

# SHEPHERDS TO THE TEMPLE

## Lesson 1

### A Vision of God's Work

God's greatest desire is to bring immortality and eternal life to all of His children.

*Moses 1:39—For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.*

Article of Faith #3 summarizes the requirements God has set for eternal life.

*AoF 3—We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the **laws** and **ordinances** of the Gospel.*

*--obedience to the **laws** suggests keeping the commandments*

*--as far as **ordinances** go, there are six that are required for eternal life:*

1. *Baptism*
2. *Confirmation*
3. *Ordination to the priesthood*
4. *Endowment*
5. *Sealing*
6. *Sacrament*

A closer look at the covenants associated with several of these ordinances reveals a common promise and hence purpose for receiving these ordinances. Let's look at three of these ordinances—baptism, ordination to the priesthood, and sealing—and see just exactly what that common promise is. The purpose here is not to delve into the specifics of these ordinances but only to reveal the common promise. To make this visually apparent, the promise of interest for each ordinance is bolded and underlined in the passages below.

#### *Baptism*

*Mosiah 18:8-10—And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burden that they may be light; Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection **that ye may have eternal life**—Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you*

*against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?*

*Priesthood Ordination*

*D&C 84:33-38—For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God. And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; And he that receiveth my Father **receiveth my Fathers kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.***

*Sealing*

*D&C 132:19—And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood . . . **shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths. . . and they shall pass. . . to their exaltation and glory. . .***

It should be fairly obvious and exciting to see that the common promise and hence purpose of the ordinances of salvation is “to bring to pass the . . . eternal life of man”. The Lord teaches this point succinctly in the following passage from the Doctrine and Covenants.

*D&C 84:20-22—Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh*

Just for review—the “ordinances” referred to here include baptism, confirmation, ordination to the priesthood, endowment, sealing and sacrament.

And “the power of godliness” is nothing less than the power that enables one to claim the blessings of eternal life!

It seems that if this is how God “brings to pass the . . . eternal life of man” he would provide an example of this process for us to learn from somewhere in the scriptures. Not surprisingly, and most joyously he does and is to be found through study of Abraham’s life.

*Bible Dictionary: Abraham, Covenant Of—Abraham first received the gospel by baptism (which is the covenant of salvation). Then he had conferred upon him the higher priesthood, and entered into celestial marriage (which is the covenant of exaltation).*

So Abraham was obedient and received the ordinances required for eternal life. In the next quotation we will see that Abraham received eternal life because of it.

*D&C 132:29-30—Abraham . . . hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne.*

Next comes the supernal revelation that all of us may come and lay claim to the blessings of eternal life and glorify the Father in so doing.

*D&C 132:31—This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself.*

In the next verse, the Lord gives some guidance as to how acquire this wonderful gift of eternal life that we have just been told may be ours if we so desire.

*D&C 132:32—Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved.*

And just what are the works of Abraham, what law did he enter into, what exactly did he do to qualify for eternal life—he received the ordinances required for eternal life (baptism, confirmation, ordination to the priesthood, endowment, sealing and sacrament). His counsel to us is to go and do the same—go and receive the same ordinances and thus qualify for eternal life.

Finally, the Lord warns us that unless we do receive those ordinances, we cannot have what Abraham has—we cannot receive that eternal life that he has received.

*D&C 132:33—But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.*

And so, with this ground work we see the big picture, the forest from the trees—that God's work and glory is to bring eternal life to his children, that this is accomplished by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, that the six ordinances required are baptism, confirmation, ordination to the priesthood, endowment, sealing, and the sacrament., that through these

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ordinances the power of godliness or the power to unlock the blessing of eternal life is manifest and that without them, there can be no promise.

## SHEPHERDS TO THE TEMPLE

### Lesson 2

#### A Vision of Priesthood Work

God's purpose is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39)

He invites worthy male members of the Church to join Him in the work of bringing eternal life to His children.

To those that join Him by making his purpose their purpose, He gives special power and authority.

This power and authority is called the Priesthood.

The Priesthood is the power and authority to act in the name of God—*or in other words, to do the things he would do if he were here.*

*And just what would he do if he were on the earth? If he were on the earth, he would teach the laws and perform the priesthood ordinances required for eternal life for those who do not have them. The ordinances required for eternal life that he would be performing include baptism, confirmation, ordination, endowment, sealing and sacrament.*

He invites worthy Priesthood holders *to perform these ordinances for others on His behalf* so that they may receive eternal life.

Can you see how a righteous priesthood holder assists God in "bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man"?—*he does what God would do if He were here by teaching people the laws and performing the ordinances required for eternal life for those who do not have them.*

And so, to solidify an already obvious point, *the priesthood purpose has everything to do with preparing God's children to receive and the performing of the ordinances of eternal life for those who do not already have them*—thus assisting God to bring to pass the eternal life of man.

