Lesson 31
Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4; and 132:4–33

Doctrine and Covenants 131

Verses 1–4: What does it mean to say that marriage is an order of the priesthood (verse 2)? Is it a third order of priesthood, after the Aaronic and Melchizedek?

Why is the highest degree of the celestial kingdom reserved for the married? The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 300–301)

How is eternal increase a blessing?

What about the faithful Saints who for some reason are unable to be sealed to a husband or wife in this life? What would you say to someone in that situation that wouldn’t be “the same old thing”? Does D&C 124:49 give an answer to this question?
Doctrine and Covenants 132

Verses 4–6: Why is the covenant of eternal marriage described as “new and everlasting”?
What does “damned” mean?
How do we “abide the law” of eternal marriage? What does the word abide suggest?

Verse 7: Any covenant, contract, bond, and so on, that is not entered into and sealed by the Holy Ghost through the medium of the person whom God appointed for that purpose is “of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead.” How do we enter into a covenant by the Holy Ghost? How is it sealed by the Holy Ghost?

Compare the language of Ephesians 1:13: “You [Gentiles] also were included in him [Christ] when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed [in him] you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit [‘the holy Spirit of promise’ in the KJV]” (my translation). Are this verse and the verse in Ephesians talking about the same thing? For example, what do you make of the fact that Ephesians speaks of being sealed with the Spirit rather than by the Spirit? If the language here is intended to remind us of the language in Ephesians, how does the Ephesians verse cast light on what we read here?

Why do you think we need to have such a sealing performed by someone anointed for the purpose? Does verse 8 give us some answer to this? Does what D&C 126, 127, and 128 say about recorders apply here? How?
**Verses 13–14:** Do these verses suggest anything about how we should think about the things we do during our lives? Based on these verses, how might we decide what is important and what is not? Alternatively, how might this suggest we should go about our various works?

**Verses 19–20:** The grammar of these verses is complicated; it isn’t obvious how to understand the relations between their parts. Here is my précis of these verses:

If a man and woman marry in the covenant and their marriage is sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise through someone holding appropriate priesthood authority, and if they abide in the covenant and do not commit murder, then:

- They will come forth in the first or second resurrection.
- They will inherit thrones, powers, dominions, all heights and depths.
- Their marriage will be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.
- They will receive everything that the officiator has promised them.
- They will receive exaltation and eternal increase.
- They will be gods.

What does it mean to inherit thrones, powers, dominions, all heights and depths? What does it mean for one’s marriage to be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? What is exaltation? Are these the same thing or different things?
What does it mean to say that they will be gods? Is this a new thing in a list or another way of saying the same thing that has been said in several different ways?

Verse 20 says, “They shall be gods, because they have no end,” and it uses “they continue” as a parallel to “they have no end.” What does it mean to say that they will be gods because they continue? Continue in what way? Does this verse help us understand what the scriptures mean when they say that we can become like God? Using what we learn here, what does that mean?

**Verse 24:** Why does the Lord use the plural here, *lives* instead of *life*?

**Verse 25:** Why *deaths* instead of *death*?

**Verse 26:** What does this verse teach? It is easier to understand than verse 19, but are there things in verse 19 that clarify this verse?

**Verse 27:** Consider Hebrews 6:4–6:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

How do these verses from Hebrews compare with this verse (27)? How does this verse clarify these verses from
Hebrews? What do the verses in Hebrews add to our understanding of this verse?

Notice what Joseph Smith says about the sin against the Holy Ghost:

All sins shall be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; for Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 358)

Does that help us understand these verses?

**Verse 31:** In what senses are we of Abraham? Romans 9:3–16 offers one answer:

I could wish that I myself were separated from Christ for [the sake of] my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom belongs adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and temple service to God, and the promises; whose are the fathers [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob], and from whom the Messiah came in the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.
But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel, who are born into Israel: nor are they all children because they are the seed [descendants] of Abraham: but, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” [Genesis 21:12]. That is, they who are the children of the flesh are not [in virtue of merely that] the children of God: instead the children of the promise are counted as seed. For this is the word of promise, “At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son” [Genesis 18:10].

And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived multiple children by one man, our father Isaac—the children being not yet born, neither having yet done any good or evil, so that the purpose of God in election might stand, not because of works, but because of his call—it was said unto her, “The elder shall serve the younger” [Genesis 25:23]. As it is written, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” [Malachi 1:2–3].

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Impossible! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” [Exodus 33:19]. So then election does not depend on human desire nor on human effort, but on God who shows mercy. (King James Version, modified)

How does the passage from Romans add to our understanding of sealing?

**Verse 32:** This verse says, “Since you are of Abraham, go and do the works of Abraham.” What are those works?