

# ∞ The Two Davids ∞

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[Underlining is NOT original.]



**T**WO Davids appear in the Old Testament. Although separated by three millennia, they are bound to one another by blood and by promise. The first ruled Israel in the eleventh century before Christ; the second will rule Israel in the coming age. Of the first much is known; of the second, much remains to be revealed.

## The Historical Setting

The house of Israel arose in Syria and Canaan. It spent centuries of servitude in Egypt where it became a nation and from whence it was delivered by Moses, the man of God. After the translation of Moses, Joshua led the Israelites in a partially successful conquest of Canaan.

For about a century after Joshua's death, the Israelites looked to their individual tribal heroes, called judges, for leadership. It was a time of spiritual and political disarray. Idolatry was rife; the people were at least semiapostate. The anonymous author of Judges summed up conditions when he wrote: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judg. 21:25; see also 17:6.)

Then came Samuel, Israel's dominant prophet-leader in that age. In his later years Israel demanded a king: "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." (1 Sam. 8:5.) Offended, Samuel went to the Lord, who instructed him to "hearken unto the voice of the people," adding, "for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Sam. 8:7.)

The Lord further instructed Samuel to warn the people of the burdens and evils a king could bring upon them, but they were adamant: "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." (1 Sam. 8:19-20.)

## King Saul

So a king they got. Unlike alien rulers, however, he was to be the "anointed of the Lord"-a messiah-one obedient to Jehovah's will as that will was made known by the prophets. Although 1 Samuel describes the institution of a monarchy in negative terms, it was designed to serve Israel's eternal best interests. Israel was meant to have a king. As we shall see, the divine patriarchal order mandated it.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord, seeking "a man after his own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14), selected Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. He was anointed by Samuel, but within two years Saul fell out of favor for, among other things, presuming to offer sacrifice on his own recognizance. For this, he and his posterity were rejected as the ruling house in Israel.<sup>2</sup> It was foreordained that Judah, not Benjamin, should be the kingly tribe.

## The First David

To replace Saul, Samuel was inspired to anoint David, a shepherd boy and the youngest of Jesse's eight sons. His life was one of triumph and tragedy. It is recounted by the anonymous authors of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. Of the three, Chronicles, seeking to depict him as the ideal ruler, provides the least critical and least historical version of David's life.<sup>3</sup>

In any case, he came to epitomize the golden age of the Jews, an age Jesus' generation longed to see restored by another king, another messiah, another who would be the Lord's anointed.<sup>4</sup> But when he came, he was crucified. As the Spirit of the Lord descended upon David, it departed from Saul, and a certain madness seized the king. David's skill on the lyre and as a sweet singer of songs brought him to Saul's court where he became his armorbearer and dispeller of evil spirits.

Then followed David's surprising defeat of Goliath the Philistine champion, his deep friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan, his brief appointment as commander of Israel's

armies, and Saul's obsessive jealousy. The king looked upon David with narrow eyes after the people cried: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (1 Sam. 18:7.)

Driven by a consuming fear of being overthrown, Saul murdered eighty-five priests who had befriended David, together with every man, woman, child, and beast in the city of Nob.<sup>5</sup> Saul became obsessed with capturing his supposed rival.

On one occasion David crept into Saul's camp while he slept.<sup>6</sup> An officer, Abishai, asked permission to slay the king but David refused: "Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" (1 Sam. 26:9; see also 24:6.)

The Lord's anointed was in the Lord's hands. God, old age, or battle would end Saul's life; David would not. In spite of all, David revered his king as God's chosen servant. Loyalty to God and his anointed one was perhaps David's major virtue.

Saul's spear and jar of water lay by his head. David took them and, from a distance, protested his innocence to the then awake Saul, who responded: "I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly." (1 Sam. 26:21; see also 24:17.)

David did not trust Saul's words; he fled with six hundred men to the Philistine city of Gath and for sixteen months served Achish, its king. During that time he led a series of bloody raids to the south against various Canaanitish peoples. Learning that David had joined the Philistines, Saul made no further efforts to capture him.

In a battle with the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, Saul and three sons, including Jonathan, perished. Severely wounded, Saul deliberately fell upon his own sword; however, a young Amalekite told David that at the king's request, he had slain him. Assuming the Amalekite was telling the truth, David had him killed because he had "slain the Lord's anointed." (2 Sam. 1:16.)

## King David

Samuel the prophet and Saul the king were dead. At the age of thirty, David was anointed king of Judah at Hebron (possibly by the prophet Nathan). He ruled there seven and a half years and in Jerusalem, as king of all Israel, for thirty-three years. His reign marked the beginning of the unbroken Davidic dynasty of twenty-one kings of Judah, which lasted almost five hundred years, ending only with the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.<sup>7</sup>

David had at least nineteen sons, plus daughters, by a number of wives, not including Saul's daughter Michal, who bore him no children.<sup>8</sup> This number does not include his concubines and their children.