There are several places in the scriptures that teach this priesthood purpose very clearly. Lets examine two of them.

First, in the verses below, Alma teaches that righteous spirits were foreordained to carry on the priesthood purpose on earth. That once received, *we are to use the priesthood given us to take the gospel (its laws and ordinances) to those who do not have them that they might also have eternal life.*

*Alma 13:1— . . . the Lord God ordained priests. . .*

*Alma 13:2-5—And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being **called and prepared from the foundation of the world** according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith **are called with a holy calling**, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to a preparatory redemption for such. And thus they have been **called to this holy calling on account of their faith**, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been so this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren. Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; **thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world** for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared—*

*Alma 13:6—And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they might enter into his rest—*

Second, in the book of Abraham, we learn that Abraham sought his ordination to the priesthood, and that once granted was taught by God that ***the purpose of that priesthood was to take the gospel (its laws and ordinances) to those in the world that do not have them that they might also have eternal life.***

*Abraham 1:1-4— . . . I Abraham. . . sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood . . .*

*Abraham 1:16,18—And his voice was unto me: Abraham, Abraham, behold, my name is Jehovah, and I have heard thee. . . I will put upon thee my name, even the Priesthood . . .*

*Abraham 2:11— . . . in thee (that is, **in thy Priesthood**) and in thy seed (that is, **thy Priesthood**) . . . shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal.*

**If it is not already obvious, the priesthood purpose is God’s purpose, and one who is ordained to the priesthood does what God would do if he were on the earth—he strives to bring to pass the eternal life of man by seeking out those who are not yet qualified—those who do not have all the ordinances of eternal life—and then prepares and performs these ordinances for them.**

## SHEPHERDS TO THE TEMPLE

### Lesson 3

### The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

Thus far we have seen that the work of God and the work of the priesthood are one and the same—it is all about bringing exaltation to his children **by preparing them to receive and performing the ordinances they need to enter his presence and claim the blessings of eternal life.**

It goes without saying that this is a sacred calling and responsibility that we are invited to participate in.

As such, there are **great expectations and great promises associated with ones appointment unto the priesthood.** In fact, so great are these expectations and promises that **God binds them into a covenant which is known as the oath and covenant of the priesthood.**

The oath and covenant of the priesthood is a two way promise—let’s look at the two parts of our promise and then later revisit the glorious promise we receive if we keep our part of the bargain.

*D&C 84:33—For whoso is faithful unto the **obtaining these two priesthoods** of which I have spoken, and the **magnifying their calling** . . .*

So we promise to first obtain the priesthood and second **magnify our calling.**

**What is the definition of our calling?** Our calling is to assist God in bringing to pass the eternal life of man. Our calling is to do what the Lord would do if he were on the earth today—which is to seek out those who do not have the ordinances of eternal life and perform them for them. Our calling is to find people who do not have baptism and baptize them, to find people who are not confirmed and confirm them, to find people who are not ordained and ordain them, to find people who are not endowed and get them endowed, to find people who are not sealed and get them sealed and to find people who do not have the sacrament and give them the sacrament. In sum, **our calling is all about administering the ordinances of eternal life to those who do not have them that they may also enjoy the promised blessings of eternal life with us.**

The Lord reaffirms that this is our calling in the following verses

*D&C 84:48-49—And the Father teacheth him of the covenant which he has renewed and confirmed upon you, **which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for your sakes only, but for the sake of the whole world.***

*D&C 84:62—Therefore, go ye into all the world . . . that the testimony may go from you into all the world unto every creature.*

*D&C 84:75-76—And this revelation unto you and commandment, is in force from this very hour upon all the world, and the **gospel is unto all who have not received it**. But, verily I say unto **all those to whom the kingdom has been given—from you it must be preached unto them . . .***

*D&C 84:94— . . . **search diligently and spare not . . .***

**What is the definition of *magnify* our callings? One is magnifying their priesthood calling if they are *actively engaged*** in assisting God to bring to pass the eternal life of man by seeking out those who lack the ordinances of eternal life (baptism, confirmation, ordination, endowment, sealing, and the sacrament) and striving to provide them for them. One who is magnifying their calling will be found doing activities that **identify** those who lack ordinances, that **teach** those who lack ordinances why and what ordinances they need, that **shepherd** those who lack ordinances towards obtaining them, they will **perform** the ordinances for those who lack them, and will engage in activities that **encourage** those who have already received the ordinances to be faithful to the covenants made at the time those ordinances were performed. To magnify our calling is to simply do what we have been charged to do when we were given the priesthood—by now you should understand what that charge is—it is the priesthood purpose, it is God’s purpose—to bring to pass the eternal life of man by taking the ordinances of eternal life to those who do not have them. Those who are anxiously engaged in doing so are magnifying their callings. Those who are slothful and neglect such activities are not.

