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THE GOSPEL
RESTORED
LATTER DAY Q&A

THE TRUE
PREISTHOOD
AUTHORITY?

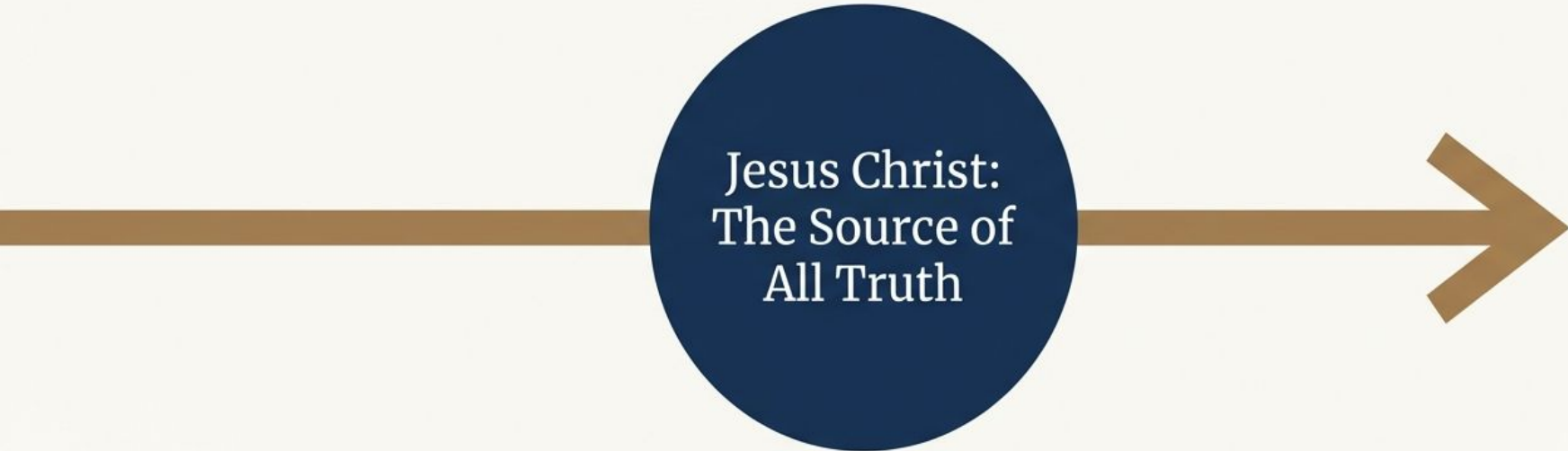
Resolving the 1844 Succession Crisis

Who Holds the True Authority?

An investigative look at the organizational and historical
evidence following the death of **Joseph Smith**.

Authority originates directly from Jesus Christ.

After centuries of church corruption and apostasy, the Lord established a mandate to restore His priesthood and everlasting gospel to the earth.



