

3 Nephi 25:1*Root nor Branch*

1 It would be well to consider this verse carefully to see what Malachi wrote under inspiration from the Lord. He meant that if we do not do things in the Lord's way, we act wickedly and hence would be destroyed. What is meant by the word *root*? I could well ask, What are my roots? Why, my roots are where I came from. My roots are my parents, my progenitors or ancestors in a direct bloodline. The blood that runs in my veins came to me through my father and my mother, through my grandmothers and my grandfathers, and so on back through the direct lineage of my father and mother. What then is meant by the word *branch*? If I consider myself as the trunk of the tree, nourished and supported by my roots, then the branches constitute that which comes from me. My branches are my children and my grandchildren, etc. In other words, my branches are the posterity that comes from me as branches spring from the trunk of a tree.

Theodore M. Burton, *God's Greatest Gift*, pp. 194-95.

2 The phrase "it shall leave them neither root nor branch" means the opposite of turning the "heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (3 Nephi 25:6). The righteous will be joined in eternal families while the wicked will be cut off from their fathers and grandfathers (their roots) and also cut off from their children and grandchildren (their branches).

Thomas R. Valetta, ed. *Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families*, 564.

3 Elder Jeffrey R. Holland spoke of this idea: "Elijah restored the sealing powers whereby ordinances that were sealed on earth were also sealed in heaven... Without that link no family ties would exist in the eternities, and indeed the family of man would have been left in eternity with "neither root (ancestors) nor branch (descendants)".

Christ and the New Covenants [1997], 297-98.

4 The higher ordinances, the greater blessings which are essential to exaltation in the kingdom of God, and which can only be obtained in certain places, no man has a right to perform except as he receives the authority to do it from one who holds the keys. It makes no difference how great an office you have, what position in the Church you hold, you cannot officiate unless the keys, the sealing power, is there back of it. That is the thing that counts, and that is why Elijah came...

Elijah restored to this Church and, if they would receive it, to the world, the keys of the sealing power; and that sealing power puts the stamp of approval upon every ordinance that is done in this Church and more particularly those that are performed in the temples of the Lord. Through that restoration, each of you, my brethren, has the privilege of going into this house or one of the other temples (I believe most of you have done so) to have your wife sealed to you for time and for all eternity, and your children sealed to you also, or better, have them born under that covenant.

What a glorious privilege it is to know that the family organization will remain intact. It is not destroyed. It does not come to an end when we have complied with the divine law, by virtue of the keys which are held by the President of the Church.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:129-30.

3 Nephi 25: 2

Son of Righteousness, Calves in stalls, Healing in His Wings

- 5 The “Son of Righteousness” (Mal 4:2; cf. 3 Ne. 25:2) will bring the healing power of the resurrection and redemption (2 Ne. 25:13), and the righteous will be nourished “as calves of the stall” because of their obedience to the Lord (1 Ne. 22:24).

Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:851

Healing in his wings

- 6 That is, power in his extremities, the power that came from his having had nails driven through his hands and feet. In short, the Son of Righteousness came with the power of the Atonement.

Millet and Top, *BOM Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 165.

- 7 President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that children who will be raised during the Millennium “shall grow up ‘as calves of the stall’ unto righteousness, that is, without sin or the temptations which are so prevalent today.”

The Way to Perfection, [1970], 299.

3 Nephi 25: 5-6

Elijah

- 8 Some members of the Church have been confused in thinking that Elijah came with the keys of baptism for the dead or of salvation for the dead. Elijah’s keys were *greater* than that. They were the keys of *sealing*, and *those keys of sealing pertain to the living and embrace the dead who are willing to repent*.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956], 5:150.

- 9 Elijah was the last Prophet that held the keys of the Priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the Priesthood, in order that all the ordinances may be attended to in righteousness. It is true that the Savior had authority and power to bestow this blessing; but the sons of Levi were too prejudiced. “And I will send Elijah the Prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord,” etc., etc. Why send Elijah? Because he holds the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the Priesthood; and without the authority is given, the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness.

History of the Church, 4:211.

