

Lesson: Priesthood Calls and Ordinations – God’s Conferring of Priesthood Authority

Romans 10:15 thru 16

How shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written,
How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of
peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

So then faith cometh by hearing,
and hearing by the word of God.

Christ was called and set apart to the Holy Priesthood after the Order of The Son of God

- ◆ And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to-be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.
 - Note: Christ did not take upon himself the calling of High Priest - God bestowed it upon him because he humbled himself - God declared first Christ's place in the Kingdom - "You Are My Son, today I have begotten thee" - the NIV interprets it to say - "Today I have become your Father" - this doesn't make sense because God was his Father always
 - As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. ***Hebrews 5:4-6***

Christ called and set apart the twelve after seeking council with God

And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom - also he named apostles **Luke 6:12 -13**

And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils. **Mark 3:13**

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. **John 17:18**

Christ also set apart others:

Luke 10:1 After these things the Lord appointed other **seventy** also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place where he himself would come.

All who minister must be called and authorized

When the Master sent out His agents, He authorized them to operate in the name (by the authority) of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (see Matthew 28:19), and said that what was bound by them on earth would be bound in heaven, and what they loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven. (See Matthew 16:19; 18:19; John 20:23.) Under such credentials they, when administering according to the law, could safely sign the names of the Godhead, and the candidates receiving their administrations were thus made legal claimants upon the treasury on high. Heaven is bound by the work of its duly commissioned agents, but under no obligation to respect the operation of usurpers or self-made representatives.

When men began to "heap to themselves teachers," God withdrew, and took the man-child, or, in other words, took the authority back to Himself (see Revelation 12:5), and divine authority ceased on earth, only to be restored when, in the fullness of times, He should send the "angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach." (See Revelation 14:6.) The question is a serious one--eternal interests hinge upon it; hence let us ask of all who announce themselves as ministers of Christ, **"By what authority?" Produce your credentials.** – The Old Jerusalem Gospel by Joseph Luff

Matthew 9:42-44; 10:1-8 But when he saw the multitudes, **he was moved with compassion on them**, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then said he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest...And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, **he gave them power** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease...**These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them**, saying,...as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick; cleanse the lepers; raise the dead; cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.

Pattern of Priesthood Calls and Ordination in Scripture

OT - And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; ...And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses. - ***Numbers 27:18-23***

NT - ...As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. - ***Acts 13:1-3***

BoM - And now it came to pass that after Alma had made an end of speaking unto the people of the church,...he ordained priests and elders, by laying on his hands according to the order of God, to preside and watch over the church. - ***Alma 4:1***

DC - Let them be set apart to this office by the laying on of hands by my servants whose duty it is to ordain and set in order the officers of my church; - ***DC 117:3b***

Some denominations say there is no need for "Ordination." If this is true—Why Did Christ Ordain the Twelve?

"They were chosen, named, and ordained apostles. Why ordain them? Why not send them without an ordination? Ordination is the conferring of authority upon an individual that he may properly perform the duties upon which he is sent. Could the apostles have accomplished the errand upon which they were sent, or even have been sent, without an *ordination*? If so, why ordain them? Why go through a useless and dead form?

To argue that the apostles could have been sent as competent ministers without an ordination, is to charge Jesus with performing a work of no validity, a sham. None knew better than he what was necessary.

Additional Response to Objectors

I admit," says the objector, "that Jesus held the Melchisedec priesthood, which was necessary to his ministry, but I do not believe that the apostles held it." **Query: What was that authority, then, which conferred upon the apostles when Jesus ordained them? If they could preach the gospel, heal the sick, administer the Spirit, cast out devils, etc., without the priesthood, why could not Jesus?** He was their chief in point of office and character. **Was the priesthood of any benefit to him? If not, why was it conferred on him?** Evidently it was the authority by which he ministered and established his church. The apostles were his authorized agents in preaching the gospel and building [the Kingdom.] They too, then, must have held a like authority.

Jesus said, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them." [John xvii.18.) His Father sent him into the world holding the Melchisedec priesthood. The apostles, to be sent like him, must have received a like authority or priesthood.

Presidency and Priesthood, William H. Kelley

Ordination Confers the Right to Act

The primary value of ordination is that it makes clear that the authority of the minister is not his own. This authority comes to him from above. After he has been set apart, then in a very special sense he is no more his own man. – F. Henry Edwards, Authority and Spiritual Power, pg. 23

Presumed Attributes of the One Being Called

1. He has a testimony that God is, and that he is willing to serve Him
2. He has ordered his life in such a way that he is seeking “perfection”
3. Is somewhat familiar with the scriptures, accepts them as the word of God and desires to learn more
4. That he is a leader
5. Church needs his ministry

Source: Ordinances and Sacraments – Yale and Brockway, 1962. Pg. 172

Man called according to God's timing

Matthew 3:24,26 *And it came to pass that Jesus grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of his ministry to come. And after many years, the hour of his ministry drew nigh.*

Jacob 1:17 *I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having firstly obtained mine errand from the Lord.*

DC 10:8a, 10a *Behold, I command you, that you need not suppose that you are called to preach until you are called: Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments; yea, with all your might, mind, and strength; seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed;*

What Ordination Represents:

Ordination represents:

- ◆ Authority being given by God
- ◆ Responsibility being embraced by the one called
- ◆ Authority being accepted by the Church

I. Authority to act comes from God through authorized representatives of His Church

John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, . . .*

DC 68:1f *Go ye into all the world; preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;*

DC 17:12b *and he is to be ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him.*

