

# PRIESTHOOD

## **An Everlasting Principle**

The Holy Order is an everlasting principle which exists with God from eternity to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years.

It was a singular priesthood with a singular name which was called *“the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God.”* [T&C 154:8](#) [\(D&C 107:3\)](#)

This original, unified, singular priesthood was held by the first Patriarchs and *“was confirmed to be handed down from father to son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed to whom the promises were made.”* [T&C 154:9](#) [\(D&C 107:40-41\)](#)

There are, however, different degrees or portions of that one, unified priesthood. Because priesthood is an association or fellowship between man and the Divine, it can be described in three orders or degrees.

- 1) A fellowship between mankind and the heavens (angels).
- 2) A fellowship between mankind and the Son of God (Christ).
- 3) A fellowship between mankind and the Great Patriarch (Heavenly Father) which involves “sonship” to the receiver.

## **The Right of Dominion**

Adam, the first man, is the father of the human family and presides over the spirits of all men. He was given a fullness and possessed this priesthood in the beginning along with dominion over the whole earth which was thereafter passed down by birthright. [Abr. 1:1 RE](#) [\(Abr. 1:1-4\)](#)

The right of dominion over the creation belonged to God. God gave that right to Adam and Eve, however it does not transfer to all their descendants. It descended from father to son by birthright to the first rightful heir. This right is called the patriarchal priesthood, or in other words, the right to hold dominion over the world as the steward, or father, or patriarch over all creation.

*“Adam, when given dominion over the whole earth by the word of God, received the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God.”* [T&C 154:9-20](#) [\(D&C 107:40-56\)](#)

It is the nature of this Holy Order that it is conferred upon the man and woman jointly. *The image of God is male and female.*

*“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.”* [1 Cor. 1:44 RE](#) [\(1 Cor. 11:11\)](#)

*“And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so. And I, God, said: Let them have*

*dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

*And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them.*

*And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” [Gen 2:8-9 RE](#) ([Moses 2:26-28](#))*

*“In essence, the Holy Order is to create of flesh and blood a living, mortal surrogate for the Father and Mother.” [Holy Order page 10](#)*

It was never “good for man to be alone.” See ([Gen. 2:18](#); [Moses 3:18](#); [Abr. 5:14](#)). See also the [Answer to Prayer for Covenant](#) providing a new revelation on marriage, which states in part:

*“And again, I say to you, Abraham and Sarah sit upon a Throne, for he could not be there if not for Sarah’s covenant with him. Isaac and Rebecca sit upon a Throne, and Isaac likewise could not be there if not for Rebecca’s covenant with him. And Jacob and Rachel sit upon a Throne, and Jacob could not be there if not for Rachel’s covenant with him. And all these have ascended above Dominions and Principalities and Powers, to abide in my Kingdom. Therefore the marriage covenant is needed for all those who would likewise seek to obtain from me the right to continue their seed into eternity, for only through marriage can Thrones and Kingdoms be established.”*

*[The Holy Order page 7; footnote 18](#)*

Men and women were ordained by God through the marriage covenant to continue throughout the eternities and jointly hold that right together, just as Adam and Eve did.

*“The Holy Order is familial. It does not involve establishing a church but, instead, connecting together the Family of God, or in other words, the Government of God.” [The Holy Order page 41](#)*

It is the responsibility of Christ to establish this order once again in the meridian of time; to restore the government of God or family of God in which He, Christ represents the “Father” of all, as Redeemer of all and the one who brings again the holy covenant.

*“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of government and peace there is no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.” [2 Nephi 9:10 RE](#) ([2 Nephi 19:6-7](#))*

That priesthood (Holy Order) in its fullness is a right of government or right of dominion. It began with Adam and descended down through the generations which dispensation belonged to Adam. (Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah and these were the first to hold the Patriarchal priesthood from the oldest to the youngest holding the right.) [T&C 154:9-20](#) ([D&C 107:40-57](#))

The original form of Priesthood (Holy Order) was renamed after Enoch in his day. [T&C 69:13](#) [\(D&C 76:57\)](#)

Later, it was renamed again after Melchizedek.

