will restore all things. It is not any one man, because one man did not restore all things.

Comment: However, on the third line, there on the board on the right . . . (inaudible).

BRM: That Elias apparently is an individual, a separate person, somebody with a body. And who he was, who would know? He brought the gospel of the dispensation—or he brought the gospel of Abraham. Well, I could take a good guess at who he is, but if I took a guess, you would say I said that. Now just speculate a little. I do not know who he is, but it sounds like he ought to be Melchizedek, does it not? Because Melchizedek was running things in Abraham's day. Now I do not know whether it was Melchizedek or who it was, but somebody who had the name Elias came in this day.

Comment: Did John the Baptist come on the Mount of Transfiguration, too?

BRM: John the Baptist, according to the Inspired Version, was on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Comment: Do we have any knowledge of what keys he would have brought or why he came?

BRM: Why he would be on the Mount we can only speculate. Makes a little sense to figure that they would bring John there and have him there because he was the symbol of the end of all that went before; and he was the symbol of the initial legal administrator of all that was to come in the future. It just sort of sounds like there, on the Mount, they were closing up the dispensations of the past and John was turning over, winding them up to start in the new one. That is what John did. The last legal administrator of the old dispensation, the first legal administrator of the new, and now, here on the Mount, Peter, James and John are getting the Keys of the Kingdom of the new dispensation. You just reason a little and you sort of assume that John was there to wind up the past and open the new. But in any event, the Inspired Version says he was there and our information is fragmentary that he—we do not quite know what to make of all these things.

Comment: Now in connection with these keys, if you could just comment about mortal men having the power to forgive sin.

BRM: Well, as I said, if we had enough days, you would have a lecture on the forgiveness of sin. Now we get all kinds of strange ideas about forgiving sins. The power was given to Peter, the apostle, to forgive sin. The power was given to modern apostles to forgive sin. Now it talks about the apostles doing this, because they are the ones that hold the Keys of the Kingdom. Now how does an apostle forgive sin? Let us only talk about David O. McKay. How does David O. McKay forgive sin? He has the key. It is in Section 132, along about verses 47 or there about, where it says he has the power to forgive sin. How does President McKay forgive sin? Well, he holds the key and he exercises them in their fulness. And so he authorizes the priesthood to be used for a purpose. And the primary way that he forgives sin is to authorize somebody to baptize an individual because sins are remitted through baptism; that is the chief great way in which the apostles are empowered to forgive sin. They hold the keys and they authorize somebody to use the Priesthood to baptize. It is just as simple as that. And sins are remitted through baptism. Now, another way they forgive sin, they hold the keys to the kingdom, and they authorize the performance of the ordinance of the sacrament in which the covenant, made at the waters of baptism, is renewed. They hold the Keys of the Kingdom and they authorize somebody to administer to the sick. And the revelation says that when you administer to the sick, if they—if he has committed any sins, they shall be forgiven. And so sins are forgiven for people who are worthy to have them forgiven through the regular established order of the Church. Now is not this matter of slipping up to the priest and getting into the little alcove and whispering in his ear and being told, be penitent. This is just a short perversion. That is because they do not have the established order of the Church. But sins are forgiven through baptism and through the sacrament, and through

administration to the sick. And really, anytime that anybody gets so in tune with the Lord that he has the Spirit in his life, his sins are forgiven because the Spirit will not dwell in an unclean tabernacle. Forgiveness of sin was in the established order and system of things in the church. And you do not run to Mark Peterson or somebody and say, “You hold the keys of forgiving sins, will you forgive me of my sins?” What you do is, you have been baptized and so you repent and you get in harmony and you go to the Sacrament Meetings and partake of the sacrament. And if you actually get the Spirit of the Lord as a result, then you are clean. And because you have the Spirit of the Lord, your sins are forgiven. And we are supposed to get forgiveness of sins just recurringly and always in the Church, so that we do not have these burdens hanging above.

Now, if somebody commits a serious sin, for which his membership and fellowship would be in jeopardy in the Church, then he has to confess his sins to the bishop. And the bishop says, “Well, as far as the church is concerned, I will forgive you, in that I will not institute the court’s procedures against you. You make your peace with the Lord and go to Sacrament Meeting and partake of the sacrament when you feel worthy and if you get the Spirit of the Lord, then the Lord has forgiven you of your sins.”

I had that down for a lesson for a whole day, but we just do not have time for it. So maybe it is just as well to say that much about it because it bears on what we are talking about here. Or at least, the thing about forgiveness is decided in connection with giving these keys and powers to the apostles.