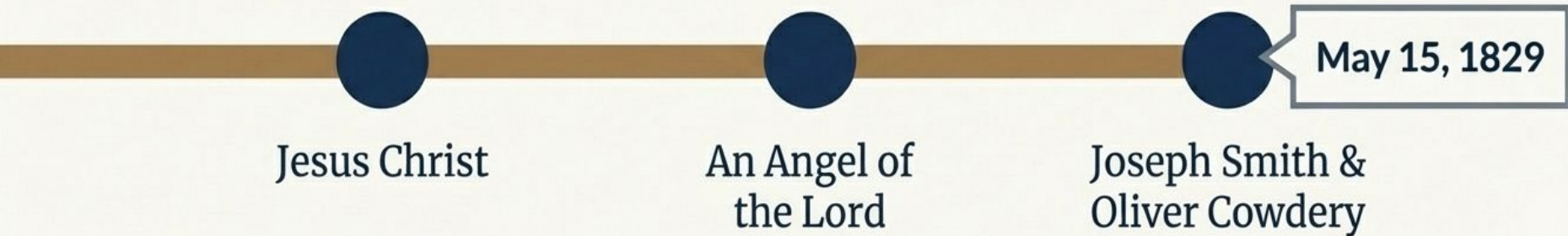
Jesus Christ:
The Source of
All Truth



Divine Mandate

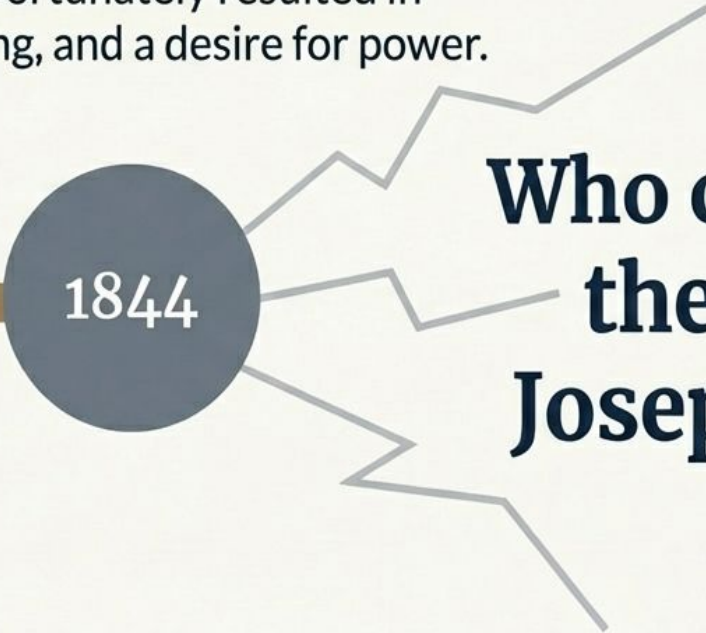
An angel restored the Priesthood authority to the earth.

In fulfillment of biblical prophecy (Revelation 14:6-7), heavenly authority was physically returned to mankind.



The death of Joseph Smith in 1844
created a critical leadership void.

Joseph Smith led the Church until his sudden death.
The aftermath unfortunately resulted in
debates, splintering, and a desire for power.



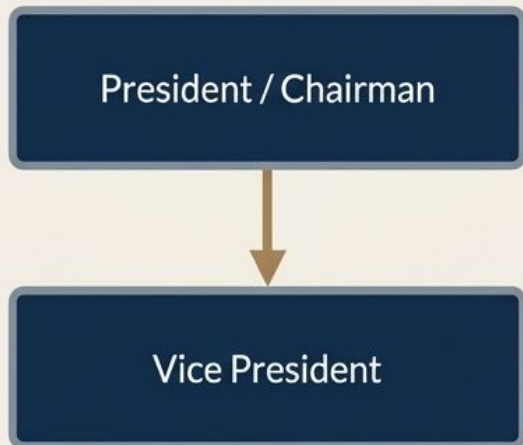
1844

**Who could truly lead
the Church after
Joseph Smith, Jr.?**

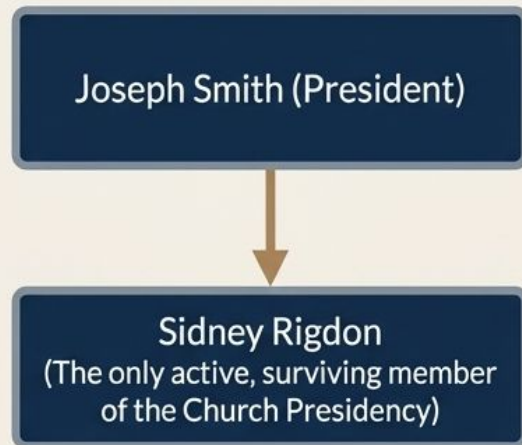
Standard organizational practice points to the surviving presidency.

Sidney Rigdon was the natural choice. He was even running as a U.S. Vice Presidential candidate alongside Joseph Smith at the time.