Six wives are mentioned by name during David's reign in Hebron. He married additional wives and concubines during his reign in Jerusalem. The total number is not given, but since the Lord denounced his "many wives and concubines" as being "abominable before me," it was excessive. (Jacob 2:24.)

After the death of Saul's son Ishbosheth, David was anointed king of all Israel. He soon conquered the Jebusite city of Jerusalem, "the stronghold of Zion," the last bastion of Canaanite power in the land, and declared it the city of David.<sup>9</sup>

The ark of the covenant was removed from Kiriath-jearim where it had been kept for more than twenty years. David, literally dancing for joy, brought it to Zion. Jerusalem became the spiritual as well as the political capital of the kingdom of Israel.

## \*David and Bathsheba

As the Psalms attest, David gloried in the Lord, who had abundantly blessed him. Then tragedy struck. David remained in Jerusalem while his armies fought the Ammonites east of the Jordan. It was springtime. Arising from an afternoon rest, he walked upon the flat roof of his cedar palace. As he did so he saw a beautiful woman performing a ritual bath for uncleanness.<sup>10</sup> Upon inquiry, he learned that her name was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his Hittite officers.

The ruler of others failed to rule himself. Driven by desire, David commanded that she be brought to him. No five stones protected him against his own moral Goliath, nor was there a great army present to cheer him on to victory. He was alone with the dark side of his nature, and he was defeated by it. He humbled Bathsheba.

Thereafter she sent word that she was with child. To hide his own responsibility for her condition, David ordered Uriah's return to Jerusalem and then urged him to go to his wife. But Uriah, under a soldier's vow of continence<sup>11</sup> and sensitive to the plight of his comrades in the field, refused to do so.

The king plied him with wine, but Uriah stubbornly remained with the king's servants. In desperation, David wrote an order to his commander, Joab, to put Uriah in the fiercest battle and abandon him. The order was hand carried by Uriah himself. Joab obeyed, and Uriah was killed. His loyalty to his king and his comrades cost him his life.

But that same order cost David far more. In one unguarded moment he set in motion a series of events that undid virtually all that he had achieved since his anointing by Samuel the prophet.

How do we account for David's behavior? We can only suggest some possibilities. For one thing, he was a man of war, one who had ordered the death of a number of men through the years; perhaps he had become somewhat hardened to killing. Then, too, apparently he did not

know Uriah well because he did not know Bathsheba's identity. As for taking a woman of his choosing, he was accustomed to that, being a king with numerous wives and concubines.

But, ironically, perhaps his fatal flaw was his earlier unquestioning loyalty toward the Lord's anointed. He well may have transferred that very loyalty to himself. Like Saul, he, too, had become untouchable and beyond judgment. Was he not the king? Did he not have rights and privileges denied lesser men? He saw the woman. He wanted her. He took her.

Another irony, as Saul had sought the life of loyal David, so David took the life of loyal Uriah. Both kings were motivated by the desire to protect their thrones and the honor of the Lord's anointed.

Had David stopped at adultery, the Lord could have forgiven him; but murder doomed him. And it was all for naught. Nathan the prophet came to David and told him the classic parable of the one ewe lamb belonging to a poor man that a rich man having "exceeding many flocks and herds" callously took from him. Incensed by the injustice, David swore an oath: "As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." Nathan answered: "Thou art the man." (2 Sam. 12:6-7.)

The death of Uriah was the deliberate shedding of innocent blood. It violated the standards of even that violent age. Being so, it robbed David of the everlasting kingdom that might have been his.

In seeking to hide his sordid sin, he committed a far more grievous crime and lost those wives who had been sealed to him by Nathan and other prophets. "I gave them," said the Lord, "unto another." (D&C 132:39.) Perhaps that man was Uriah.

Nathan reminded David that God had saved him from Saul, given him all that Saul possessed, made him king over Israel, and would have given him even more had he asked. But David had "despised the commandment of the Lord" and killed Uriah. Nathan then prophesied: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." (2 Sam. 12:11-12.)

David acknowledged his guilt. Psalm 51 is said to be his cry for forgiveness: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." (Ps. 51:1-3.)

Nevertheless, the merciless murder of Uriah placed

David beyond the mercy of Christ. More, it placed him beyond the security of the sealing powers of the priesthood. According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, there is "a reserve [restriction] made in the seals and power of the Priesthood" rendering the sealing power void for those who commit the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, or the lesser but unforgiveable sin of shedding innocent blood.<sup>12</sup>

The Prophet cited David as an example of such a man: "A murderer, for instance, one that sheds innocent blood, cannot have forgiveness [via the Atonement]. David sought repentance at the hand of God carefully with tears, for the murder of Uriah; but he could only get it through hell: he got the promise that his soul should not be left in hell."<sup>13</sup>

There he has been for three thousand years. What has been his anguish of soul as he has contemplated all that he might have had and all that he might have become! David is surely the most poignant figure in all scripture because he had the potential for genuine greatness. Still, forever is a long time; who can say what the future will bring him?