- 10 Now keep in mind this: that when the full measure of Elijah’s mission is understood, that the hearts of the children will be turned to the fathers and the fathers to the children. It applies just as much on this side of the veil as it does on the other side of the veil. If we neglect our families

here in having home night and we fail in our responsibilities, here, how could we feel we are doing our full duty in turning the hearts of our children to their fathers?... So, the hearts of you fathers and mothers must be turned to your children right now, if you have the true spirit of Elijah, and not think it applies merely to those who are beyond the veil. Let your hearts be turned to your children, and teach your children; but you must do it when they are young enough to be properly schooled. If you are neglecting your family home evening, you are neglecting the beginning of the mission of Elijah just as certainly as if you were neglecting your genealogy research work.

Harold B. Lee, 1973 Annual Priesthood Genealogical Research Seminar.

- 11 Elijah was the last Prophet [in the Old Testament] that held the keys of the Priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the Priesthood, in order that all the ordinances may be attended to in righteousness.

Joseph Smith, *Teachings*, 172.

What did Elijah come to restore?

- 12 By restoring the sealing keys, Elijah revealed the greatest use to which the priesthood may be put by mortals on earth.

Bruce R. McConkie, *New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 508.

- 13 When the full measure of Elijah's mission is understood... It applies just as much on this side of the veil as it does to the other side of the veil (see Malachi 4:5-6)... The hearts of you fathers and mothers must be turned to your children right now, if you have the true Spirit of Elijah, and not think that it applies mere to those who are beyond the veil. Let your hearts be turned to your children, and teach your children; but you must do it when they are young enough to be schooled. And if you are neglecting your family home evening, you are neglecting the beginning of the mission of Elijah just as certainly as if you were neglecting your research work of genealogy.

Harold B. Lee, *Teachings*, 281.

- 14 The higher ordinances, the greater blessings which are essential to exaltation in the kingdom of God, and which can only be obtained in certain places, no man has a right to perform except as he receives the authority to do it from the one who holds the keys. It makes no difference how great an office you have, what position in the Church you hold, you cannot officiate unless the keys, the sealing power, is there back of it. That is the thing that counts, and that is why Elijah came...

Elijah restored to this Church and, if they would receive it, to the world, the keys of the sealing power; and that sealing power puts the stamp of approval upon *every ordinance* that is done in this Church and *more particularly those that are performed in the temples of the Lord*. Through that restoration, each of you, my brethren, has the privilege of going into this house or one of the other temples (I believe most of you have done so) to have your wife sealed to you for

time and for all eternity, and your children sealed to you also, or better, have them born under that covenant.

What a glorious privilege it is to know that the family organization will remain intact. It is not destroyed. It does not come to an end when we have complied with the divine law, by virtue of the keys which are held by the President of the Church.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:129-30.

15 Elijah brought the keys of sealing powers—that power which seals a man to a woman and seals their posterity to them endlessly, that which seals their forefathers to them all the way back to Adam. This is the power and order that Elijah revealed—that same order of priesthood which God gave to Adam and to all the ancient patriarchs which followed after him.

Ezra Taft Benson, “What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, August 1985, pp. 9-10.

16 Precisely on that day in 1836 when Elijah’s appearance took place (D&C 110:13-16), Jews throughout the world were engaged in the celebration of the Passover. Since the time of Malachi, four centuries before Christ’s mortal birth, Jews worldwide have awaited Elijah’s coming to Passover with anxious anticipation. Elijah came, but not to Jewish homes; he came rather to a temple of the Saints and to his legal administrator on earth, a descendant of Joseph and Ephraim. There Elijah bestowed keys of inestimable worth.

Robert L. Millet, “The Ancient Covenant Restored,” *Ensign*, March 1998, p. 42.

17 Men, women, and children... honor and respect the divine roles of both fathers and mothers in the home... in this way, the great sealing keys restored by Elijah, spoken of by Malachi, might operate to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse” (Mal 4:6)... Perhaps we regard the power bestowed by Elijah as something associated only with formal ordinances performed in sacred places. But these ordinances become dynamic and productive of good only as they reveal themselves in our daily lives. Malachi said that the power of Elijah would turn the hearts of the fathers and the children to each other. The heart is the seat of the emotions and a conduit for revelation. This sealing power thus reveals itself in family relationships, in attributes and virtues developed in a nurturing environment, and in loving service. These are the cords that bind families together, and the priesthood advances their development.