Standard Practice



Church Precedent (1844)



Joseph Smith explicitly appointed
Sidney Rigdon to preside in his absence.

“

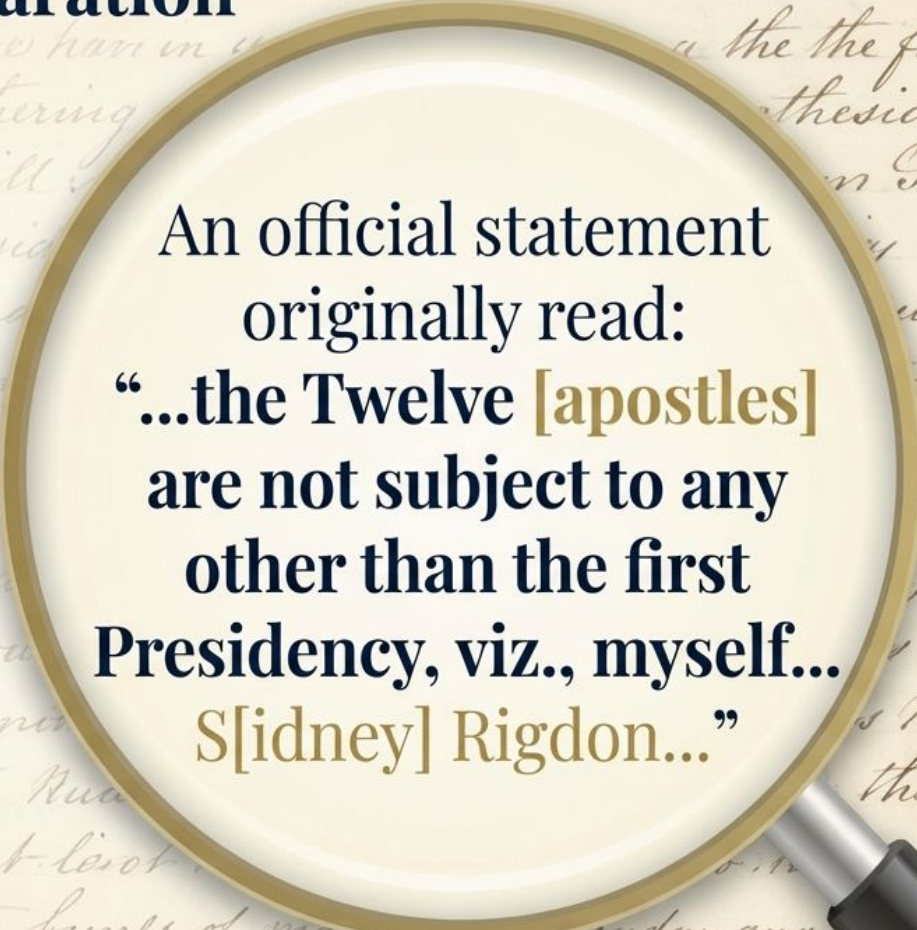
...wisdom and knowledge to
preside over the church in [my
– Joseph Smith’s] **absence.**”

Joseph Smith laying hands on Sidney Rigdon, 1834.
(Source: HC 2:51)

The Original 1836 Declaration

No historical records from the founder's lifetime suggest otherwise, though official histories from other organizations later added to this original statement.

Joseph Smith Papers,
Minute Book 1,
2 May 1835, p. 187



An official statement
originally read:
“...the Twelve [apostles]
are not subject to any
other than the first
Presidency, viz., myself...
S[idney] Rigdon...”

Apostolic witness against dissolving the Presidency

After the death of Joseph Smith, leaders recognized that discarding the First Presidency violated church law.