Although he forfeited the crown of exaltation,<sup>14</sup> eventually he will be saved in a kingdom of glory. But like those repentant Jews who crucified Jesus, he must remain in the spirit world until the next general resurrection.<sup>15</sup> "Even David," said Joseph Smith, "must wait for those times of refreshing [or redemption] before he can come forth and his sins be blotted out."<sup>16</sup>

Although it is often assumed that David will inherit a telestial glory, the "times of refreshing," as the Prophet made clear, occur in connection with Christ's second coming when only celestial and terrestrial souls are resurrected.<sup>17</sup> It seems, therefore, that in the infinite mercy of God, David will obtain a terrestrial salvation.

### **\*Tamar and Absalom**

David married Bathsheba, but their son died at birth. Then another tragedy, painfully similar to the first, engulfed David and three of his children. His firstborn son, Amnon, became lovesick over his half-sister Tamar and was advised to feign illness to have her wait upon him in his room. When Amnon forced himself on Tamar, she pleaded with him to ask their father David for her in marriage. But Amnon was interested in gratification, not matrimony. The author of Samuel tells us that when he had spent his passion, "then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her." He told her to get out. She cried: "There is no cause: this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me." Ignoring her pleas, Amnon called his servant: "Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her." Tamar put ashes of mourning on her head, tore her virgin's apparel of many colors, and

"remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house." (2 Sam. 13:15-20.)

The affair angered David, yet he did nothing. But Absalom, her full brother, was enraged, and two years later, to avenge Tamar's honor and at the same time remove a rival for the throne, successfully plotted Amnon's death. Absalom fled from Jerusalem and was only reconciled to his grieving father five years later.

A flawlessly handsome man and David's heir apparent, Absalom was impatient for power. He flattered the people and "stole the hearts of the men of Israel." (2 Sam. 15:6.) After four years he raised a rebellion that prompted David to leave Jerusalem through the Kidron Valley and over the Mount of Olives to Jericho and beyond.

Absalom entered Jerusalem in triumph, and in a symbolic act of claiming the throne "went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel." (2 Sam. 16:22.) Nathan's prophecy was fulfilled.

Civil war ensued in which David's well-trained armies vanquished Absalom's inept forces. Absalom, fleeing on his mule, caught his head in the limbs of an oak tree. As he hung "between the heaven and the earth" (2 Sam. 18:9.) he was slain by Joab, David's commander.

Overcome by his son's death, David cried out: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." (2 Sam. 18:33.)

David's final years saw wars, insurrections, famines, and further affronts to the Lord—but he endured. As David lay dying, his son Adonijah conspired to seize the throne. But David, heeding Nathan and Bathsheba, named Solomon, who was not first in line of succession, his heir. Despite his weaknesses, David lived and died loyal to Israel's God: "The Lord [Jehovah] is my shepherd." In doing so, he became a larger-than-life symbol of Israel at its finest.

### Solomon

In accordance with David's dying instructions, Solomon was anointed king by Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest at the Gihon spring in the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem. The spring still flows today.<sup>18</sup> In his later years Solomon betrayed Jehovah by marrying literally hundreds of foreign wives and erecting altars on "the mount of offense" to their alien gods.<sup>19</sup> Thus Solomon "the wise" introduced the practice of officially sanctioned idolatry, which plagued Israel until the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity of the Jews.

His death, about 925 b.c., brought about the prophesied division of his kingdom into the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel, or Ephraim (the ten tribes). Israel's division and scattering has continued to the present time.

But it must end. Peace must come to Israel before

peace can come to the world. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would set up an ensign and gather the "outcasts of Israel" and the "dispersed of Judah." That ensign is Mount Zion—not the "mount Zion" of old Jerusalem, but the "Mount Zion" centered in the New Jerusalem of the Saints.<sup>20</sup> Sometime after it is established in glory, Isaiah's words will be fulfilled: "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." (Isa. 11:13.)

The ingathering of scattered Israel, which began with Ephraim in 1830, will continue until all twelve tribes stand united before the Holy One of Israel. This union is symbolized by the two sticks that became one in the hand of Ezekiel.<sup>21</sup> Said Jehovah: "And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms anymore at all." (Ezek. 37:22.)