James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1993, p. 37.

18 Moroni used the phrase “plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers.” The Prophet Joseph clarified this by saying that the words turn or plant could be translated as bind or seal. “But what is the object of this important mission? Or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion. But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations, and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors

who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah.” (*Teachings*, p. 330.)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie further taught: “Elijah brought back the sealing power so that marriages and other ordinances that are bound on earth shall be eternally sealed in the heavens. Those married by this authority are husband and wife in this life, and they so remain in the life to come, if they are true and faithful in all things... One of the grandest concepts in the whole plan of salvation is that these same blessings, given to worthy mortals whenever the fullness of the gospel is on earth, are also available to all those who have died without a knowledge of the gospel but who would have received it with all their hearts had it been offered to them while they dwelt in the flesh. This is what is involved in the promise that the Lord would reveal unto us ‘the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.’ By restoring the sealing keys, Elijah revealed the greatest use to which the priesthood may be put by mortals on earth.” (*New Witness*, p. 508.)

Generally speaking, then, we are prone to think of the coming of Elijah as essential to the great genealogical (family history) work which results in temple work for the dead. But there is more, as Elder McConkie (above) suggested, and this pertains to the living. In Moroni’s words, because Elijah came, the hearts of the children (we who now live in mortality) turn to the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-see D&C 27:10; D&C 98:32). That is to say, because Elijah came to earth and restored the keys of sealing and also the fullness of the blessings of the priesthood, there comes into our hearts a desire to have all of the blessings of the ancient fathers-the blessings of the gospel, the priesthood, and eternal life (Abraham 2: 8-11). There is only one place on earth wherein those blessings may be obtained, and that is in temples of the Lord, through the ordinance of celestial marriage. We then want the same for our children. And, by extension, we want all of those same blessings for our immediate fathers, and thus the need for genealogical research and temple work for the dead.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4 Vol, 4, p.167.

19 Now, the word turn here should be translated bind, or seal. But what is the object of this important mission? Or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion. But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah.

Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith, p. 330.

20 Moroni used the following language: “If it were not so [if Elijah had not come], the whole earth would be utterly wasted at [Christ’s] coming.” Why would this be the case? “Because the earth would not have accomplished its foreordained purposes, to establish on its face a family system patterned after the order of heaven. If there were no binding and sealing powers whereby families could be cemented forever, then the earth would never “answer the end of its creation” (D&C 49:16). It would be wasted and cursed, for all men would be forever without root or branch.”

Robert L. Millet and Joseph Fielding McConkie, *The Life Beyond*, pp. 97-98.

21 When you come to the temple you will love your family with a deeper love than you have ever felt before. The temple is about families. As my wife, Karen, and I have increased our temple service, our love for each other and for our children has increased. And it doesn’t stop there. It extends to parents, brothers, and sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, forebears, and especially our grandchildren! This is the Spirit of Elijah, which is the spirit of family history work; and when inspired by the Holy Ghost, it prompts the turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers.

Richard H. Winkel, *Ensign*, Nov. 2006 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006] 9

22 Many of your deceased ancestors will have received a testimony that the message of the missionaries is true. When you received that testimony you could ask the missionaries for baptism. But those who are in the spirit world cannot. The ordinances you so cherish are offered only in this world. Someone in this world must go to a holy temple and accept the covenants on behalf of the person in the spirit world. That is why we are under obligation to find the names of our ancestors and ensure that they are offered by us what they cannot receive there without our help.

For me, knowing that turns my heart not only to my ancestors who wait but to the missionaries who teach them. I will see those missionaries in the spirit world, and so will you. Think of a faithful missionary standing there with those he has loved and taught who are your ancestors. Picture as I do the smile on the face of that missionary as you walk up to him and your ancestors who he converted but could not baptize or have sealed to family until you came to the rescue. I do not know what the protocol will be in such a place, but I imagine arms thrown around your neck and tears of gratitude...

