There are a number of variations of this scripture (e.g., Malachi 4:6, 3 Nephi 25:6, and D&C 128:17) where the word heart is singular, “the heart of the fathers,” though we would expect it to be plural, “hearts of the fathers.” In other variations (e.g., Luke 1:17, D&C 27:9, 98:16–17, 110:14–15, 138:47, and Joseph Smith—History 1:39) the word is plural, as it is here: “the hearts of the children.” Does this difference between the singular heart and the plural hearts tell us anything, or is it just an irrelevant fact?

In addition, in some of these scriptures, the Lord prophesies that the Lord will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, in others he promises that he will turn the heart of the fathers to the hearts of the children, and in still others he promises he will plant the promises made to the fathers to the children in the hearts of the children. Which of these differences are significant? (It is relatively simple to make a chart comparing each of the verses.)

**Verse 1:** Does it mean anything that the Lord says he will reveal the priesthood rather than that he will give it?
What is the day of the Lord and why is it described as “dreadful”? Webster’s 1828 dictionary gives these definitions for the word *dreadful*: “impressing great fear; terrible; formidable” and “awful; venerable.” Which of these seems to be the one intended here?

**Verse 2:** Who are “the fathers”? To what promises made to the fathers is the Lord referring?

**Verse 3:** What does “utterly wasted” mean, “completely useless” or “made into a complete wasteland”?

If the priesthood weren’t revealed and the hearts of the children weren’t turned to the fathers, why would the whole earth be completely wasted?

**Doctrine and Covenants 124**

**Verses 25–28:** The Saints are commanded to build the Nauvoo Temple. What purpose was the Nauvoo Temple to fulfill? How did that differ from the Kirtland Temple? Why do we have to have a temple if we are to receive the fulness of the priesthood? What is the fulness of the priesthood?

**Verses 40–41:** The endowment is promised. What is the significance of the promise made in verse 41? Compare verses 38 and 41. What is the same in each? What does that say about temple ordinances?

**Verses 43–44:** What does this suggest about the relation of our efforts to the Lord’s work?

**Verses 45–48:** How might we apply these verses to ourselves? What does it mean to say that “we, by our own
works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments upon our heads”?

**Verse 49:** Compare this verse to 1 Nephi 3:7 and think about how they differ. Is there a way to bring them into accord?

The Lord says that he releases from their obligation those who strive to keep a commandment when they are prevented from fulfilling it by others. (This seems to be a reference to the temple in Independence and perhaps also to the one in Far West.) But if the Lord knew a commandment would not be able to be fulfilled, why did he give it? If we were in a circumstance where we were no longer required to obey, how would we know? Isn’t this an “escape clause” that I can invoke whenever it becomes difficult to obey a commandment?

**Verse 50:** What does this verse mean? Does this say that if someone doesn’t repent, the Lord will punish his children and grandchildren? What if those children and grandchildren were repentant?

**Verses 51–52:** To what does the word *therefore* connect these verses?

**Verse 55:** How does this commandment to build a temple in Jackson County (Independence) square with the fact that the Lord has just released them from the commandment to do so and accepted the sacrifices of the Saints in its place?

Much of this section, especially from verse 62 through verse 118, consists of admonitions to various individuals about their families, lives, and responsibilities. (Many of
those people later apostatized.) Why are these admonitions important to us today? How do they help us? For example, how do verses 75 and 76, given specifically to Vinson Knight, say anything to us? How about verse 84? Verses 85 and 86? 87 and 88? Verses 104–10? How about the verses earlier in the section, such as verses 12–14 (to Robert B. Thompson), or 16–17 (to John C. Bennett)?

**Doctrine and Covenants 127**

The section heading describes this as a letter rather than a revelation. Does that change its status in relation to us? If it isn’t a revelation, then why is it canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants? We have different kinds of documents in the Doctrine and Covenants: revelations, official declarations, parts of letters, statements of resolve, and so on. Do we treat them all as equally revelations, or is there any distinction among them even once they have become part of canonized scripture?

**Verse 1:** This is Joseph’s explanation of why he left Nauvoo: he was being pursued unjustly and he thought it best to leave for a while, so he gave authority to people to act for him while he was gone, and he’ll return when things have settled down. Why is this part of our canon? Does it say anything to us? Does it tell us anything about how we can receive revelation?