*“Before his day it was called the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood.”* [\(D&C 107:3-4\)](#)

The renaming did not change the priesthood, but used a different title to avoid the too frequent repetition of His name. It is all the same priesthood and as mentioned at the beginning of this paper, is an everlasting principle that existed with God from the beginning. It will be present at the end of this world and continue to exist from eternity to eternity, worlds without end.

*“Now this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also — or in other words, at the end of the world, the final dispensation will restore again the pattern of the first, or Adam’s dispensation.”* [T&C 154:21](#) [\(Moses 6:7\)](#)

## Becoming Sons of God

Adam was the first to be baptized and receive sonship and became, through the powers of the holy priesthood and the ordinances associated, a son of God.

*“And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever; And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen.”* [Genesis 4:10 RE](#) [\(Moses 6:66-68\)](#)

*“The Holy Order was held by the first patriarchs who “are the church of the Firstborn; have received of His fullness and of His glory; are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son. Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God.”* [T&C 69:11-13](#) [\(D&C 76:54-58\)](#)

One who obtains this priesthood is brought into the family of God and called “His Son” just as was Adam called, “the son of God.” [Genesis 3:23 RE](#); [\(Luke 3:38\)](#); [\(Moses 6:22\)](#) Those who inherit the Holy Order by definition are the sons of God. In other words, calling it the Holy Order after the son of God is a way of identifying the recipient as someone who has become one of God’s sons even though they are mortal, living in the flesh.

Christ is the means by which we lay hold upon the promises but it is He who intends to make us all sons of God.

*“For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”* [Genesis 1:7 RE](#) [\(Moses 1:39\)](#)

The purpose of the Holy Order is to establish God's family upon the earth and put in place a mechanism by which He can reveal from heaven what is necessary for the salvation of man in every generation thorough one authorized by God. A connection to Him is essential. God must be able to reveal truths and knowledge and give power to seal them up unto eternal life.

We learn all of this through the revelations given to us through Joseph Smith.

*"Whenever men can find out the will of God and find an administrator legally authorized from God, there is the kingdom of God; but where these are not, the kingdom of God is not. All the ordinances, systems, and administrations on the earth are of no use to the children of men, unless they are ordained and authorized of God; for nothing will save a man but a legal administrator; for none others will be acknowledged either by God or angels." (Joseph Smith, January 22, 1843).*

And again:

*"If a man gets fullness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments, and by obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord." [\(Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith \[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976\], page 308.\)](#)*

## Directly Called by God

Those who are called of God are done so by His own voice. They are approved by Him and ordained by Him. Melchizedek received this same priesthood.

*"And Melchizedek lifted up his voice and blessed Abram. Now Melchizedek was a man of faith, who wrought righteousness; and when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch," (Vs. 25-27.) He's got the same covenant as had been previously made with Enoch. That tells you something if you're paying attention. "It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God; And it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as (received) his name." (Vs. 28-29.) (Denver Snuffer, [The Mission of Elijah Reconsidered.](#)) [Genesis 7:17-18 RE](#) [\(JST 14:26-29\)](#)*

*"For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas...dry up [the] waters, ...turn them out of their course; To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, ...break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things...according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; **and this by the will of the Son of God** which was from before the foundation of the world." [Genesis 7:19 RE](#) [\(JST 14:30-31\)](#)*

Having direct communication with God gives a man the key to the mysteries and knowledge of God. Those who gain knowledge also receive ordinances of salvation.

*“And the Lord confirmed a priesthood also upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations, which priesthood also continueth and abideth forever with the priesthood which is after the holiest order of God. 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. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh.”*  
[T&C 82:11-12](#) [\(D&C 84:18-21\)](#)

And God is endless, so His words are endless, and His covenants are endless and His promises are endless. So, given that fact, if a person lays hold upon something from God, it indeed is endless.

