

# Who to Follow after Joseph Smith

Before his death, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught the following to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



Brethren, . . . [s]ome important scene is near to take place. It may be that my enemies will kill me. And in case they should, and the keys and power which rest on me not be imparted to you, they will be lost from the earth. But if I can only succeed in placing them upon your heads, then let me fall a victim to murderous hands if God will suffer it, and I can go with all pleasure and satisfaction, knowing that my work is done, and the foundation laid on which the kingdom of God is to be reared in this dispensation of the fulness of times.

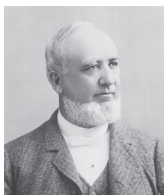
Upon the shoulders of the Twelve must the responsibility of leading this church henceforth rest until you shall appoint others to succeed you. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 533–34)

Joseph Smith also taught that the First Presidency is the only group over the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, but when the prophet dies, the First Presidency is dissolved (see *History, 1838–1856* [Manuscript History of the Church], volume B-1, 691, [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)).

- From what you learned, what would help you respond to the three claims made earlier?
- What pattern did the Lord establish for the continuation of leadership of His Church when the prophet dies?

When Brigham Young addressed the Saints in a large meeting, many recorded a miraculous experience and felt a confirmation of the Holy Ghost.

President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), who later served in the First Presidency, shared:



Brigham Young . . . arose and addressed the people. . . . Who that was present on that occasion can ever forget the impression it made upon them! If Joseph had risen from the dead and

again spoken in their hearing, the effect could not have been more startling than it was to many present at that meeting. It was the voice of Joseph himself; and not only was it the voice of Joseph which was heard; but it seemed in the eyes of the people as though it was the very person of Joseph which stood before them. A more wonderful and miraculous event than was wrought that day in the presence of that congregation we never heard of. The Lord gave His people a testimony that left no room for doubt as to who was the man He had chosen to lead them. They both saw and heard with their natural eyes and ears, and then the words which were uttered came, accompanied by the convincing power of God, to their hearts, and they were filled with the Spirit and with great joy. There had been gloom, and, in some hearts probably, doubt and uncertainty; but now it was plain to all that here was the man upon whom the Lord had bestowed the necessary authority to act in their midst in Joseph's stead (George Q. Cannon, "Joseph Smith, the Prophet," *Juvenile Instructor*, Oct. 1870, 174–75).

Emily Smith Hoyt, a member present when Brigham Young addressed the Saints, recorded this:

The manner of reasoning, the expression of the countenance, the sound of the voice thrilled my whole soul. My own eyes had beheld Joseph's murdered body. My own hands, had felt death's icy coldness on his once noble forehead. I knew that Joseph was dead. And yet I often startled and involuntarily looked at the stand to see if it was not Joseph. It was not, it was Brigham Young and if any one doubts the right of Brigham to manage affairs for the Saints, all I have to say to them is this. Get the spirit of God and know for yourselves. The Lord will provide for his own (Emily Smith Hoyt, in Lynne W. Jorgensen, "The Mantle of the Prophet Joseph Passes to Brother Brigham: A Collective Spiritual Witness," *BYU Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4 [1996–97], 164).

- If you were there, how might this experience have impacted you?
- How might Moroni 10:5 relate to what you studied?