

July 28–August 3: Doctrine and Covenants 84 “The Power of Godliness”

Historical Background

Joseph Smith

“The Elders during the month of September began to return from their missions to the Eastern States, and present the histories of their several stewardships in the Lord’s vineyard; and while together in these seasons of joy, I inquired of the Lord, and received on the 22nd and 23rd of September [1832], the following revelation on Priesthood: [D&C 84].” (History of the Church, 1:273)

The Fullness of the Priesthood

Section 84 tells us of the great power and blessing available thru the Melchizedek priesthood

D&C 84:19-21

19 And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

20 Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh;

What priesthood key pertains to the Melchizedek priesthood?

(holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God)

What is available to all as a result of the priesthood?

(administereth the gospel
without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men)

What blessings do we receive because “the key of the knowledge of God” is made manifest thru the priesthood?

(power of godliness is manifest)

David A. Bednar

“Holy ordinances are central in the Savior’s gospel and in the process of coming unto Him and seeking spiritual rebirth. Ordinances are sacred acts that have spiritual purpose, eternal significance, and are related to God’s laws and statutes. All saving ordinances and the ordinance of the sacrament must be authorized by one who holds the requisite priesthood keys.

“The ordinances of salvation and exaltation administered in the Lord’s

restored Church are far more than rituals or symbolic performances. Rather, they constitute authorized channels through which the blessings and powers of heaven can flow into our individual lives....

“Ordinances received and honored with integrity are essential to obtaining the power of godliness and all of the blessings made available through the Savior’s Atonement.” (CR, April 2016)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"So if there is no priesthood, there is no knowledge of God. And that is why the world is in darkness today, because they have no priesthood. They have lost the knowledge of God. And so they have been teaching all manner of tradition, all manner of false doctrine, all manner of man-made philosophy in relation to God and the principles of truth pertaining to the salvation of men....

"When we read things of this nature, it ought to make us rejoice because of that priesthood and the ordinances thereof, every member of the Church, men and women alike, may know God." (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:142-143)

How is the restoration of the priesthood a blessing to the whole world?

Thru the ordinances of priesthood everyone can receive the power of godliness – not just the priesthood holder

The Lord states that He has great spiritual blessing in store for those who are “faithful unto obtaining” and “magnifying” these two priesthoods.

D&C 84:33-38

33 For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.

34 They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

35 And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;

36 For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;

37 And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

38 And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

What do you think it means to be “faithful unto obtaining” and “magnify” these two priesthoods?

Delbert L. Stapley

“There are two main requirements of this oath and covenant. First is faithfulness which denotes obedience to the laws of God and connotes true

observance of all gospel standards....

“The second requirement of the oath and covenant of the Holy Priesthood is to magnify one's calling. To magnify is to honor, to exalt and glorify, and cause to be held in greater esteem or respect. It also means to increase the importance of, to enlarge and make greater....

“To be faithful and devoted to priesthood obligations is the only way man can gain favor and power with God and have rightful claim upon him for blessings to himself, his family, and others to whom he may minister.” (CR, April 1957)

What blessings are promised to those who magnify the priesthood?

Sanctified by the Spirit
Sons of Moses and Aaron, and seed of Abraham
Become the church and kingdom
Become the elect of God
All they who receive this priesthood receive me
All that my Father hath shall be given unto him

Let's discuss each of these blessings

What does it mean to be “sanctified by the Spirit”?

He promises that they will be sanctified in another important chapter about the priesthood

Alma 13:10-12

10] Now, as I said concerning the holy order, or this high priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish;

11] Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb.

12] Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God.

What blessings await those who “work righteousness” with “exceeding faith and repentance”?

(called after this holy order, and were sanctified)

What does it mean to “become sons of Moses and Aaron, and seed of Abraham”?

Abraham 2:11

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal.

How do you think that all the families of the earth will be blessed?

(even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal)

What does it mean to “become... the church and kingdom”?

synonymous with king and priest

Joseph Smith

“Those holding the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings. In fact, that priesthood is a perfect law of theocracy, and stands as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam.” (TPJS, pg. 322)

What form of government could administer perfect law?

What does it mean to be “the elect of God”?

synonymous with calling and election made sure

Joseph Smith

“After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost (by the laying on of hands), which is the first comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter,... he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him.” (TPJS, pg. 150)

What does someone have to do to be called, elected, and made sure?