*“Behold, I am God, Man of Holiness is my name, man of Counsel is my name, and Endless and Eternal is my name also.”* [Gen. 4:17 RE](#) [\(Moses 7:35\)](#)

*“Commencing with Adam, who was the first man, who is spoken of in Daniel as being the Ancient of Days, or in other words, the first and oldest of all, the great grand progenitor, of whom it is said in another place, He is Michael, because he was the first and father of all, not only by progeny, but he was the first to hold the spiritual blessings, to whom was made known the plan of ordinances for the salvation of his posterity unto the end, and to whom Christ was first revealed, and through whom Christ has been revealed from Heaven and will continue to be revealed from henceforth. Adam holds the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of times; i.e., the dispensation of all the times have been and will be revealed through him, from the beginning to Christ, and from Christ to the end of all the dispensations that are to be revealed.”* [T&C 140:3](#)

Alma taught *“that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people.”* [Alma 9:10 RE](#) [\(Alma 13:1\)](#)

When an angel is sent from the presence of the Lord, they are under the direction of Michael or Adam who acts under the direction of Christ.

*“Therefore, he set the ordinances to be the same for ever and ever, and set Adam to watch over them, to reveal them from Heaven to man or to send angels to reveal them.”* [T&C 140:6](#) [Joseph Smith Papers Oct. 1840](#)

## Reconnection Through Abraham

Following Melchizedek an apostasy of generations lost the right and there was no successor for Melchizedek with dominion over the earth nor a right to be the father of nations (or families). This broken line of apostasy was the first gap between Adam and his posterity. This break lasted nine generations. Until Abraham longed for the blessings of the Fathers...

*“And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having*

*been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.” [Abraham 1:1 RE](#) [\(Abraham 1:2\)](#)*

Abraham not only sought to receive higher knowledge but he wanted to use that knowledge to obey more commandments, to gain further knowledge through obedience and in return persuade others to do the same. In essence, Abraham desired to be a servant who would be a father of all nations. That is what this priesthood is. It is given to one who seeks to bless others’ lives, to serve, to bring them truth and connect them with the Lord. A call to kneel and wash another’s feet just as the Savior did.

*“It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me. I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.” [Abraham 1:1 RE](#) [\(Abraham 1:3-4\)](#)*

Abraham’s right was non-genealogical. He was isolated from God’s Holy Order, living in a generation of apostasy. There is a complete falling away and there are no righteous fathers for Abraham. They had turned to idolatry.

*“My fathers, having turned from their righteousness, and from the holy commandments which the Lord their God had given unto them, unto the worshipping of the gods of the heathen, utterly refused to hearken to my voice;” [Abraham 1:1 RE](#) [\(Abraham 1:5\)](#)*

Because Abraham realized he was living in a generation of apostasy, he sought from God the opportunity to attain this priesthood (Holy Order) and the right to be ordained to administer the same. Although generations separated Abraham from Shem, he qualified to receive the rights belonging to the fathers. He is an example of a man in a world of apostasy reconnecting to heaven.

When Abraham received the Holy Order by ordination from the oldest living holder ([T&C 82:10](#) [\(D&C 84:14\)](#)) Melkizedek, the Lord accepted Abraham and declared to him:

*“My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father;” [Abraham 3:1 RE](#) [\(Abraham 2:8-10\)](#)*

This represents the pattern for future priesthood ordination of the Holy Order which is non-genealogical. The reconnecting does and has happened after generations of apostasy. It is and will be the same process through which Abraham became a descendent of the first fathers by ordination and then ratification from the Lord.

## Ordination vs. Confirmation

“Ordination” and “confirmation by the voice of God” are two separate events. When the confirmation comes from the voice of God, the line of authority comes straight from Him and not by man. When this happens, they are called His son and belong to the family of God.

*“And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption. And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such. And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren. Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared—*

*And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest—*

*This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things—*

*Now they were ordained after this manner—being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end—*

*Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen. [Alma 9:10 RE](#) [\(Alma 13:3-9\)](#)*

Priesthood is God’s almighty power. Men are not called and ordained in this life without the proper preparation and readiness and an individual will not receive the higher priesthood in this second estate without being called and prepared beforehand in the first estate. Joseph Smith confirmed this by saying:

*“Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was.” [\(Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith \[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976\], page 365.\)](#)*

The high priesthood reckons back to a preparation and calling before the foundation of the world. God’s foreknowledge of an individual’s faith and works determines who He will call to these holy callings. The power of this priesthood is one that few will possess. *“Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen.” [T&C 139:5](#) [\(D&C 121:34-40\)](#)*

This is how priesthood power is acquired. It is how all prophets, from Adam to the present, have been called of God and then endowed with power by Him.



