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Priesthood Restoration Concerns

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Chapter 10

Priesthood Restoration Concerns

51) *Joseph and Oliver didn't teach about the priesthood restoration until 1834 (instead of 1829 when it supposedly happened).*

Answer: Interestingly, it was from Oliver, not Joseph, that we have our first recorded comments about the priesthood restoration. It's pretty hard to always know when things were discussed. The best we can do is know when something is put into print—even that may be difficult because it assumes we have all documents, journals entireties, etc., which discuss an event.

As early as 1830 we have a non-LDS newspaper which observed that Oliver claimed to teach by “authority,” and that, after conversing with angels, he and his associates were the only ones to have this necessary authority.

52) *Joseph changed the wording of revelations—after the fact—to include revelations about the priesthood restoration that weren't in the original revelations.*

Answer: And? Joseph felt that revelation and restoration was an ongoing process. Additional light drives away shadows. Since both the initial revelation and subsequent revelations on the topic both came from God, how is it wrong to modify past scriptures by updating them with additional insights? I'm always amazed that some critics (which are often former Mormons) seem to think that Latter-day Saints should take a Protestant *closed-book* approach to the scriptures.

Protestants believe that the New Testament was delivered once and for all in its final form during and shortly after Christ's ministry. LDS believe that like the Restoration itself, scriptural recording is an on-going process. *We don't believe that the scriptural doors are shut!* Former members and critics may acknowledge this aspect of LDS belief, but for some reason their view of an open canon seems to consist only of “adding” to scripture—like adding another section to the D&C.

A prophet can also clarify and correct information. Joseph Smith did this with all scripture in his day—and it wasn't done in secret, so he wasn't trying to pull a fast one. He understood that more revelation would come and that these new insights often required an update to what was recorded. The author of the CES Letter regularly updates his “letter” for what I'm sure he sees as similar reasons—revisions necessary to clarify, update, or correct past claims. His fundamentalist slip is showing when he assumes that human interaction with God works on a more infallible level.

53) *The Priesthood restorations weren't recorded in the 1833 Book of Commandments even though they took place before the book was printed.*

Answer: See above

54) *In the 1835 D&C Joseph retrofitted the priesthood restoration stories to the past timeline.*

Answer: See above.

55) *David Whitmer said he never heard that an angel had ordained Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Aaronic Priesthood until 1834 and he didn't believe that it had happened.*

Answer: Whitmer did acknowledge that Oliver and Joseph were ordaining members to various priesthood callings; he just wasn't familiar with the fact that they had received their Aaronic priesthood ordination from John the Baptist.