

Lesson: Priesthood - Why instituted & What is it?

1. **God's Mission – to bring pass the immortality, and eternal life of man - DC 22:23b**
2. **Reason for the Mission—A Plan of Redemption** - Once Adam and Eve, because of their disobedience, fell out of the **eternal presence of God and saw him not**—God, because of His love for his creation, **set in place a means to redeem His creation** so that they might once again **come into his eternal presence.** - *Genesis 4:5-10*
 - ✂ Repentance and Baptism Enjoined as part of the Plan of Redemption - *Genesis 6:49-54*
3. **God's Plan of Redemption— Agency, an Instrumental Part**
 - ✂ **They are agents unto themselves—all men, everywhere, must repent** - *Genesis 6:55-63*
 - ✂ **Agency/Choice** - God, the Father, considered that the Agency of man was paramount in his plan to save His creation. - *Genesis 3:2*
 - ✂ **A firm decree, To Choose, declared from the mouth of God to all** - *Genesis 4:13-5:2*
4. **As part of God's plan, a probation period was provided where man might freely exercise His agency and choose – God's way or Satan's way** (I Corinthians 10:21)
 - ✂ The plan could not be accomplished unless man was taught repentance and redemption through faith on the name of Christ. He did that with Adam through the ministry of Angels. - *DC 28:12a-12c*
 - ✂ There would be virtually no hope of our fellow probationers being saved through God's plan in this evil, carnal, and sensual world without teachers with a method of teaching those of us who are probationers, and without those teachers being authorized and empowered with divine power. **Thus, the need for authorized and empowered representatives of God to declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of Jesus.** Christ, at the direction of God the Father through the Holy Ghost, proceeded to do that very thing. - *Genesis 5:42-44— How shall they hear without a preacher? Romans 10:14*
5. **The Priesthood, Plan of Salvation & Ordinances Established from the Beginning**
 - ✂ **Knowledge of God** - *We have now traced the chronology of the world, agreeable to the account given in our present Bible, from Adam to Abraham, & have clearly determined beyond the power of controversy, that there was no difficulty in preserving the knowledge of God in the world from the creation of Adam, & the manifestation made to his immediate descendants,* – Lectures of Faith 2:53
 - ✂ **God loves us and desires us to be with him, and provided the means for us to return into His presence,** - *Genesis 6:64-66*
 - ✂ Priesthood from the beginning and eternal - *Genesis 6:4-7; 6:30-31 DC 83:2c-3a*
 - ✂ Preachers of righteousness who called men to repent, taught faith and the plan of salvation – *Genesis 6:10-23; 6:61-63*
 - ✂ Priesthood, instituted in Adam's time by ordinance, handed down from father to son, & continues in all generations - *Genesis 5:45;*
 - ✂ Priesthood is Lineal – Originally handed from father to son – Subsequently, lineal in the sense of being able to trace priesthood authority to someone with authority - *D&C 104:18-19; 83:2c-3a; Hebrews 7:2-3*
 - ✂ **Ordinance of Baptism by Water and Fire, and Ordination of Priesthood Instituted on the Earth** - *Genesis 6:67-71*
6. **Why Priesthood? - To Preach and Teach the Plan of Salvation & the Doctrine of Christ**
 - ✂ Scripture confirms that a form of Priesthood has always been, and apparently always will be because God the Father willed it so, and Christ, through the Holy Ghost made it so, so that all of God's creation will have the opportunity to choose God and His plan of redemption. Without Priesthood, there would be very limited hope for God's creation on the Earth where Satan rules. Truly, how could any learn of the Power of the Spirit unless there is an approved preacher.
 - ✂ I am called;...to preach unto all, ... yea, to cry unto them that they must repent and be born again *Alma 3:83-91; Alma 19:21-23*
 - ✂ The Lord God ordained priests...to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest, *Alma 9:63-64, 65; 3 Nephi 5:40-43;*
7. **What is Priesthood?**
 - ✂ **Priesthood sets men apart to become one with Christ in His work. It can be defined as follows:**
"Priesthood is 1) the power of God operating in men, 2) chosen of him, 3) **ordained and set apart according to the provisions of his law**, 4) for the ministering of His gospel of salvation to mankind, in word and in ordinance. This priesthood or power carries with it authority to act in Christ's stead. by faith in him, in any and all matters which are expedient according to his will." —*The Nature of Priesthood, Charles Fry - pg.5*