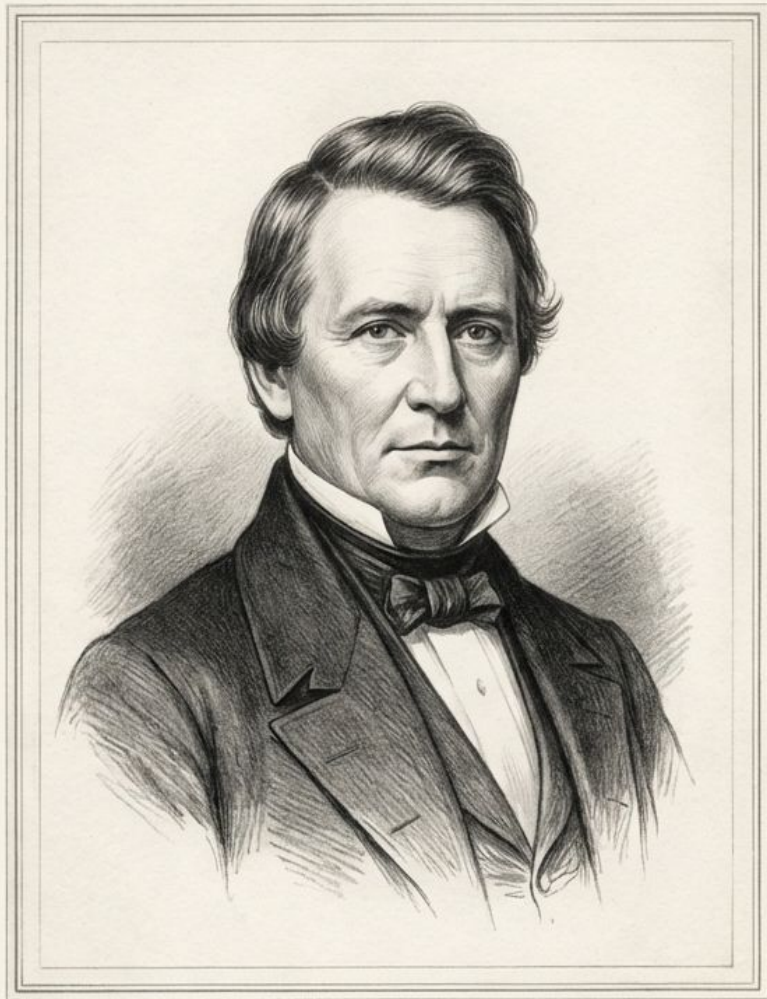
Times & Seasons.

I had always been taught that the first presidency would remain and always be with the church...and I cannot find any law to say that this quorum [the church presidency] should ever be dropped.

— Apostle William Marks
(*Times & Seasons*, vol 5, no.18, 664-665)

The only active, surviving member of the Church Presidency

Sidney Rigdon presided alongside Joseph Smith for over a decade. During those early years, the Church Presidency directed the entire church. Upon Joseph Smith's death, Rigdon stood alone as the sole active, surviving member of that highest governing quorum.

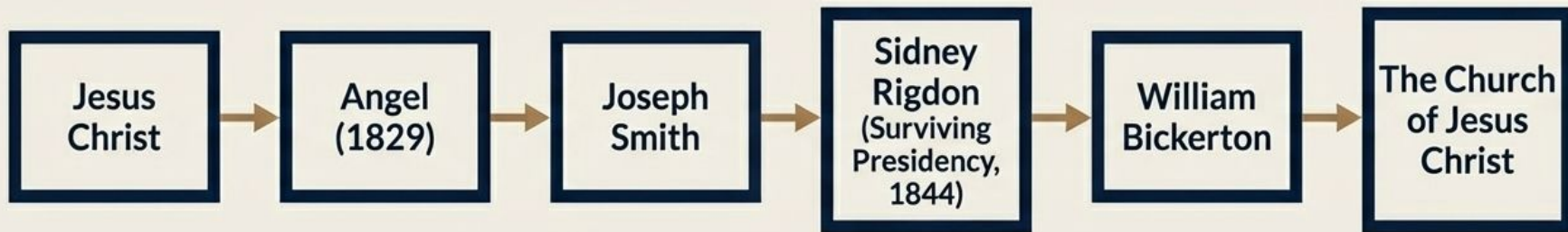


THE CHURCH OF
Jesus[®]
Christ

- [illegible]

The true succession continued unbroken through Sidney Rigdon.

