A close reading of Paul and other writers shows that “flesh” most often applies to man bound by sin, and “spirit” to one regenerated through Christ. Thus, it is not the flesh, but the vices of the flesh that are to be avoided. And it is not the earth, but worldliness (wickedness) that is to be transcended ([JST Rom. 7:5–27]. Similarly, Latter-day Saints do not finally pit faith against reason, or the spirit against the senses, or the life of contemplation against the life of activity and service. Only when these are distorted are they opposed, for when the self is united under Christ, they are reconciled.

In the plan of redemption, opposition is not obliterating but overcome: evil by good, death by life, ignorance by knowledge, darkness by light, weakness by strength.

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ORDINANCES
[This entry consists of two articles: An Overview, a general discussion of the nature of ordinances in the broadest sense, and Administration of Ordinances, the actual ecclesiastical procedures involved in the authorization and performance of ordinances in the Church.]

OVERVIEW
The word “ordination” is derived from the Latin ordinare, which means to put in order or sequence; or to act by authorization or command. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regard religious ordinances not as arbitrarily established but as purposefully instituted by God and eternal in scope.

The power to perform ordinances whose validity is recognized by God is inseparably connected with the divine authority conferred on mortal man, that is, the priesthood of God: “Which priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations. . . . Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh” (D&C 84:17, 20–21).

Ordinances in the Church contain instructions and rich symbolism. Anointing with consecrated oil (e.g., as in the temple) is reminiscent of the use of sacred oil in the coronation of kings and the calling of prophets in ancient days. Laying hands on the head of the sick symbolically suggests the invocation and transmission of power from on high. The “waters of baptism” richly symbolize the actuality of new birth.

Latter-day scriptures give ample evidence that God has established unchangeable, eternal ordinances as essential elements of the plan of salvation and redemption (Isa. 24:5; Mal. 3:7; Alma 13:16; D&C 124:38). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “the ordinances of the Gospel . . . were laid out before the foundations of the world” and “are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles” (TPJS, pp. 367, 308).

A biblical example of the necessity of ordinances can be found in the Lord’s statement to Nicodemus that one must “be born again” (John 3:3). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “being born again comes by the spirit of God through ordinances” (TPJS, p. 162). The process of salvation is experienced as a “mighty change in your hearts” (Alma 5:14) under the guidance and assistance of the Spirit of God through keeping the divine ordinances. The test of obedience is reiterated in modern times, a pattern that is said to apply “in all cases under the whole heavens.” One is fully accepted of God and is “of God” if, and only if, she or he obey mine ordinances” (D&C 52:14–19).

Some ordinances are universal in nature (cf. Lev. 18:4; Rom. 13:2; Alma 30:3; D&C 136:4), while others are rites and ceremonies decreed for special purposes within the Lord’s work (e.g., Num. 18:8; Heb. 9:10; Alma 13:8; D&C 128:12).

Ordinances, in the sense of rituals and ceremonies, embrace the entire mortal life of God’s sons and daughters and are performed by the Lord’s authorized representatives, the bearers of his priesthood. Indeed, ordinances are the visible aspect of priesthood efficacy, the operation of proper divine authority conferred upon mortal man.

Some ordinances are prerequisite for entering celestial glory (baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost) and for exaltation (priesthood ordina-
tion, temple endowment, celestial marriage). Each human who lives, who has ever lived, or who will yet live upon the earth has need of these ordinances. Therefore, ordinances are to be performed vicariously in behalf of those who had no opportunity to receive them during their mortal lives.

Other ordinances enhance the physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare of their recipients though they may not be prerequisites for celestial glory or entering into the actual presence of God the Father. Such additional ordinances include the naming of children, confirmation, consecration of oil, dedication of buildings, and dedication of graves. Administering to the sick contributes to health and well-being and to emotional relief and comfort. Spiritual guidance is provided by the bestowal on children of patriarchal and paternal blessings. Vital COVENANT renewal occurs in partaking of the SACRAMENT, when one makes a solemn commitment to conduct one’s self appropriately as a bearer of the name of Christ, to always remember him, and to keep the commandments that he has given. Such obedience increases susceptibility to the guidance and sanctification of the Spirit.