Comment: Do you care to list those sins that would cause ex-communication?

BRM: Well, they are just—they are in the handbook. I mean, I do not know how you really could list them, but sex sins and serious sins and sins that get you in the penitentiary. President Steven L. Richards said, “Sin involving moral purposes.” It is not just the ordinary little thing that we do. You keep that kind of sin secret; you never let your bishop know about it. The least the bishop knows about your sins, the better off you and the bishop both are, unless you get involved in something that involves moral turpitude and it is the kind of thing for which you would be disfellowshipped or ex-communicated. And then, you have got to tell him about it, so he can help you work it out. Otherwise, confession is limited to the Lord. President Steven L. Richards preached of that sermon, in many respects, (it has never been preached about in General Conference), listing the steps in the system of confession and all the rest. Oh, it must be 10 years ago, I guess. You would have to look it up.

Comment: Is it not true, however, that suppose you have some teenage child who is guilty of some sexual sin, that because of the patriarchal order within the Church, that the child can go to his father and confess this and—and in set things like this, would it sort of be necessary to go to the bishop?

BRM: Well, if that is true, I do not know it. That—that is new to me. All I have ever heard the Brethren say is that they have to go to the bishop in the case of sins involving moral turpitude. And I will tell you why they have to go to the bishop. Because the

bishop has to sit in judgment on them and determine whether they can have a temple recommend. He is a common judge in Israel. He has to sit in judgment and see whether they would be ordained to some other office in the Priesthood. He has to sit as the common judge and determine whether they would serve in an MIA superintendency or something. And so you just have to end up going to the common judge who is appointed to determine these things. That is all that I am aware of that is the system.

Now this thing that we have been talking about here is also the system of succession in the presidency. It automatically provides who the next President of the Church will be. Now people everlastingly want to say, well, could they not choose somebody else to be President of the Church? I will tell you what Brother Lee said in a meeting one day when somebody asked that question. They said, "Well, could they not choose somebody else?" He said, "Look, if the President of the Church dies, we cannot even hold a meeting to discuss or decide on anything unless the man who presides calls it." We cannot even hold a meeting to decide whether there will be a new President of the Church, unless the President of the Twelve calls it, because he now is the presiding authority in the church. He is just automatically the presiding authority. Nobody had to bat an eye to make Brigham Young the presiding authority when Joseph Smith died, because he was the Senior Apostle and keys are the rights of presidencies. Now I do not know what they will do, always when they choose and ordain a man to be President of the Church. But in any event, automatically, without more, the Senior Apostle presides. Now, I will tell you what happened when David O. McKay was ordained President of the Church. He did not get a single key. He did not get any of the keys when he became President of the Church. But President Joseph Fielding Smith ordained him and he said, "I confirm." C-O-N-F-I-R-M. He did not say, "I confer", but "I confirm." Because President McKay already held all of the keys that there were and the way he got them, when he was ordained an apostle by President Joseph F. Smith. So all you can do now, when he becomes President of the Church, is confirm that what previously had transpired was a fact. The church organization just runs automatically and there is never any problem about it. If there is no First Presidency, then the Council of the Twelve is the First Presidency until such day as they organize it again as a separate quorum. Now we would not have any way of knowing whether Peter, James and John served as a separate quorum by themselves, apart from the apostles in the Primitive Church or not. But in any event, whether they did or whether they did not, the three of them were singled out as, in effect, the presidency of the Church.

Comment: President suggests that there were First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve and the Seventy. Would you care to clarify that?

BRM: Yes, that is—thank you, that is a good point to raise. Now this revelation says that the Twelve hold the authority equally with the Presidency and that the Seventy hold it equally with the Twelve. Now, there is no such thing as three equal heads. And what that means is, that the First Presidency holds the authority and they tell the Twelve what to do, as long as there is a First Presidency. So if the First Presidency goes, then the Twelve become equal in authority with the Presidency, because they hold the authority that the Presidency did hold. And if, which is inconceivable, the Twelve went, then the Seventy,

70 men, would be equal, in that they would then exercise the power that the Twelve exercised. Now when the Presidency goes, the first thing the Twelve do is reorganize the Presidency and then they are not equal with the Presidency because the Presidency is presiding over them. And if, which is inconceivable, the Presidency and the Twelve went, then the Seventy would immediately organize the Twelve and forthwith, the Seventy would not be equal with the Twelve anymore. The Twelve would be directing the Seventy, and then the Twelve would organize the Presidency.