Those you never met in life will become friends you love. Your heart will be bound to theirs forever...

More people in all the world have felt the Spirit of Elijah move them to record the identities and facts of their ancestors’ lives...

Remember that the names which will be so difficult to find are of real people to whom you owe your existence in this world and whom you will meet again in the spirit world. When you were baptized, your ancestors looked down on you with hope. Perhaps after centuries, they rejoiced to see one or their descendants make a covenant to find them and to offer them freedom. In your reunion, you will see in their eyes either gratitude or terrible disappointment. Their

hearts are bound to you. Their hope is in your hands. You will have more than your own strength as you choose to labor on to find them.

Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, May 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 78-80.

23 As I sat in the temple in Columbus, Ohio, the other day, looking at my great-grandchildren, a peculiar thing happened. I suddenly realized that I stood midway, with three generations with which I am familiar behind me and three generations ahead of me. My heart literally turned to my fathers. My heart also turned to my posterity.

I envisioned a chain of the generations. That chain goes back a very long way into the distant past, of which we know so very little. It now reaches for three generations beyond me. I pictured that chain in my mind's eye, to date unbroken and shining and strong.

I thought of the time when I was a boy and we lived on a farm in the summer. We had horses and plows and harrows and mowers and rakes—and chains. We were familiar with chains. Later on we got a tractor, and I recalled the day when I put the chain around a tree that we wished to remove, with the other end fastened to the tractor. I started slowly. The tree scarcely moved. I turned up the gas. The wheels ground into the earth. Then suddenly the chain snapped. I had not pulled the tree, but I had broken the chain. It had a weak link. I undid the two pieces from the tree and the tractor. I went to a hardware store and bought a repair link. With that link I joined the two pieces of the chain together. We used that chain for years and years after that. But it was never the same where the repair link was. The link never quite fit. The adjoining links were crowded where the repair was made. It was always a misfit. It never looked right. Whenever I pulled with that chain after that, I watched the repair link. It never was what it should have been.

Now I thought, as I sat in the temple, that I am a link joining all of the generations of the past and all of the generations of the future... I cannot afford to break that chain. My posterity cannot afford to break that chain. If that should happen, we could obtain a repair link, but it would never be quite the same.

I wish I had the eloquence of language to convey to you young people here today the feeling I had in the temple—the great, overwhelming desire that neither I nor my posterity should ever break the chain of the generations of our family.

To you I say with all of the energy of which I am capable, do not become a weak link in your chain of generations...

I knew well a man of great prominence, a man whose forebears were men and women of faith and great integrity. I heard him frequently pray that among his future generations there would be no empty chairs. I know today the grandson of that man. He became prideful and arrogant. He apostatized from the Church. He took his children with him into apostasy. He had broken the chain that his grandfather counted on with such great hope.

Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1995-99 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:576-577, 579.

3 Nephi 25:6*What is the Curse?*

- 24 I remember when a friend having a difficult day exclaimed, “Oh, why was I ever born?” God’s plan answers his question. We came into this life to acquire a physical body. We may fall in love and be married. We may have children and experience the trials of mortal life (Please forgive me for mentioning children and the trials of life in the same breath. I sense that they are both part of our growing process.) The Church was restored—the earth was created—so that those families could be sealed in holy temples. Otherwise, the whole earth would be “utterly wasted.”

Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, May 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 16.

Three-fold Mission of the Church**3 Nephi 11-25**

1. Perfect the Saints (11-15)
 - 11 Christ-one-on-one, baptism, Holy Ghost, no contention
 - 12 Process to move from Law of Moses to Christ—How to become holy
 - 13 How to worship
 - 14 How to treat others
 - 15 New covenant, lead into Chapter 16

2. Proclaim the Gospel (16-20)
 - 16 How to teach the gospel
 - 17 Service
 - 18 Sacrament
 - 19 12 minister to people
 - 20 More service and lead into Chapter 21

2. Redeem the Dead (21-25)
 - 21 Book of Mormon overview
 - 22 Israel gathered
 - 23 Repentance, Salvation of dead
 - 24 Book of remembrance
 - 25 Genealogy