*“Thus I, Abraham, talked with the Lord, face to face, as one man talketh with another; and he told me of the works which his hands had made; And he said unto me: My son, my son (and his hand was stretched out), behold I will show you all these. And he put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many; and they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof.” [Abraham 5:3 RE](#) ([Abraham 3:11-12](#))*

## Non-Generational Priesthood Rights

Similar to Abraham, we must also rise up to reconnect to our Fathers. Whoever follows this pattern, in whatever generation, is also called a son of God and is a descendant of the Fathers and can therefore call Abraham their father.

Abraham represents coming back to the light, despite the fact that his fathers taught him idolatry. We say that Abraham's right is *non-genealogical* because many generations separated him from Shem. He also represents the challenge that every man who would be saved from that point forward: he must recognize and, likewise, overcome the idolatry of his fathers. Abraham is the prototype. Any person in any generation (after Abraham) who becomes part of the Holy Order will be grafted into the line of the fathers, and become a descendant of Father Abraham.

This process involves repentance. It is having the courage to look inward and understand that there is something amiss and you want to change and leave things behind for something better. It requires the faith to turn toward God and be in harmony with Him:

*“And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men.” [Moroni 7:6 RE](#) ([Moroni 7:31-32](#))*

The Lord Says:

*“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) [Because fundamentally, what distinguishes Abraham and what distinguishes the covenant is the knowledge of the priesthood holder. Abraham was in possession of priesthood like the original fathers because he knew things that are true which relate back to the very beginning. As a consequence of that, those who are given the same knowledge, necessarily have to belong to the same priesthood.] and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), [Because you become a son of Abraham if you take upon yourselves the requirements for the covenant, you inherit that. Just as Abraham inherited it because of what he sought and obtained. It comes down from the beginning from the fathers.] 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. Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from*



*speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee;" Here again, Abraham stands as the prototype of the saved man, the father of the righteous, the example of all those who coming out of apostasy find their way back to God and redemption, because all of the servants that will be acknowledged by Him, must seeking earnestly, and will as The Lectures on Faith promise, assuredly find Him. [Abraham 3:1 RE \(Abraham 2:11-12\)](#) (Denver's 40 Years in Mormonism Lectures, [Lecture 4, Covenants](#) page 10.)*

Abraham obtained the kingdom of God, the patriarchal priesthood, and the right of dominion belonging to the first man, Adam. It continued through descent from Abraham for five generations (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim). Then the restoration ended, and apostasy returned. The apostasy then lasted for many generations until Moses. (Denver Snuffer, [All or Nothing, 4](#))

## The Ordination of Moses

Moses was ordained to the priesthood differently than the Patriarchs in that the ordination came directly from Heaven. Anciently it was by descent through a family line (oldest living righteous son) from generation to generation. But again, through apostasy, it was lost and God needed to restore it again to the Earth. God established the rule of the Holy Priesthood after the order of the Son of God through Moses.

*"And, behold, thou art my son; wherefore look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands; but not all, for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease."*  
[Genesis 1:1 RE \(Moses 1:4\)](#)

Joseph Smith explains:

*"All Priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it. That portion which brought Moses to speak with God face to face was taken away; but that which brought the ministry of angels remained. All prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself."* [\(Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith \[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976\], page 180-181.\)](#)

It was through Moses that God liberated the children of Israel and they were free to follow God. Yet, they were unwilling to abide this priesthood and they hardened their hearts in which the Lord in His wrath, took the Holy Priesthood and gave them the lesser....