Ordinances reflect the truth that the Lord’s Church is a house of order. They also remind members of their standing in God’s kingdom on earth.

Not only should the one performing an ordinance qualify to do so, but those receiving the ordinance should prepare themselves for the occasion. The fourth ARTICLE OF FAITH says, “We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.” These initiatory steps are in precise and divinely appointed sequence, and by following them one moves “from grace to grace” as did the Son of God himself (D&C 93:13; cf. Luke 2:52). Indeed, modern revelation teaches, “If a man gets the fulness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the House of the Lord” (TPJS, p. 308).

When ordinances are performed with authority and power, they are followed by divine blessings. They have “efficacy, virtue, [and] force” (D&C 132:7). They are enlightening to the mind and enlivening to the whole soul (JS—H 1:74). The first man, after he entered the process of baptism, was “quickened in the inner man” (Moses 6:65). Ordinances unify man with God, and man with man: “Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons” (Moses 6:68).

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ADMINISTRATION OF ORDINANCES
Ordinances performed in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are to “be done in order” (D&C 20:68) by one who is ordained. The common linguistic root of the words “ordinance,” “order,” and “ordain” implies fixed succession, privilege, right, and solemn responsibility.

The administration of all ordinances presupposes worthiness of the administrator and the recipient. Most are performed by the LAYING ON OF HANDS of one properly ordained. It must be “known to the church that he [the officiator] has authority” (D&C 42:11), which can be traced in a documented line to the source of all AUTHORITY, Jesus Christ. All ordinances are performed in the name of the Son, Jesus Christ, and in the authority of the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD or MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. For some ordinances, such as BAPTISM and administration of the SACRAMENT, the scriptures prescribe exact words. For others, such as administration to the sick, the pronouncement of the recipient’s name and a statement of the authority of the officiator are followed by a spontaneous blessing as inspiration directs.

Ordinances that are essential to SALVATION must be performed under the direction of those who hold the KEYS to assign the administration (see Heb. 5:4; cf. D&C 132:7). The validity of ordinances performed, and their divine ratification or SEALING, require this approval.

In harmony with biblical precedent and latter-day commandment, all saving and exalting ordinances, from baptism to temple MARRIAGE, are performed in the presence of WITNESSES, and a proper and faithful record is made and kept in the archives of the Church (2 Cor. 13:1; cf. D&C 128:2–5). Thus, ordinances become “a law on earth
and in heaven” and, unless the covenants are violated, they cannot be annulled, “according to the decrees of the great Jehovah” (D&C 128:6–10).

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ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Ordination to the priesthood is required in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints of all who administer the ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The pattern of ordaining men to priesthood offices and callings is found in the Bible as well as in sacred history. Joshua was ordained by Moses (Num. 27:18–23), and Christ chose and ordained his apostles (John 15:16). Latter-day Saints believe these ordinations involved the laying on of hands. The sequence of ordaining ancient prophets and thereby transmitting authority from Adam to Noah is outlined in modern revelation (D&C 84:6–16; 107:40–52).

LDS officers trace their “line of authority” in steps back to the Lord Jesus Christ. Modern conferrals of priesthood authority are based on the specific historical claim of ordinations under the hands of ancient worthies (see Aaronic Priesthood: Restoration of; Melchizedek Priesthood: Restoration of). Priesthood authority and power from on high can be transmitted by the laying on of hands to all men who qualify for it in a spirit of humility. They who are ordained by an authorized agent of God look upon their ordinations as coming from the Lord himself (cf. Alma 13:1). An 1830 revelation declared in the voice of the Lord, “I will lay my hand upon you by the hand of my servant” (D&C 36:2).

Efficacy of ordination depends not simply upon the formula or words, but upon worthiness and the sanction of the Spirit. One may forfeit his priesthood authority by abusing it. The priesthood is not a domineering power. “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121:41).