**What groups of people do priesthood holders apply their calling to? What groups of people do we take baptism, confirmation, ordination, endowment, sealing and the sacrament to?** The simple answer is to anyone of God’s children that do not have them—interestingly, one can find people lacking the ordinances of eternal life in the church, out of the church and/or among the dead—so the scope of our calling reaches to all of Gods children. Hence, the birth of the 3 fold mission of the church. The 3 fold mission of the church is all about bringing the ordinances of eternal life to any of God’s children who might be in the church whether they are in the church, out of the church or among the dead.

Proclaim the Gospel—we are to find those outside of the church and teach them the gospel in a way that will lead them to obtain all the ordinances of eternal life starting with baptism and confirmation

Redeem the Dead—we do genealogy work to identify those among the dead who lack any of the ordinances of eternal life and then take their names to the temple and perform their baptism, confirmation, ordination if they are male, endowment and sealing. It shouldn’t surprise you that the same ordinances that are required of the living are required of the dead and that all of those ordinances with the exception of the sacrament are performed in the temple.

Perfect the Saints—we are assigned as home teachers to encourage those who already have all the ordinances to stay true to the covenants they made when they received their ordinances. We take inventory of the members of the church and

identify those who are lacking any of the ordinances of eternal life and then help them obtain them.

**What are the promised blessings to those who magnify their calling?** The ultimate answer is eternal life. It is as simple, profound and desirable as that.

*D&C 84:38-- . . . all that my father hath shall be given unto him.*

**What is the penalty for breaking the covenant of the priesthood?**

*D&C 84:41-42— . . . But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come. And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood. . .*

*Doct of Salv—The Lord is promising us everything that he has if we will be faithful. Is it not fair that the punishment for violation of that covenant, and the trampling of that priesthood under our feet, should bring a punishment, on one hand, as severe as the reward will be glorious on the other? And so the Lord says: “But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to com.” Oh if we could only impress that upon the mind of every man when he is called to receive the priesthood! Now, only those who magnify their callings will be chosen. Now when a man makes a covenant that he will receive the priesthood and magnify it, and then he violates that covenant, “and altogether turneth therefrom”—there is a chance to repent if he does not altogether turn therefrom—then there is no “forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come.” That does not mean that man is going to become a son of perdition, but the meaning is that he will never again have the opportunity of exercising the priesthood and reaching exaltation. That is where his forgiveness ends. He will not again have the priesthood conferred upon him, because he has trampled it under his feet; but as far as other things are concerned, he may be forgiven.*

And so you can see, the most glorious and promising course of action for any male member of this church is to come unto the priesthood, learn that its purpose mirrors God’s purpose, and become an active participant in His royal army striving to assist God in bringing to pass the eternal life of man by providing the ordinances of eternal life (baptism, confirmation, ordination, endowment, sealing and the sacrament) for those who do not have them.

## SHEPHERDS TO THE TEMPLE

### Lesson 4

#### “Shepherds to the Temple”

#### A Simple Paradigm on How to Magnify the Priesthood Calling

Baptism, confirmation, sacrament, ordination, endowment, and sealing all pertain to salvation in the celestial kingdom but it is the endowment and the sealing that pertain to exaltation (eternal life) within that kingdom. Joseph Fielding Smith teaches it this way:

*Doct of Salv—Baptism is the door into the celestial kingdom. All the ordinances of the gospel pertain to the celestial kingdom, and any person who is faithful to the covenant of baptism will be entitled to enter there, but no person can receive an exaltation in the celestial kingdom without the ordinances of the temple. The endowments are for advancement in that kingdom, and the sealings for our perfection. . .*

And so, if we desire the gift of eternal life, we start with baptism but must make it to the temple, for the exalting ordinances of the endowment and sealing are to be had in no other place. This is so for all of Gods children both the living and the dead.

Consider the following analogy found in the Book of Mormon and expounded upon by Elder Bednar:

*Conf Rpt Apr 2009—Behold, the field was ripe, and blessed are ye, for ye did thrust in the sickle, and did reap with your might, yea, all the day ling did ye labor; and behold the number of your sheaves! And they shall be gathered into the garners, that they are not wasted. (Alma 26:5)*

*The sheaves in this analogy represent newly baptized members of the Church. The garners are the holy temples.*

*Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained: “Clearly, when we baptize, our eyes should gaze beyond the baptismal font to the holy temple. The great garner into which the sheaves should be gathered is the holy temple”*

Why do you suppose the sheaves might be wasted if they are not gathered into the garners? Why would a newly baptized member of the church who stagnates and never enters the temple be wasted?