*"And this greater Priesthood administers the gospel and holds the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest, and without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the Priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto man in the flesh, for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. Now, this, Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God, but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence. Therefore, the Lord, in his wrath (for his anger was kindled against them) swore that they should not enter into his rest — which rest is the fullness of his glory — while in the wilderness. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also. And the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood*

*holds the key of the ministering of angels, and the preparatory gospel, which gospel is the gospel of repentance, and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron, among the children of Israel, until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the holy ghost from his mother's womb. For he was baptized while he was yet in his childhood, and was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power: to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord, in whose hand is given all power.” [T&C 82:12-14](#) [\(D&C 84:19-28\)](#)*

Between Moses and Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God was lost along with the Holy Order and right of dominion. ([All or Nothing, 4](#)) The anciently held expectation that there might be Zion ended and it was now up to some future generation to achieve the prophesy which God promised to fulfill in the last days.

## Restoration Through the Smith Family

In 1820, Joseph Smith Jr., living in a world of confusion sought for the wisdom of God and asked for further light and knowledge *“that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not”* to find the answer. He went to a grove of trees to pray where, once again, the connection to heaven was reestablished with the visitation of the Father and the Son. [T&C JSH 2:3-5](#) [\(JSH 1:10-20\)](#)

Along with that connection came the Book of Mormon, which was translated by the gift and power of God through Joseph Smith from records and writings of prophets in the Americas and compiled specifically for our day by Mormon and his son Moroni.

*“Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.” [Mormon 4:5 RE](#) [\(Mormon 8:35\)](#)*

Like all ascension texts, the Book of Mormon contains the testimonies, insight and knowledge of prophets who have been in the presence of the Lord, which is essential for our learning, instruction, and growth as we follow the same path. The book reiterates the patterns of the fathers, the priesthood, and ordinances that are required for us to be admitted into the presence of God. The brother of Jared was one of those that followed this pattern to behold the Lord while yet in the flesh:

*“And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters.” [Ether 1:13 RE](#) [\(Ether 3:13-14\)](#)*

Likewise, Joseph Smith Jr. gives testimony and confirms the voice of the Lord and that divinely appointed messengers were sent to him:

*"And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! And the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring their dispensations, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!" [T&C 151:15](#) ([D&C 128:21](#))*

Having been in the presence of God and connected to covenant patriarchs of old, Joseph then declares his patriarchal line of authority through a blessing given to his father Joseph Smith Sr., the Prophet Joseph Smith blesses his Father in this Patriarchal Priesthood and declares his line to be that line of the Patriarchs of old:

*"Thus spoke the Seer, and these are the words which fell from his lips while the visions of the Almighty were open to his view, saying: Blessed of the Lord is my father, for he shall stand in the midst of his posterity and shall be comforted by their blessings when he is old and bowed down with years, and shall be called a prince over them, and shall be numbered among those who hold the right of Patriarchal Priesthood, even the keys of that ministry: for he shall assemble together his posterity like unto Adam; and the assembly which he called shall be an example for my father, for thus it is written of him: Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch and Methuselah, who were High Priests, with the residue of his posterity, who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing. And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the Prince, the Archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him, I have set thee to be at the head: a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a Prince over them forever. **So shall it be with my father: he shall be called a prince over his posterity, holding the keys of the patriarchal Priesthood over the kingdom of God on earth, even the Church of the Latter-day Saints, and he shall sit in the general assembly of Patriarchs, even in council with the Ancient of Days when he shall sit and all the Patriarchs with him and shall enjoy his right and authority under the direction of the Ancient of Days.**" ([Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith \[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976\], page 38.](#))*

Similarly, Joseph then gives his brother Hyrum a blessing indicating that this priesthood continued through him:

*"He shall stand in the tracks of his father and be numbered among those who hold the right of Patriarchal Priesthood, even the Evangelical Priesthood and power shall be upon him, that in his old age his name may be magnified on the earth." ([Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith \[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976\], page 40.](#))*

Following the death of his father, Joseph Smith received a revelation calling his brother Hyrum Smith to succeed their father in the same manner that the patriarchal authority descended among the ancients, father to son.