**Verse 2:** What do we make of this verse? Joseph says he is used to persecution and trial, that his problems are but a small thing. But those problems include the loss of his children, the murder of some friends and betrayal by others
(most recently John C. Bennett), and great discord between himself and his immediate family (including a recent physical fight with one of his brothers). What does it mean to say that such things are a small thing? Is he minimizing the problems? Is this braggadocio in the face of more problems? Is something else going on?

What does it mean to “glory in tribulation”? How does the last sentence of the verse help explain Joseph’s attitude? How could we glory in our tribulations without being foolish or insane? Compare this to Romans 5:3 and the verses that follow. Are Joseph Smith and Paul speaking of the same thing?

**Verses 6–7:** We sometimes speak and act as if the things of this earth are only representations and symbols of heavenly things. What do we see here about earthly power? What might that say to us about the connection of heaven and earth? What does that tell us about our ordinances here on the earth? About work for the dead?

**Verse 9:** Sometimes we speak of our records as being records for the Lord. As we will see in the next section, they also serve such a purpose, but this verse says the records are so we will remember the things recorded. Why is that important? How do we remember our dead ancestors? Why do we need not only to do their temple work for them, but also to remember them?

**Doctrine and Covenants 128**

**Verses 2–4:** Though this revelation concerns the appointment of someone to record the baptisms of the dead, the
office of recorder described here eventually became what we call the ward clerk and the stake clerk, as well of course as the temple recorder. Why are such officers necessary to the Church?

**Verse 5:** Does this verse give an answer to the question about verses 2 through 4?

**Verses 6–7:** Here we see that in addition to the records being for our remembrance (D&C 127:9), they are that from which we will be judged. Why does the Lord need a record we have kept from which to judge us? In other words, why does the Father, who knows all, need a record of what has happened, and why does he ask human beings, who make mistakes, to keep that record?

**Verses 8–9:** To what does the phrase “this ordinance” refer? To baptism for the dead? To keeping a record? To the last judgment?

This verse implies that the words *bind* and *record* can be used interchangeably when speaking of ordinances. How can that be? What implications does it have for ordinance work? What implications does it have for our record keeping?

In what ways are things bound on earth? How, for example, are our families bound to one another? What has that binding to do with record keeping?

**Verse 11:** What is the subject lying before us at this verse, the question which this verse answers completely? How is obtaining the powers of the priesthood the answer to that matter?
Why does this verse speak of the powers (plural) of the priesthood, rather than of its power (singular)?

If the whole answer to the question of salvation is found in obtaining the powers of the priesthood, how do we obtain them?

**Verse 12:** To what does *herein* refer? How do we find “glory and honor, and immortality and eternal life” in that?

The end of this verse appears to say that the ordinance of baptism is instituted to be like the baptism of the dead and not the other way around. Is that right? If so, what do you make of that? If not, how do you explain the wording?

**Verses 12–13:** The prophet emphasizes the parallel between baptism, on the one hand, and death, burial, and resurrection, on the other. He mentions it here. He mentioned it in the previous verse. Why is that parallel so important? What does this say to us about baptism? About death? Why is that parallel at the center of our entry into the Church?

How many different kinds of death and resurrection are there? Make a list of them and see if you can cite a scripture for each that you think of.

**Verse 14:** What does it mean to say that the keys (plural) of the kingdom consist in the key (singular) of knowledge? What can the word *knowledge* mean in this instance? Knowledge of what? What kind of knowledge? In what sense are the sealing and binding powers the key of knowledge?

**Verse 18:** There must be a welding link between the fathers and the children or the earth will be cursed. Given what we’ve seen about binding, recording, priesthood, and so
forth, in the scriptures for this lesson, what might one say about the nature of that welding link?

If we understand the nature of that welding link, what might that say about our relations to our children and our parents? to our history? to our culture?

Is it important that here the welding link is baptism for the dead rather than the sealing ordinances, or is that just a result of the fact that this revelation occurs when baptism for the dead is the issue?

*Verses 19–21:* What is the point of this brief recitation of the history of the gospel and the Church in the latter days? How does it relate to verses 17 and 18?

*Verses 22–24:* Read this out loud, or have someone who can read aloud naturally read it. What effect do you think it would have on the audience? Why would it have that effect? How is what is said here related to what came before it?

**Joseph Smith—History 1**

*Verse 36:* What part of Malachi 3 do you think Moroni quoted? Might it have been something other than Malachi 3:1? Why do you answer as you do? Why doesn’t Joseph Smith tell us more exactly what he quoted?

*Verse 37:* We’ve already looked at the difference between verse 39 and Malachi 4:6. What do you make of the difference between this verse and Malachi 4:1?