### "Branch"

The prophecy of Ezekiel brings us to the second David, but before considering those passages that explicitly mention him, we will consider a figure that has been identified with him: the "Branch." "Branch" is a rather common figure of speech in the Old Testament. In the Book of Mormon, it almost always refers to Israel as represented by the olive tree.<sup>22</sup> (Jacob 5:3.) For example, in writing that God would "raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel," Nephi explained that this branch was "not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off." (2 Ne. 3:5.) The most extensive use of the figure is found in the complex allegory of Zenos (Jacob 5), which deals with the various branches of Israel down through time.

Just as "branch" may apply to more than one group, so may it apply to more than one person. The first mention in the Old Testament of a "Branch" personality is found in Isaiah: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." (Isa. 11:1.)<sup>23</sup>

A partial explanation of this enigmatic prophecy is provided by the Lord in Doctrine and Covenants 113 where he declares himself to be the "Stem of Jesse."<sup>24</sup> Like the trunk (stem) of a great tree, Jehovah is the life-source of Israel with its many branches. A "rod" (shoot) will grow out of the "Stem," meaning a man will come forth from Christ. This "rod" is "a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim." That is, this "servant" will have a dual lineage, being a descendant of both Judah and Joseph. Most commentators assume that Isaiah is employing synonymous parallelism<sup>25</sup> in this passage and equate the "rod" with the "Branch." If the two clauses are wholly synonymous, then both "stem" and "roots" represent Christ, whereas the

"rod" and the "Branch" represent his unidentified servant. If, however, Isaiah does not intend synonymous parallelism (as he sometimes does not), then at least *three* individuals are symbolized in verse one: the "rod," the "Stem of Jesse," and the "Branch."

A fourth individual is described in verse 10 as "the root of Jesse." The Lord explained that this "root of Jesse" will be a "descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days." Like the "rod," he, too, will descend from both Judah and Joseph.

The actual identities of the "rod," the "Branch," and the "root of Jesse" in Isaiah are conjectural. Some believe that both "rod" and "Branch" symbolize the second David. Others believe that the "rod" is David, and the "Branch" another latter-day figure.

Regardless, the "root of Jesse" is almost surely the Prophet Joseph Smith. He holds the keys of this kingdom in both time and eternity and is the president of the last and greatest of all dispensations, the dispensation of the fulness of times.<sup>26</sup> He is the living ensign to which the present generation must gather. We cannot, in reality, come to Christ if we do not accept his servant, Joseph Smith.

The Lord's works are first spiritual and then temporal, or physical.<sup>27</sup> All of the spiritual keys, powers, doctrines, and ordinances revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith must be honored and implemented before Zion, the second ensign, can be literally established in fulness and glory.<sup>28</sup> That day is not far off.

### "Branch" Passages

Jeremiah and Zechariah contain several passages that identify a "Branch" with a latter-day ruler.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." (Jer. 23:5-6.) A companion passage in Jeremiah reads: "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he [the "Branch"] shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." (Jer. 33:15.)<sup>29</sup>

Some commentators have identified Jeremiah's "Branch" with the Messiah. Aware of their position, my mentor, Dr. Sperry, for whom this symposium is named, commented as follows: "The fact that the 'Branch' is to be a descendent of David and the further fact that he is called 'Lord' by the words in italics seems to decide the identification in favor of the Messiah. But we call

attention to the fact that in Jeremiah 33:16 it is not the 'Branch' but Jerusalem that is called *The Lord our righteousness*. Furthermore, the original Hebrew may be translated *The Lord is our righteousness*, which changes the sense considerably, especially in the first quoted passage in Jeremiah."<sup>30</sup>

In one of a series of eight visions Zechariah beheld an unclean high priest named Joshua who, becoming sanctified, was promised rule over the Lord's house and told, "I will bring forth my servant the "Branch." (Zech. 3:1-8.) In a subsequent vision Zechariah crowned Joshua and told him: "Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (Zech. 6:12-13.)

This prophecy is usually associated with the building of the second temple by Zerubbabel (the presumed "Branch") in the sixth century before Christ; however, as with Peter's use of Joel 2 (Acts 2:14-21; JS-H 1:41), it is a dual prophecy and has been only partially fulfilled.

I believe its real fulfillment is yet future when the "Branch" builds the great temple in the New Jerusalem assisted by those who come from "far off"-not from ancient Babylon but from the "Babylon" of these last days.<sup>31</sup>

We cannot be certain that the "Branch" of Isaiah 11, of Jeremiah 23 and 33, and of Zechariah 3 and 6 are one and the same individual. Christ, "the stem of Jesse" has many branches. As for "Joshua" and the "Branch," are they two different men, or does the unclean Joshua become the sanctified "Branch"? Time will tell. In any event, a king designated the "Branch" will yet reign in Israel.