"Priesthood is the 1) power of divine life 2) planted in the souls of willing and responsive men. 3) chosen of God 4) to minister that life to mankind for their spiritual quickening, to prepare them for a fullness of everlasting life in the kingdom of God"—*The Nature of Priesthood*, Charles Fry - pg. 32

✚ **Priesthood is an Oath and a Covenant from God He Cannot Break – Only We Can** - D&C 83: 6f-i

8. What is the purpose of God's priesthood?

✚ **Joseph Smith III** - "The powers of priesthood ... **Are confirmed for no other purpose than the salvation of man, and are continued only in the just exercise of them in the pursuit of this object:** hence any act of any man called to this calling, performed with any other intent, or attended with a different result is not authorized of God, and hence does not bind the powers of heaven." — *Joseph Smith, III, The Saints' Herald, vol. 24, pg.168.*

✚ "Priesthood on earth **is the authority and order of God committed unto men, by which they are duly empowered and commissioned to preach the gospel and administer the ordinances thereof;** namely, to baptize, lay on hands, bless, administer the Lord's supper, ordain, and perform any and all other duties required in the administration of the government of His church, or kingdom, among men." *Presidency and Priesthood, William H. Kelley*

✚ **Without authorized priesthood to administer the ordinances, the power and knowledge of God is not manifest unto men in the flesh** D&C 83:3c

9. Priesthood Belongs to God—All Christian Ministry Must Be Authorized if it is to Be Effective.

✚ **God Ordains and Confers Authority—Not Man** - Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power in the church but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. *Romans 13:1; Also: John 3:28; Mosiah 11:118;*

✚ **"It is thus that his authority becomes real and effective...When a man acting under divine priesthood speaks and acts in the line of his commission"** his words and works are authoritative and are the same force and effect as if Christ himself had spoken and done them. They carry to the hearers the responsibility of heeding and obeying, and they impose upon them the consequences of their decision, whether they accept and obey or disregard and reject; the one to blessing and life, and the other to condemnation and death." *The Nature of Priesthood, Charles Fry, pg. 6*

10. Priesthood is Not Dependent on Us—Priesthood can exist with or without an occupant.

✚ "The removing of the officer does not destroy the office any more than the death of the President of the United States destroys the office which he holds ... So it is in all the essential offices of the government. This is true of the kingdom of God or church of Jesus Christ. God designated men for the several offices of the priesthood. They were duly authorized to occupy them. When anyone of them was removed, by death or otherwise, another was appointed to succeed him in the same office. As precedents, we refer the reader to the instance of appointing Matthias to the "bishopric" or "office" held by Judas Iscariot. (Acts i.16-26.) Matthias was "numbered with the eleven apostles." *Presidency and Priesthood, William H. Kelley*

✚ "The offices of the priesthood are varied, bear distinctive names, and are made continuous. **The occupants may be removed, but the offices remain, having been fixed by the hand of Deity.** Those permitted to hold the several positions take the name of the office to which they are respectively assigned, not the office the names of the persons. No one can rightly assume to act in the offices of the priesthood until he is duly appointed by the great Author of the institution, and complies perfectly with the laws and usages governing such appointments." *Presidency and Priesthood, William H. Kelley*

11. Some Question the Relevance of Priesthood as Part of Christian Ministry

✚ **"If men could properly administer before the Lord in olden times without the authority of either the Melchisedec or the Aaronic priesthoods, why was the use of either established? The admission that God has at any time committed the priesthood as a means of authorizing, men to administer before him acceptably, must be taken as positive evidence of its necessity."**

To put the question beyond all controversy that the Christian ministry was authorized by being placed in positions in the priesthood, we have but to refer to the language of Peter, as follows:— "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."—1 Peter ii.5. ...**[Either]** Peter is a false witness, or the priesthood was given to the Christian ministry. It would be folly to talk of a priesthood where there was none; and where there was a priesthood there was a priest's office and a priest." *Presidency and Priesthood, William H. Kelley*