(When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards)

What do you think the Lord means when He states that “all they who receive this priesthood receive me”?

Spencer W. Kimball

“The word 'receive' in these sentences has deep meaning. To receive in this connection seems to mean more than merely to accept casually, but to magnify and develop and make effective. To receive the servants might mean to accept calls and responsibilities and to serve well and faithfully; to receive the Lord would mean loving him and obeying all his commandments; to receive the Father would mean to leave nothing undone toward arriving at personal perfection.!” (The Miracle of Forgiveness, pg. 123-4)

(but to magnify and develop and make effective)

“All that my Father hath shall be given unto him”

D&C 76:51-56

51) They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given--

52) That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;

53) And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.

54) They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.

55) They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things--

56) They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

These great blessings come to us “according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood”

D&C 84:39-42

39 And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.

40 Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved.

41 But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come.

42 And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye have received, which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice out of

the heavens; and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you.

What do we need to do to “receive this oath and covenant of [the] Father”?

(all those who receive the priesthood
after he hath received it
wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye have
received)

Marion G. Romney

“The receiver undertakes to magnify his calling in the priesthood. The Father, by oath and covenant, promises the receiver that if he does so magnify his priesthood he will be sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of his body; that he will become a member of ‘the church and kingdom, and the elect of God,’ and receive the ‘Father’s kingdom; therefore,’ said the Savior, ‘all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.’...”

“These blessings, as has already been indicated, do not come by ordination alone. Ordination to the priesthood is a prerequisite to receiving them, but it does not guarantee them. For a man to actually obtain them he must faithfully discharge the obligation which is placed upon him when he received the priesthood. That is, he must magnify his calling.” (CR, Oct. 1980)

We have the example of the Father giving this promise to Abraham (of who's posterity may also receive it). Note how it discusses the promise made to Abraham and how the Lord swore an oath to obey that covenant.

Hebrews 6:13-17

13] For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,

14] Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15] And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16] For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

17] Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

Note that Abraham received the promise and the oath “after he had patiently endured.”

Lord makes it clear that the fulness of the priesthood is not just intended to help the priesthood holder, but it will bless the whole world.

D&C 84:48-51

48 And the Father teacheth him of the covenant which he has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for your sakes only, but for the sake of the whole world.

49 And the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin.

50 And by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me.

51 For whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin.

In what ways do you think that “the covenant which he has... confirmed upon you” is a blessing for “the whole world”?

(the whole world... groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin)

Dale G. Renlund

“This teaches that the purpose of the priesthood is to invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel. We have the priesthood so that we can help Heavenly Father’s children be relieved of the burden of sin and become like Him. Through the priesthood, the power of godliness is manifest in the lives of all who make and keep gospel covenants and receive the associated ordinances. This is the way each of us comes unto Christ, is purified, and is reconciled to God. Christ’s atoning power is made accessible through the priesthood, which delivers the payload.” (CR, Oct. 2017)

The Spirit of Christ

D&C 84:45-51

43 And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

44 For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

45 For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

46 And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.

47 And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.

What do we learn about the Spirit of Christ from these verses?

(beware concerning yourselves_
the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and
whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world
every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God)

Kenneth Johnson

“Not only does this verse provide a further witness that we all have access to this source of divine direction, it also emphasizes the need for us to hearken, or listen and respond, to the promptings we receive. The promise that follows is of great significance to me: ‘And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.’

“These intimations, sometimes referred to as conscience but more accurately defined as the Light of Christ, not only help us in deciding what is right and what is wrong, they will, if followed, lead us to the source of that light which emanates from the presence of the Father and the Son.”
(CR, Oct. 2002)

The Light of Christ is also made manifest thru His written word

D&C 84:52-57

52 And whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me.

53 And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkness even now.

54 And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—

55 Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.

56 And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.

57 And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written—

What is it that “brought the whole church under condemnation,” and what must we do to keep our “minds” from being “darkened”?

(repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written)

Russell M. Nelson

“[President Benson] expressed deep concern that members of the Church did not fully appreciate the value of the Book of Mormon. With emotion in his voice, he read, . . . 'Your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received - Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.'

"By that time, President Benson had completely captured my attention. He then concluded his admonition, 'And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon.' I shall never forget that lesson." (CR, Oct. 1999)