### The Second David

The king who will yet reign in Israel is the second David. A descendant of David, he will be the first king since Solomon to rule over all twelve tribes. He is mentioned by name in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.<sup>32</sup> Hosea, a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel in the eighth century before Christ, wrote: "And afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." (Hosea 3:5.)

Over two hundred years later Jeremiah prophesied: "But they [Israel] shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." (Jer. 30:9.) And in the days of the Babylonian captivity, Ezekiel expanded Jeremiah's prophecy: "And I will set one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have

spoken it." (Ezek. 34:23-24.) Later Ezekiel added: "I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. . . . and my servant David shall be their prince forever." (Ezek. 37:23-25.)

Note that these passages speak only of this king's reign over Israel; they are silent about his relationship to the gentile and heathen nations.

## Zion and Jerusalem

The Shepherd of Israel is going to gather all of his scattered sheep. His labors begin with Ephraim and Zion and end with Judah and Jerusalem. Where, therefore, does King David fit into the prophetic scheme of things? How does he relate to the Latter-day Saints? The answer given by Joseph Smith and his associates is that Christ's church will beget Christ's millennial kingdom; however, the church of Christ is not the kingdom of God. They will be two related but separate institutions.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Jews and the second David will follow and be a direct result of the fulfillment of the prophecies pertaining to the establishment of Zion and the New Jerusalem in America. The Lord will redeem Zion many years before he redeems Jerusalem.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, "the kingdom of Zion" (D&C 105:32) will provide the pattern and the power for the government of God as it will be organized in Jerusalem. President Charles W. Penrose declared that after the Messiah appears to the Jews, "the government of God as established in Zion will be set up among them."<sup>35</sup>

Heber C. Kimball said that he, himself, together with many early leaders of the Church who were then deceased, would be in Jackson County "in the flesh." He then added: "And the day will be when I will see those men in the general assembly of the Church of the First-Born, in the great council of God in Jerusalem. . . . I heard Joseph [Smith] say twice that brother Brigham and I should be in that council in Jerusalem, when there should be a uniting of the *two divisions of God's government*."<sup>36</sup>

In fulfillment of Isaiah's words, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3; see also D&C 133:21), there will be two world capitals, Zion in the west and Jerusalem in the east. But Zion will retain its preeminence as the spiritual and political center of the Church and the kingdom of God.

This worldwide order will have one head, Jesus Christ, and two arms to serve the body politic: a spiritual arm consisting of the Church of the Firstborn in all of its priestly and ecclesiastical ramifications and powers, and a political arm, the kingdom of God, to govern the nations.<sup>37</sup> In their totality the Church and kingdom constitute "the holy order." Extensive in organization and

diverse in administration, it will be a perfect theocracy.

I believe that the prophets wrote of those who would be called at various times to critical positions in both arms of the Lord's latter-day and millennial order. Their identities are hidden behind such figures as rod, Branch, root of Jesse, ensign, and one mighty and strong. Understanding the prophetic code is a challenging business; no one should dogmatize their opinions on these matters. Only the word of the Lord can provide us with certitude.

Modern revelation indicates that the second David will come on the scene sometime after Zion's redemption, the return of the lost tribes, and the selection of the 144 thousand. He will appear in connection with the climactic events associated with Armageddon and the deliverance of a remnant of Judah in Jerusalem as described in Revelation 11 and 16 and Doctrine and Covenants 45. He is essentially a millennial figure.

## Joseph Smith's Teachings

Neither the Prophet Joseph Smith nor any of the earlier leaders of the Church ever established the actual identity of this David. After the Prophet's martyrdom, however, it was rumored in Nauvoo that he believed that one of his posterity-possibly David Hyrum Smith, a son born in November 1844-would be that David. While such a notion is ludicrous to us-gifted as we are with one hundred and forty-five years of hindsight-it must have seemed plausible at the time.

In late 1844 Oliver B. Huntington was living in the Prophet's home, the Mansion House. In his diary he wrote of David Hyrum Smith: "At the time of his birth, it was intimated by old Mrs. Durphee and others that Joseph the Prophet said that he (David Hyrum, which name Joseph gave him before his death)<sup>38</sup> was to be the David the Bible speaks of to rule over Israel forever, which David spoken of most people took to be old king David."<sup>39</sup>

While there is no solid evidence that the Prophet had such aspirations for his son,<sup>40</sup> the very rumor suggests that he had not publicly identified the second David with anyone else. Had he done so, Huntington and others would probably have countered the rumor with the Prophet's actual teachings.

Joseph Smith's only known relevant statement is that "the throne and kingdom of David is to be taken from him and given to another by the name of David in the last days, raised up out of his lineage."<sup>41</sup> If he understood-and this is still unclear-that this David would be one of his own posterity, Joseph Smith had to be, in part, of the lineage of Judah. He was, if he is Isaiah's "root of Jesse."

