

Keys of the Kingdom



Wilford Woodruff, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve recalled the following words from **the Prophet Joseph**:

"Now, brethren, I thank God I have lived to see the day that I have been enabled to give you your endowments, and I have now sealed upon your heads all the powers of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and Apostleship, with all the keys and powers thereof, which God has sealed upon me; and I now roll off all the labor, burden and care of this Church and Kingdom of God upon your shoulders, and I now command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to round up your shoulders, and bear off this Church and Kingdom of God before heaven and earth, and before God, angels and men"

in James R. Clark, comp., Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. [1965-75], 3:134

Bestowal of the Keys on the Quorum of the Twelve



The Prophet Joseph Smith

The Prophet had not as yet administered the ordinances that made men kings and priests. Brigham Young said three weeks before this discourse that no one yet in the Church had the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, "For any person to have the fullness of that priesthood, he must be a king and priest" (*History of the Church*, 5:527, which is quoted verbatim from the original source kept by Wilford Woodruff, Church Archives). These ordinances were instituted on 28 September 1843 and in the next five months were conferred on twenty men (and their wives, except for those whose names are asterisked): Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, Newel K. Whitney, William Marks, John Taylor, John Smith, Reynolds Cahoon, Alpheus Cutler, Orson Spencer, Orson Hyde*, Parley P. Pratt*, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, Levi Richards*, Cornelius P. Lott, William W. Phelps Isaac Morley, and Orson Pratt.* As George Q. Cannon later said

Previous to his death, the Prophet Joseph manifested great anxiety to see the temple completed, as most of you who were with the Church during his day, well know. "Hurry up the work, brethren," he used to say, "let us finish the temple; the Lord has a great endowment in store for you, and I am anxious that the brethren should have their endowments and receive the fullness of the Priesthood.... Then," said he, "the Kingdom will be established, and I do not care what shall become of me."

Prior to the completion of the Temple, [Joseph Smith] took the Twelve and certain other men, who were chosen, and bestowed upon them a holy anointing, similar to that which was received on the day of Pentecost by the Twelve, who had been told to tarry at Jerusalem. This endowment was bestowed upon the chosen few whom Joseph anointed and ordained, giving unto them the keys of the holy Priesthood, the power and authority which he himself held, to build up the Kingdom of God in all the earth and accomplish the great purposes of our Heavenly Father."

Knowing that Sidney Rigdon was the only member of the First Presidency to survive the martyrdom but knowing too that he had not received the ordinances of the fulness of the priesthood, George Q. Cannon added this significant comment: "It was by virtue of this authority, on the death of Joseph, that President Young, as President of the quorum of the Twelve, presided over the Church" (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:49). Joseph Smith's followers did believe he "firmly established the dispensation of the fullness of the priesthood...that all...earth and hell [could] never prevail against it."