The answer is obvious—without the ordinances of the temple that individual will never be blessed with eternal life. From the standpoint of our Father in Heaven, whose work and glory is to bring about the eternal life of man, that is a terrible waste. Anything less than eternal life, even if it be another level in the celestial kingdom—is a waste in the sense that it does not contribute to God’s glory as defined in Moses 1:39—“This is *my* work and *glory, to bring to pass the* immortality and *eternal life of man.*”

Brethren of the priesthood—we are the **gatherers to the garnerers!!** We are the **shepherds to the temple!!** In a nutshell, **getting people to the temple** is how we assist God in bringing to pass the eternal life of man. This is how we magnify our calling—we **get people to the temple**. If we make **getting people to the temple** our focus then baptisms, confirmations, sacrament, and ordinations will happen naturally because now we see them now as prerequisites to the ultimate goal of having them enter the temple to receive the exalting ordinances of endowment and sealing.

It does not take much pondering to understand that we are **shepherds to the temple** for members, nonmembers, and the dead, for we find in all groups those who lack the exalting ordinances of the temple.

It becomes our responsibility to identify those who have not been to the temple and do all in our power to get them there—the mile markers as we have been taught will be the ordinances of baptism, confirmation, sacrament, and ordination to the priesthood.

**To Quorum Presidents/High Priest Group Leaders**—ponder the type of quorum you would have if you successfully instilled this simple concept of being **shepherds to the temple** in the hearts and minds of your quorum members. What would happen if during a quorum business meeting you gave a report on the current status of the quorum and mentioned there is room for improvement, then taught them their priesthood duty and introduced the concept of being a **shepherd to the temple**. What would happen if you held a brainstorming session in your priesthood committees that applied the paradigm of being a **shepherd to the temple to nonmembers, members and the dead**? What would happen if you started every quorum meeting by inviting the quorum to share any positive experiences they had that week as a **shepherd to the temple**? What would happen if in your PPI's you began to ask the question—“What are you doing as a **shepherd to the temple** for your nonmember friends, for your family, for your home teaching families, for your ancestors?” Would they not, in a few short months, begin to catch the vision of the priesthood work. Would they not become converted and committed to activities that lead people to the temple--more sharing of the gospel, more team ups with the missionaries, more families being home taught, more reactivation being done, more genealogy work being done, more temple attendance taking place—the list goes on. Ponder the enthusiasm, energy and effectiveness of a quorum who has caught the vision of being **shepherds to the temple**. So many of our quorums are stagnant—we come, we listen to the announcements, we maybe sign up to help someone move, we listen to a lesson, we say a prayer and we go home without once instructing, directing, reporting, counseling, or assigning the real work of the quorum—being shepherds to the temple to all the living and the dead. Try it—your calling will become fun and joyful as you see your quorum become energized with the vision of their calling.

**To Bishops/Branch Presidents**—ponder the type of ward you would have if you successfully instilled this simple concept of being **shepherds to the temple** in the hearts and minds of your PEC and Ward Council and then let it drive the agenda of all your meetings. What would happen if you began every PEC with the phrase—“Lets talk about how our ward is doing in **shepherding people to the temple**—who are those within the

boundaries of our ward who lack the ordinances of the temple and what are we doing to get them there—lets start with the nonmembers then move on to the members and finish up with our dead.” What would happen if the ward mission statement centered around being **shepherds to the temple** for members, nonmembers and the dead and then was used to shape the ward spiritual plan, ward mission plan and ward temple/family history plan? What would happen if every calling that was extended was given in the context of **shepherding people to the temple** and how their calling fits into the overall mission statement of the ward in **shepherding people to the temple**. What if at the beginning of priesthood and relief society meetings the brothers and sisters were invited to take a moment to share some exciting experience they had that week that **shepherded someone to the temple**—nonmember, member or the dead alike. Would you not begin to see unity in purpose at the ward, priesthood quorum, family and individual level and all interactions that take place between them. Would you not begin to see greater conversion and commitment from the members of your ward? Would you not begin to experience an outpouring of trust from God in you and your ward because you and your ward understand his work? Would you not then begin to qualify and experience great blessings as a result of that trust to speed the work in your ward? Would you not begin to see Zion established in your ward?

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## Thoughts for Subsequent Lessons

Effective presidency meetings

Effective business meetings

Extending assignments/return and report

Organizing home teaching—personalized home teaching plan

Temporal welfare—responding to quorum members temporal needs

Priesthood committees

Ministering vs Administering

PPI's

Random thoughts/lessons learned from those who have been in your shoes

Review of available reports available to you

Authority/Power/Keys—parable of the fire station

Presidency home visits

District Home Teaching Supervision—own your district/team ups/

3 Month Calendar—annual pres visits/quarterly PPI/annual team-ups/activities/business mtg