

cellence in faithfulness that their CALLING AND ELECTION are made sure (cf. 2 Pet. 1:10). These become “the elect according to the covenant” (JS—M 1:22) and are made partakers of the same eternal reward that was extended to Abraham. That is, they are assured of EXALTATION in God’s presence with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Luke 13:28; D&C 132:29–32, 37).

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ELIAS

Elias is both a name and a title and has four meanings: (1) Elias was a man, presumably of Abraham’s time, who “committed the dispensation of Abraham”—which included the blessings of God’s covenant with Abraham—to the Prophet Joseph SMITH and Oliver COWDERY on April 3, 1836, in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE (D&C 110:12); nothing more is known about this man. (2) “Elias” appears in the New Testament as the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name ELIJAH (e.g., Matt. 17:3; James 5:17–18). (3) A forerunner in building God’s kingdom is called “an Elias” (*TPJS*, pp. 335–36). (4) A prophet who helps restore something of particular importance is also referred to as an “Elias” (cf. JST Matt. 17:13–14). In scripture, therefore, the name Elias may refer to a preparer, a forerunner, a restorer, to Elias himself, or to Elijah.

Individuals who have acted as forerunners or restorers include Jesus Christ (JST John 1:21–28); Noah as Gabriel (D&C 27:6–7; *TPJS*, p. 157); John the Baptist (Luke 1:17); John the Revelator (D&C 77:9, 14); Adam as Michael, Moroni₂, and Peter, James, and John (D&C 27:5–13; 128:20–21); and Joseph Smith (D&C 1:17–18; *TPJS*, p. 335). Each of these may be considered an Elias.

Preparatory work in the Church is primarily associated with the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD; but when performed by the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD, it is done under the spirit and power of Elijah (*TPJS*, pp. 336–37). In this connection, the keys given by Elias in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110:12) were specifically for the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

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ELIAS, SPIRIT OF

The “spirit of Elias” is a LDS concept that refers to the preparatory power that initiates gospel RESTORATION following periods of APOSTASY. The Prophet Joseph SMITH explained, “The spirit of Elias is to prepare the way for a greater revelation of God, which is the Priesthood of Elias, or the Priesthood unto which Aaron was ordained. And when God sends a man into the world to prepare for a greater work, holding the keys of the power of Elias, it was called the doctrine of Elias, even from the early ages of the world. . . . We find the Apostles endowed with greater power than John [the Baptist]: their office was more under the spirit and power of Elijah than Elias” (*TPJS*, pp. 335–36).

JOHN THE BAPTIST was the forerunner of Jesus Christ in the MERIDIAN OF TIME (Matt. 11:12–14; 17:12; JST John 1:21–24). He “was ordained by the angel of God . . . to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord” (D&C 84:28). By authority of the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD, John preached repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, in preparation for the coming of one mightier who would baptize with the HOLY GHOST.

On May 15, 1829, John the Baptist, as a resurrected being, ordained Joseph Smith and Oliver COWDERY to the Aaronic Priesthood preparatory to Christ’s SECOND COMING. Describing this ordination, Joseph Smith stated:

An angel . . . laid his hands upon my head, and ordained me to a Priest after the order of Aaron, and to hold the keys of this Priesthood, which office was to preach repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, and also to baptize. But I was informed that this office did not extend to the laying on of hands for the giving of the Holy Ghost; that office was a greater work, and was to be given afterward; but that my ordination was a preparatory work, or a going before, which was the spirit of Elias [*TPJS*, p. 335].

Later, PETER, JAMES, and JOHN conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD (D&C 27:12), and still later (April 3, 1836) ELIJAH conferred additional keys upon them (D&C 110:13–16).

Joseph Smith further explained:

The spirit of Elias is first, Elijah second, and Messiah last. Elias is a forerunner to prepare the way,

and the spirit and power of Elijah is to come after, holding the keys of power, building the Temple to the capstone, placing the seals of the Melchizedek Priesthood upon the house of Israel, and making all things ready; then Messiah comes to His Temple, which is last of all. . . . Elijah was to come and prepare the way and build up the kingdom before the coming of the great day of the Lord, although the spirit of Elias might begin it [*TPJS*, pp. 335, 340].

A. JAMES HUDSON

ELIJAH

[Because of Elijah's prophesied role (Mal. 4:5–6), he has become the subject of tradition and legend, as the article Ancient Sources explains. Moreover, as expressed in the companion essay, LDS Sources, Latter-day Saint teaching illuminates Elijah's latter-day roles as well as the fulfillment of prophetic expectations associated with him.]

LDS SOURCES

During a divine manifestation to the youthful Joseph SMITH on the evening of September 21, 1823, the angel MORONI quoted Malachi 4:5–6, a prophecy that concerns Elijah's activities in the latter days. Moroni's rendering, which differs from the current biblical text, outlines and clarifies Elijah's prophesied role:

Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming [JS—H 1:38–39; D&C 2].

Malachi's prophecy anticipates that Elijah would play an important role "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5). Elijah was endowed with the priesthood power of God. With this power, he declared to King Ahab that no rain would fall upon the land (1 Kgs. 17:1). Accordingly, the heavens were sealed and ancient Israel experienced a disastrous drought for three and a half years. When Elijah was carried up into heaven in a fiery chariot, his earthly mission appeared to have ended. But the sealing power that he exercised marked only the beginning of his responsibility regarding this eternal priesthood power.

At the conclusion of his mortal life, Elijah was translated; that is, he experienced some type of change from mortality without experiencing mortal death (*see* TRANSLATED BEINGS). Latter-day Saints conclude that a major reason for Elijah's translation was to enable him to return to the earth to confer KEYS of authority on the three chief apostles before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (*see* MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION). Since spirits cannot lay hands on mortal beings (D&C 129), and since Moses and Elijah could not return as resurrected beings because Jesus was the first to be resurrected (Packer, p. 109; cf. *TPJS*, p. 191), the need for the translation of Elijah and Moses is evident. On the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–9), Elijah specifically restored the priesthood keys of sealing, the power that binds and validates in the heavens all ordinances performed on the earth (cf. *TPJS*, p. 338).

On April 3, 1836, in a vision to Joseph Smith and Oliver COWDERY in the newly completed KIRTLAND TEMPLE, Elijah appeared and announced that the time had come when Malachi's prophecy was to be fulfilled. He committed the sealing keys of the priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (D&C 110:13–16). This restoration was necessary so that the sealing ordinances and covenants of God could be administered in righteousness upon the earth (DS 2:117). Joseph Smith explained:

The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God. . . . What you seal on earth, by the keys of Elijah, is sealed in heaven; and this is the power of Elijah [*TPJS*, pp. 337–38].

Through the sealing power of the priesthood, men and women may be sealed to each other in marriage for all eternity in one of the temples of God. In addition, children may be sealed to their parents forever. Thus the family organization continues eternally (Sperry, p. 139).

Because many have died without either a knowledge of saving gospel principles or the opportunity to receive priesthood ordinances, the latter-day mission of Elijah made it possible to have these sealing ordinances performed vicariously on the earth for those who have died, thus