Denouncing what he called "The Davidic Myth," however, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "This wresting of the written word assumes that someone of prophetic stature will arise in the Church in the last days, to preside as a Second David, and to prepare the way before the Second Coming of the Son of Man. That there may be one

or many brethren called David who preside over the Church in this dispensation is of no moment. The scriptures that speak of King David reigning in the last days are Messianic; they have reference to the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>42</sup>

His most extensive discussion of this subject is found in *The Millennial Messiah*, published in 1982. In it he identifies Christ as "the Branch," the "Second David," the "Eternal David, the Son of David, the one of whom David of old was a type and a shadow."<sup>43</sup>

### A New Exegesis

This view is reflected in the LDS edition of the Bible published in 1979. The headnotes to Jeremiah 30 and Ezekiel 34 and 37 identify Christ as the prophesied David. The headnotes to Jeremiah 23 and 33 and Zechariah 3 and 6 state that the Messiah, or Christ, is the "Branch."<sup>44</sup> Thus the Messiah, the "Branch," and the second David are identified as being one and the same person: Jesus Christ.<sup>45</sup> This position is primarily based on those indisputable scriptures, both ancient and modern, which declare the Lord Jesus Christ to be Israel's supreme king and lawgiver.<sup>46</sup> For example, in Luke, Mary is told by the angel Gabriel that God would give Jesus "the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32-33; see also Acts 2:30.)

As we shall see, however, Christ is not the only king in Israel; he is "King of kings." Then too, the relevant passages in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel distinguish between the Lord God and that "servant" whom he will raise up in the last days as a Davidic king. Is Jehovah a servant to himself? Joseph Smith's brief reference to this king does not suggest divinity. But, as with so many theological questions, we need not close and bolt the door on this matter. It is not imperative that we have the final answer now; in good time we will see "eye to eye" on the second David.

### The Everlasting Kingdom of David

A number of prophets, including Joseph Smith, have testified to the enduring nature of the house of David.<sup>47</sup> Although ancient David has lost his own kingdom, nevertheless the Lord said through Nathan: "Thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." (2 Sam. 7:16.) And Jeremiah added: "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." (Jer. 33:17; see also vss. 19-26.)

The Psalmist wrote: "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." (Ps. 89:35-37; see also 132:11-18.)

### King of Kings

Why is the house of David so highly favored of the Lord? The answer lies not in David the man but in his lineage and in the kingdom he symbolizes. In blessing his son Judah, Jacob said: "The sceptre [kingly authority] shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh [the Messiah] come;<sup>48</sup> and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49:10.)

Judah was designated the kingly tribe in Israel and, as we have seen, the house of David its ruling dynasty. The promised Messiah-King must be of that house; a non-Davidic Messiah was, and is, prophetically inconceivable. Therefore it was ordained that the Son of Man, being both "the root and offspring of David" (Rev. 22:16; see also 5:5; Matt. 22:41-46), should be born into that house as *the* Son of David and the only legitimate heir to the immortal throne of Israel.

So kingship belongs to Jesus the Messiah both by lineage and by divine decree. He alone possesses "the key of the house of David" (Isa. 22:22; see also Rev. 3:7), the key to the governance of Israel. The house of David reigns forever because the Son of David reigns forever. He will be the God-King of this celestialized earth.<sup>49</sup>

He is preeminently "the Lord's anointed." Although, as we have seen, this title was bestowed upon Israel's ancient kings, it did not originate with them nor with the ancient patriarchs and prophets. It originated with the Son of Man. Paul wrote: "But unto the Son he [the Father] saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Heb. 1:8-9.) That anointing was performed in the first estate in a general assembly of the Father's spirit family.<sup>50</sup> The Messiah is the prototype of all upon whom the designation "the Lord's anointed" is sealed. He is the begetter of kings. For he shares his throne with all who prove worthy of joint-heirship under him in the Father's kingdom.<sup>51</sup>

Clearly, his throne is not literally one throne, his kingdom not literally one kingdom. Rather, it consists of the myriad "thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers" (D&C 132:19) that compose the house of Israel in the celestial world.

Anointed "with the oil of gladness above his fellows" (Heb. 1:9), the Messiah stands at the apex of royal Israel as the King of her kings and the Lord of her lords.<sup>52</sup> He is the David of Davids, the Melchizedek of Melchizedeks<sup>53</sup>—the righteous King of righteous kings during and following the millennial age. Hence Isaiah's words: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it. . . . even for ever." (Isa. 9:7.)

## Priest of Priests

The Savior is not only King of kings, but Priest of priests.<sup>54</sup> To be a celestial king is to be a celestial priest. No man can be a king forever who is not a priest forever. No woman can be a queen forever who is not a priestess forever. And only those who receive a fulness of priesthood will be celestial priests and priestesses and, therefore, celestial kings and queens. That is the patriarchal order now under attack by a few misguided members of the Church.