Comment: You were saying 17 men?

BRM: Seventy.

Comment: Seven?

BRM: Seventy.

Comment: Is there any system by which these 70 would be selected?

BRM: I do not know what would happen. Of course this is so theoretical, it never, in practice, will arrive. But there is no ordained and established system for getting the Seventy. If all of the . . . (inaudible) . . . I can tell you, in principle, what would happen. If all of the Presidency and all of the Twelve went, there would be seven men left. And the first thing that would have to happen is that they would choose 63 more to fill up the vacancies so there would be 70. And then when they got to have 70, they would choose the Twelve. And the Twelve, being ordained and appointed, then the Seventy would go back where they belong and the Twelve would run the Church and then the Twelve would choose the President.

Comment: (Inaudible) . . . the high council in the stakes of Zion . . . (inaudible) . . . the Seventy went . . . (inaudible)?

BRM: Well, I do not think that that means that. Now, I do not know what that means, but I think it has to mean that the high councils in the stakes of Zion form a quorum equal with the Twelve in the field of administration within the Saints. Now I just cannot conceive that it means anything different than that, but I do not know what it means. That just seems like what it would have to mean, that it could not mean that you have got all the high councils of the Church together but I do not know. But of course, this is an eventuality that we do not figure will ever transpire.

Comment: Do the Seventies hold the keys to the kingdom, or what particular keys do they hold?

BRM: Well, I will tell you a little interesting thing on that now. I asked that question one day, years ago, in the missionary committee, when President Smith was running it and the whole group was, about, either six or eight of the brethren were there and he said, "Let

me make an explanation about that.” And he told a little story. He says, “When I was a young apostle, I once preached a sermon in General Conference and I said in the sermon that Moses and Elijah and others came and laid their hands upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and gave them keys in these various fields.” And he says, “After the meeting, President Anthon H. Lund came up to me and he says, ‘Brother Smith, how do you know they laid their hands on their head?’” And he says, “All of a sudden, I did not know how I knew that.” Well, then he went on to explain that you do not have to get keys by the laying on of hands, that you can get keys by just being told by the legal authorized administrators that organize the affairs and do the work that is involved. Now, President Joseph F. Smith has this very famous quotation, which says that, “The Priesthood is greater than any of its offices and if there were one elder left on earth, he could completely reorganize the Church with all of the apostolic power and everything else. Well,” said President Joseph Fielding, “now the way it operates, is this, the keys have been given.” Now wait a minute, I had better clarify the quotation. President Joseph F. Smith says “That by the spirit of inspiration, one elder could do this.” All right, now in the light of that, President Joseph Fielding says, “All right, now if (which of course is inconceivable), everybody went except the Seventy, then, by revelation, the Seventy could reorganize the church. Meaning, the Lord would just say to them, ‘You are authorized to use all of the keys that have been conferred in this dispensation.’ We do not have to give them again, they have been conferred once, now use them.” Well, that is the most intelligent, sensible explanation I ever heard of this and I am sure it must be right. I know I do not hold or I have not had conferred upon me any of these keys, like the Twelve have. They are limited to the Presidency and the Twelve and the Patriarchs of the Church. But on the principle indicated by this illustration that, I suppose, is how they would be past on. Well, our time is gone, I guess.

Comment: How does the Patriarch fit into the succession?

BRM: I was afraid somebody was going to ask me and I do not know. I just do not know, Brother Townes.

Comment: Okay.

Comment: (Inaudible.)

BRM: Well, I do not know the answer to that because I do not run the Church. That is up to the men, you see, that hold the keys. Maybe I ought to say just one more word. In the exercise of the use of these keys, things can be ordained in many ways and it depends upon how the presiding authority wants to ordain them and have it done. It would be possible to do things right in more than one way, administratively. And so you could have more than one administrative arrangement. But in the exercise of these keys, unless the person is authorized to use his priesthood, it cannot be used. And so, when the President of the Church says, no more plural marriages, then that withdraws from anyone who has the sealing power, the right to use the priesthood for a plural marriage. And hence, plural marriage stops. Now if the President of the Church said, no more Celestial Marriages, Celestial Marriage would stop. If he said, no more baptism, baptism would stop. This is

the great principle of control in the Church. It is not Priesthood that enables you to do something, it is priesthood plus the authorization to use the priesthood as it is given by somebody who holds the keys.

Well, tomorrow, we will start a lesson, entitled the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is a prelude to our discussions that will grow out of it from the Second Comforter and making your Calling and Election sure.