

And I have sent forth the fulness of my gospel by the hand of my servant Joseph (Doctrine and Covenants 35:17).

Since the time of Adam, people have turned away from the gospel. They have turned away no matter how long and hard the prophets tried to teach them of the love of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and of Their desire for us to live with Them and enjoy all that They have for eternity.

Each period of time when there has been at least one prophet on the earth is called a “dispensation.”* The prophets of each dispensation have had the power and authority of God, known as the

John the Baptist ordained them “in the name of Messiah.” He told them that this priesthood held the “keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.” He also said that it would “never be taken again from the earth.” He explained that he acted under the direction of the ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John and that they would soon come to ordain Joseph and Oliver to the Melchizedek Priesthood.†

The **POWER** and **AUTHORITY** of **GOD**



priesthood, to help them testify of Jesus Christ and His gospel and perform the ordinances necessary for people to return to Him and Heavenly Father.

The first of these important ordinances is baptism. In our dispensation, known as the final dispensation, or the dispensation of the fulness of times, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned about the priesthood when he was translating the Book of Mormon.

In May 1829, he and Oliver Cowdery, who was writing down what the Prophet translated, wanted to learn about baptism for the remission of sins, mentioned on the gold plates. They went into a woods and prayed about it.

While they were praying, John the Baptist came to them and ordained them to the Priesthood of Aaron (the Aaronic Priesthood). He told them to baptize each other, then to ordain each other to the Aaronic Priesthood.

Later that spring, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood, the priesthood that the Savior holds. Then, on April 3, 1836, after partaking of the sacrament on the Sabbath, Joseph and Oliver were visited by Moses, Elias, and Elijah, who conferred upon (gave) them more priesthood keys pertaining to the kingdom of God on earth.‡

Since the Prophet Joseph, each Church President has held all the priesthood keys for the ordinances that people need to return to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. These keys are delegated to worthy priesthood holders to perform needed ordinances, such as baptism and the conferring of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

*See Bible Dictionary—“Dispensations,” page 657.

†See Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72.

‡See Doctrine and Covenants 27:12; 110:heading, 11–16; 128:20.

Poster Article Activity: The Priesthood of God

Remove page 45 from the magazine and mount it on lightweight cardboard. Cut out the puzzle pieces. Assemble the puzzle, and you will discover that the organization and priesthood of the Church can be compared to a building. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, and the Apostles and prophets are the foundation. (See Articles of Faith 1:6.)