Receiving only a portion of priesthood, David could not be exalted. "Although David was a king," said the Prophet, "he never did obtain the spirit and power of Elijah and the fullness of the Priesthood."<sup>55</sup>

Divine kingship and priesthood constitute exaltation. The Son of Man was anointed a King and a Priest from eternity.<sup>56</sup> Those men and women who are adopted into his family, becoming his sons and his daughters, inherit like powers. As Jesus' priesthood was not based on a Levitical lineage but on oath and covenant (Heb. 7:14-21), so may all receive a fulness of priesthood by oath and covenant without regard to any earthly lineage.<sup>57</sup>

When a man becomes a king and a priest and a woman a queen and a priestess, they are linked into the eternal order of celestial Israel. He is a king over his posterity and a priest to his God. She is a queen to her children and a priestess to her divine husband. Thus each is linked to their endless posterity and each to their Lord in a "whole and complete and perfect union" (D&C 128:18) from eternity to eternity.

This royal union of the Father's sons and daughters is achievable only through a fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood. For it is only by entering this holy order that the kingly authority, as represented by Judah, and the priestly authority, as represented by Ephraim, can be received. Joseph Smith, with selected brethren and sisters, initiated this order in Nauvoo in 1843.<sup>58</sup>

## Ephraim

In a latter-day context Jehovah said, "I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn." (Jer. 31:9; see also v. 20.) Now Ephraim is coming into his own as the elder son of Jacob, the heir of the spiritual birthright. The redemption of Israel is primarily, but not exclusively, Ephraim's responsibility.

The foundation of the Restoration was laid through the Ephraimite Joseph Smith, who also initiated the temple order—the straight and narrow way to exaltation. Even as ancient Joseph's brothers came to him for the wheat of temporal and physical survival, so must his brethren come to Ephraim, Joseph's son of the right-hand blessing (Gen. 48:10-20), for the wheat of salvation and exaltation. And they will do so. The lost tribes will come to Zion,

"and there shall they fall down and be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim. . . . Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows." (D&C 133:32-35.)

Only after the other tribes are gathered, redeemed, and sealed will Judah be blessed in like manner. It is then that Israel will once more have a king named David.

## Conclusion

David of old personifies those who, aspiring to the Father's richest blessings, enter into the most solemn of covenants in the house of the Lord. Those who prove faithful in these covenants—as David did not prove faithful to his—will be numbered among the kings and priests, queens and priestesses composing celestial Israel. The second David personifies them.

We must never forget, however, that all aspirants for exaltation ultimately rely upon the merits of the Holy One of Israel. Enoch testified: "Thou hast made me, and given unto me a right to thy throne, *and not of myself*, but through thy own grace." (Moses 7:59; italics added.)

Jesus himself said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5.) A "branch" is just that, a branch; it is not the life-giving vine itself. Thus it is altogether fitting that the anthem of Israel and her millennial king should be, "The Lord is our righteousness." As we approach the last decade of the twentieth century, the tide of prophecy flows ever faster. We are poised on the very brink of unprecedented events pertaining to the Church, America, and the world. It will be some years before the second David makes his grand entrance on the prophetic stage. But when he does so, he will reign over a united Israel as a gracious ruler, a glorious king—one whom the first David will look upon with gratitude and joy.

## NOTES

1. Abraham was told, "Kings shall come out of thee." (Gen. 17:6.) Moses predicted that Israel would desire a king and counseled that he should be chosen by the Lord. (Deut. 17:14-15.)
2. 1 Sam. 13:8-4; 15.
3. For example, compare the account of David's adultery and his subsequent murder of Uriah in 2 Sam. 11 with 1 Chron. 20:1-3.
4. See Luke 3:15; John 6:15; 10:24; Acts 1:6.
5. 1 Sam. 22:17-22.
6. There appear to be two versions of this narrative in 1 Samuel, the first in chapter 24 and the second in chapter 26. I have quoted the latter as probably the more correct account.
7. The succession of Davidic kings was broken once when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, murdered all but one of his sons and ruled Judah for eleven years. See 2 Kgs. 11:1-16.
8. Six sons by six wives were born to David in Hebron and at least thirteen sons by an unspecified number of wives were born in Jerusalem. See 2 Sam.