Only one church today descends from a surviving member of the Church Presidency at the death of Joseph Smith, Jr.



The fruit of the Spirit

Solid historical grounds are essential, but true authority requires living spiritual evidence. When Jesus Christ asserted his own authority as Messiah to the disciples of John the Baptist, he did not cite lineage alone—he pointed to the miraculous power of God.



Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.



True authority is ultimately demonstrated by the fruits of the Spirit.

When Jesus asserted his authority as Messiah to the disciples of John the Baptist, He relied on undeniable manifestations of God's power (Luke 7:22).



The blind see



The lame walk



The lepers are cleansed
The deaf hear
The dead are raised



The gospel is preached
to the poor

A Dual Foundation

The perpetuation of the restored gospel is validated by two undeniable forces: airtight historical precedent and the living, active power of God.



The Chain of Authority: The History of Lawful Succession

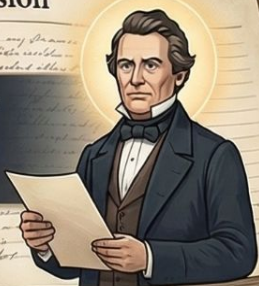
The perpetuation of the gospel through a clear line of succession, arguing that upon Joseph Smith's death, authority legally and spiritually remained with the surviving First Presidency, leading to the church's current headquarters in Pennsylvania.

The Case for Lawful Succession

Succession

The Sole Surviving Leader

Sidney Rigdon was the only active member of the First Presidency surviving in 1844.



President

Vice President

Vice President
Sidney Rigdon

Subordinates

Standard Organizational Precedent

In any organization, a vice president naturally succeeds the president upon their death.

Subordination of the Twelve

During Smith's life, the Twelve Apostles were officially subject to the First Presidency.



Continuity and Manifestation

The Direct Lineage

Joseph Smith



Sidney Rigdon

1834 Official Appointment
Joseph Smith laid hands on
Rigdon to preside over the
church in his absence.



William Bickerton

Monongahela,
Pennsylvania:
Historical
Headquarters

Monongahela, Pennsylvania

Authority passed from Rigdon to William Bickerton, continuing to the church's current ministry and headquarters.

Evidence in the Fruit

Authority is demonstrated today through healings and preaching the gospel to the poor.

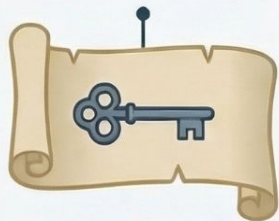


THE CHURCH OF
Jesus Christ

The Line of Authority:

Priesthood Succession in The Church of Jesus Christ

The Foundation of Authority (1829–1844)



Restoration of the Priesthood

Authority was restored on May 15, 1829, through the laying on of hands.



The Presidency Held Supreme Authority

During Joseph Smith's life, the Twelve Apostles were officially subordinate to the Church Presidency.



Rigdon's Official Appointment

In 1834, Joseph Smith laid hands on Sidney Rigdon to preside over the church.

Continuity and Succession



Succession in 1844

As the only active, surviving member of the Presidency, Sidney Rigdon became the successor.



From Rigdon to the Present

This authority continued through William Bickerton to the church's current international headquarters in Pennsylvania.



Spiritual Evidence of Authority

The church identifies modern miracles and gifts of the Spirit as proof of authority.

The Gospel Restored Today

The Church of Jesus Christ is the sole descendent of the surviving Church Presidency. Matching the structure established in the New Testament, the Church today is led by a Quorum of 12 Apostles, praising the source of all redemption and authority.