DC 42:4 *Again I say unto you that it shall not be given to anyone to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority, and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church.*

Matthew 3:34 *Why is it that ye receive not the preaching of him whom God has sent?” See also Mosiah 5:43*

The church is the human representative of the voice of God

*Whenever an individual is called of God, as a matter of course he feels that he is authorized to teach, **but it must needs be that there shall be recognition of this right to teach, and the church is that which as the human representative of the voice of God by which the authority is recognized and the right to act in it is sanctioned.** "Many are called; but few are chosen," and by the imposition of the hands of the church, and in the name of Christ who is the chief builder of the church, is the right to act for the church conferred upon the individual who is called of God.*

Address to the priesthood, by President Joseph Smith III. At the General Conference, Lamoni, Iowa, Friday, April 14, 1893.
Supplement to The Saints' Herald. Lamoni, Iowa, July 22, 1893.

A Principle - greater authority cannot be conferred upon others than that which is possessed by the original source of authority.

II. Authority has to be accepted and embraced by the one called

DC 63:15a *And again, verily I say unto you, Those who desire in their hearts, in meekness, to warn sinners to repentance, let them be ordained unto this power; for this is a day of warning, and not a day of many words*

Alma 8:8 *Nevertheless, I did harden my heart, for I was called many times and I would not hear; Therefore, I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know [Amulek]*

And they are not qualified by the laying on of hands alone; it is but the outward form of choosing, a recognition of that which is within them by virtue of the calling of God unto them and his gifts to them, for which they must answer unto God alone in the day of judgment. The church confers the right to act in the name of the church and in the name of Christ as an officer of the church, and it can take this right from a man, but it can never absolve him from his obligation to God for that which God has bestowed upon him; for that he must answer before the court of heaven. Address to the priesthood, by President Joseph Smith III. At the General Conference, Lamoni, Iowa, Friday, April 14, 1893. Supplement to The Saints' Herald. Lamoni, Iowa, July 22, 1893.

Agency and Ordination

- ◆ God recognizes a person's capacity – He will not ask us to do more than we can.
- ◆ Ordination does not Infringe Upon Agency

*It is a responsible thing, this right to act conferred upon a man, and I do not wonder that the Savior said even when he was but twelve years of age, "Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Every minister called of God should bear that in mind, and **from the hour that he is consecrated by the laying on of hands and set apart to work in the ministry he must feel within himself the movings of that very Spirit which moved the Savior when he was a boy, and said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"*** Address to the priesthood, by President Joseph Smith III. At the General Conference, Lamoni, Iowa, Friday, April 14, 1893. Supplement to The Saints' Herald. Lamoni, Iowa, July 22, 1893.

Seriousness of Priesthood Ordination – *DC 83:6c-d; g-h*

c.) 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: **they become the sons** of Moses and of Aaron, and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom **and the elect of God**; Therefore, all that my Father hath shall be given unto him; and **this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.**

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

III. Authority has to be accepted by the people, by the Church

No person is to be ordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that church; - *DC 17:16a*

What does the “vote” represent?

If my people will respect the officers whom I have called and set in the church, I will respect these officers; and if they do not, they cannot expect the riches of gifts and the blessings of direction. - *DC 125:14c*

We must always ask ourselves, “Are we worthy of this respect?”

Purpose of Ordination Rite/Ceremony

1. To confer the authority and the responsibility of a specific office upon the one ordained
2. To officially inaugurate the ordained into the office to which he has been called
3. To symbolize the acceptance of the man to the call and office
4. To symbolize his covenant and to interpret the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people everywhere as his office directs

Ordinances and Sacraments – Yale and Brockway, 1962. Pg. 172

Example of the Manner of Ordination

The manner which the disciples, who were called the elders of the church, ordained priests and teachers.

After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, they laid their hands upon them, and said,

In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a priest; (or if he be a teacher;) I ordain you to be a teacher, to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end. Amen.

And after this manner did they ordain priests and teachers, according to the gifts and callings of God unto men; and they ordained them by the power of the Holy Ghost, which was in them. ***Moroni 3:1-3***

Ordination Mechanics – Service and Prayer

Ordination Service:

- ◆ Spiritual Preparation
- ◆ Dedicated Worship Service
- ◆ Physical Arrangements
- ◆ Charge to Candidate
- ◆ Acceptance of Call
- ◆ Hands Layed On Head & Prayer
- ◆ Acknowledgement
- ◆ Greeting with membership

Ordination Prayer:

- ◆ No set prayer
- ◆ Not too long and to the point
- ◆ The Priesthood and Office being conferred should be identified
- ◆ Reflection of responsibility may be appropriate

Follow-up After the Ordination

- ◆ Record ordination
- ◆ Issue license
- ◆ Continued training and mentoring
- ◆ Use quickly

An Engaged Priesthood

The 20-80 Rule - 20% of the Priesthood do 80 % of the work

- Our Challenge as Leaders is to Change the Percentages

- ◆ What does it mean for priesthood to be “actively engaged” in ministry? Or, What constitutes an “active” or “inactive” priesthood member?

- ◆ What are reasonable expectations for priesthood?

- ◆ What does it mean to “magnify our calling?”

- ◆ What are reasonable expectations for priesthood in magnifying their calling?

The Question of Accountability

- ◆ Who are we accountable to? In what ways are we accountable? or
- ◆ Should priesthood give an account of their ministry to someone in the Branch? If so, to whom, and what are some ways this can be done?
- ◆ How should an inactive priesthood member be used?
- ◆ How should he be worked with?