- 5:13-16; 14:3-7; 1 Chron. 3:1-9.
9. 2 Sam. 5:6-7. The original city of David covered about fifteen acres.
10. See Lev. 15:19-24.
11. 1 Sam. 21:4-5.
12. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), p. 339; see Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), pp. 334-35.
13. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 339.
14. See Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 335.
15. See Acts 3:12-21.
16. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 188.
17. See Acts 3:19-21; D&C 88:95-100; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), pp. 640, 795-96.
18. The Gihon spring was the main source of water for ancient Jerusalem. It is also known as Mary's Spring and the Virgin's Fountain.
19. See 1 Kgs. 11:1-10.
20. Although Jerusalem is sometimes described as "mount Zion" (see 2 Kgs. 19:31; Ps. 48:11), the truly glorious Mount Zion will be centered in the New Jerusalem of the Latter-day Saints. From thence the spirit of Zion will spread forth until Jerusalem and eventually the whole earth become Zion. See Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph*, pp. 17, 362; *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86), 9:138; D&C 58:13, 64; 76:66; 84:2-5; 133:18, 56.
21. Ezek. 37:15-17.
22. See 1 Ne. 15:12; 19:24; Jacob 2:25.
23. "Branch" is not capitalized in 2 Nephi 21:1.
24. D&C 113:1-2. Note that "Stem" is capitalized in the Doctrine and Covenants but not in Isaiah. See Rom. 15:12.
25. Synonymous parallelism occurs when the same thought is restated or amplified in the second clause or sentence. For examples, see Isaiah 1:10; 9:6; Psalm 24:1.
26. See D&C 27:12-13; 90:1-3; 112:30-32; 128:18-21.
27. See D&C 29:31-32.
28. See D&C 64:41-43; 105:3-5.
29. The complete capitalization in the King James Version of "The Lord our righteousness" in Jeremiah 23:6 and of "Branch" in Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12 is both unique and arbitrary on the part of the translators who applied these passages to Christ. See Revelation 19:16.
30. Sidney B. Sperry, *The Voice of Israel's Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1961), p. 414. Modern translations in English (including Jewish) read, "The Lord is our righteousness."
31. See D&C 133:2-7.
32. Whether David will be his actual name or is only symbolic of the restored Davidic order is a moot question. My opinion is that both usages were intended by the prophets.
33. See *Journal of Discourses*, 2:317; 15:44-45.
34. See D&C 45:66-71; 64:41-43; 133:26-35.
35. N. B. Lundwall, comp., *Inspired Prophetic Warnings*, 6th ed., p. 73; see also *Millennial Star*, 10 Sept. 1859, pp. 581-84.
36. *Journal of Discourses*, 9:27; italics added.
37. The so-called Council of Fifty was organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith in March 1844 as the precursor of the political arm (kingdom) of Christ's millennial "holy order."
38. When leaving for Carthage, the Prophet told Emma, "If the child is a boy, name him David Hyrum."
39. As quoted in Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1967), p. 464, n. 109.
40. Brigham Young believed that if he made himself worthy to do so, it was David Hyrum Smith's right to preside over the Church. (See *Journal of Discourses*, 8:69; 15:136; see also 25:367.) Any statements about Joseph Smith's posterity having honored positions in the Church must be qualified by the Lord's warning to the Prophet in 1833: "Your family must needs repent and forsake some things, and give more earnest heed unto your sayings, or be removed out of their place." (D&C 93:48.) Still, in 1841 the Lord assured the Prophet that he and his posterity would bless the nations, even as had Abraham. See D&C 124:56-59.
41. Smith, *Teachings*, p. 339; see also Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, pp. 331, 334-35.
42. Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985), p. 518.
43. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982), pp. 172, 602-11.
44. See Jeremiah 23: "King Messiah (the Branch) shall reign in righteousness"; Jeremiah 33: "Christ the Branch of righteousness is promised"; Zechariah 3: "The Branch shall come" and Zechariah 6: "Christ, the Branch, who shall come."
45. The "Branch" and "David" are not found together in any given passage.
46. See Psalm 89:18; 149:2; Isaiah 33:22; 43:15; 44:6; Zephaniah 3:15; Matthew 27:42; John 1:49; 12:13; 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16; D&C 38:22; 41:4; 58:22.
47. See 1 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 33:17-26; Psalm 89:3-4; Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, p. 335.
48. "Until Shiloh comes" does not mean that kingship will depart from Judah when he does come—that would negate Jeremiah 33:17 and related passages—but that it will remain with Judah and be perfected in Christ. "Until" is used in a similar fashion in D&C 13:1.
49. See D&C 130:9.
50. See Smith, *Teachings*, p. 265.
51. Rom. 8:14-17; D&C 84:37-38.
52. Rev. 19:16.
53. The Hebrew "Melchizedek" may be translated "King of righteousness" (Heb. 7:2) or "our king is righteous."
54. See Hebrews 2:17; 4:14-15; 6:8; 7:7-28; 8:1; 9:11.
55. Smith, *Teachings*, p. 339.
56. See JST Revelation 12:6-9.
57. See D&C 84:33-40; JST Genesis 14:28; Hebrews 7:1-3.
58. For key references on the fulness of priesthood, see Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, pp. 303-7.