The . . . January 1841 revelation that called Hyrum Smith to succeed his father, Joseph Smith Sr., as Patriarch. [T&C 141:32](#) ([D&C 124:91-96](#)) The revelation said that Joseph Smith Sr., the first Patriarch, who died in September 1840, had appointed Hyrum to "the office of Priesthood and

Patriarch, which was appointed unto him [Hyrum] by his father, by blessing and also by right," implying a chain of Smith family authority over patriarchal blessings, going from the departing Patriarch to his eldest son.

Patriarch Eldred G. Smith was born in Lehi, Utah. He is the great-great-great-grandson of Joseph Smith, Sr., the first Presiding Patriarch of the Church. This is the only office in the Church that follows the patriarchal line from father to son, and Elder Smith is the seventh Presiding Patriarch of the Church since it was organized in 1830. (*Elder Eldred G. Smith, March 10, 1964, BYU Speeches of the Year, 1964 1.*)

Regarding Hyrum, the Lord said through Joseph Smith in a revelation ...

*"That from henceforth he shall hold the keys of the patriarchal blessings upon the heads of all my people, That whoever he blesses shall be blessed, and whoever he curses shall be cursed; that whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. And from this time forth I appoint unto him that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph; That he may act in concert also with my servant Joseph; and that he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive, and be crowned with the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and gifts of the priesthood, that once were put upon him that was my servant Oliver Cowdery; That my servant Hyrum may bear record of the things which I shall show unto him, that his name may be had in honorable remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever." [T&C 141:32](#) ([D&C 124:91-96](#))*

Following the death of Hyrum and Joseph, there were other named candidates in the Smith family line, but they either died early or their posterity terminated. Thus, Hyrum's line became the last to hold the Patriarchal line of descent. This would ultimately be accomplished through the office of Church Patriarch in which Hyrum Smith's blood line would hold the exclusive right of occupancy in forthcoming generations. The final Church Patriarch, Eldred G. Smith, was ordained to the office on April 10, 1947. However, in 1979, the First Presidency announced that Eldred G. Smith had been honorably released and designated Patriarch Emeritus (inactive), claiming that every stake now had its own patriarch. This administrative action effectively discontinued the office within the LDS Church, which ended completely with Eldred Smith's passing in 2013. ([Wikipedia: Chronology of Presiding Patriarchs \(LDS Church\)](#); [Wikipedia: Patriarch Emeritus.](#))

In summary, before the death of Joseph Smith Jr., the Lord conferred the office of "Priesthood" upon Hyrum, thereby providing LDS Mormons a lifeline through his descendants. However, with the death of Eldred G. Smith, Hyrum Smith's family was no longer held in honorable remembrance by the church. The third and fourth generations have passed and the atrophy of the restoration has now been brought to an end by the Lord's own voice. During that time, there were many things that happened within the church that were offensive to the Lord, but He intends to complete what He began through Joseph. Furthermore, and following the pattern of scripture, the only thing that remained to be done was for God to send a witness to be the final required sign sent to declare God's intention to begin something new. God gave us prophecy, telling what would happen, and signs have confirmed the gentile failure. We are now living at the end of one era and in the beginning of another. (*Preserving the Restoration, Denver Snuffer, pp 480-495.*)

## A Servant and Messenger Sent In Our Day

Scriptural prophesy explains that the original priesthood (Holy Order) would return at the end of the world. ([Genesis 3:14 RE](#) [\(Moses 6:7-8\)](#)) Adam was talking about the priesthood held by the patriarchs (Patriarchal Order). It was unitary and had only one form. The priesthood must return to being unified as it was in the days of Adam, and God's family must be gathered and organized once more. Today, another authorized messenger has been sent from the presence of the Lord to warn and instruct this generation and to reestablish the Holy Order, which was declared in the following statement:

*"We believe we are approaching a moment in which the Lord is about to return. Read that chapter, [Matt 11:1-14 RE](#) [\(Matthew 24\)](#). All of the signs that He speaks of will occur in one single generation. If you've not noticed, the signs have begun to appear. It means you are living within a generation in which a great deal is to occur. As it was in the days of Noah so is it about to be. That means dreadful things are coming on the one hand, and it means prophets are going to be among us again, people with messages that come from the Lord. I'm not here on my own volition. I've not done anything that I've done throughout the last number of years on my own volition. I do what I do, I preach what I preach, I testify to what I testify to, because, like Paul, I've been sent. I would rather understate than overstate the case but let me end by telling you Christ lives. He died and He was resurrected. I know this to be true because, like Paul, I have seen Him. I don't tell you that to make this seem sensational. I tell you that to give you cause to believe in Him. He is real."* ([Denver's Christian Reformation Lecture Series, Talk #1 given in Cerritos, CA on September 21st, 2017.](#))

## Who Can Hold Priesthood in Our Day?

In our day, the order established by heaven is that while only men can hold the priesthood, only women can vote and sustain the men who can exercise priesthood in our communities of faith.

*"Because of the potential and actual abuse by some priesthood holding men, I asked the Lord to extend priesthood to women. I was told as to public rites, 'priesthood is confined to men because of the Fall and the conditions ordained at that time.' Until things are reversed at the millennium, it will remain for men alone to perform the public ordinances thus far given to us."* (*Denver Suffer, Preserving the Restoration, page 510.*)

Any priesthood holder can minister to his own family as a matter of right. However, in order for him to function in priesthood services like baptism or blessing the sacrament outside of his family, he must first have the sustaining vote of at least seven women. If the man is married, his wife must be one of the seven who sustain him.

In one sense, the answer to "who can hold priesthood?" is, "only men, at the moment." Note that aside from performing public ordinances, there is nothing a woman cannot do by the power of faith. Anna was a prophetess who testified of Christ to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and others also had the gift of prophecy. The mother of Jesus, the mother of Samson, and Mary Magdalene all had angelic visitations. And, it was a group of women, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others, to whom the resurrected Lord appeared first. All these things were done by faith and did not require these women to hold priesthood.

In a more complete sense, the answer to the question “who can hold priesthood?” is, “those who have been properly ordained, and live in conformity with the principals of righteousness.”

A man must be both ordained by another man who holds priesthood, and also empowered by God, who ratifies the ordination. The story of Alma at the waters of Mormon illustrates this pattern. Alma had previously been ordained a priest, but before performing the ordinance of baptism, he prayed and asked God for power to baptize.

*“And now it came to pass that Alma took Helam... and went and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying: O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart. And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said, Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God,”* [Mosiah 9:8 RE \(Mosiah 18:12-13\)](#)

The Lord sent his spirit upon Alma to signify His approval of Alma using the priesthood. Men today are instructed to first receive an authoritative ordination at the hands of another man who holds priesthood, and then seek approval from the Lord to use His priesthood. Our scriptures read,

*“Wait until the spirit ratifies your ordination before you act. Ask God to give you the power. Get his “word” through the spirit just as Alma did. After Alma repented, but before using authority to baptize, he asked God to give him power. God, seeing his repentance, accepted it, and poured out his spirit upon Alma to give him power to baptize... If we get power to baptize, we get it from Him. Power is required. It must come from Christ.”* [T&C 175:29-30](#)

Priesthood is not simply having hands laid upon your head while a formula is recited. The ordination is necessary, but true authority requires one to faithfully obtain, and then faithfully magnify.

Considering again the idea that priesthood is a fellowship with the divine, Joseph Smith taught the following about the relationship between men and the Powers of Heaven (“Powers of Heaven” being a proper noun, a title or status, referring to certain persons on the other side of the veil who hold that title.)

*“The rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and the Powers of Heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the Heavens withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.”* [T&C 139:5 \(D&C 121:36-37\)](#)

This means priesthood is perishable. Those who receive priesthood only maintain that priesthood when they act in concert with principles of righteousness. Because it is a fellowship, or an association with the Powers of Heaven, the relationship with them can be damaged or severed when a man is unwilling to contain himself within the bounds the Lord has set. Even with an authoritative ordination, if a man offends the heavens, the heavens “withdraw themselves,” and “amen to the priesthood or authority of that man.” This system is perfect. Men can fool other men (and often have), but they cannot fool God. Men can pretend to priesthood, feign claim to rights or authorities (and often have), but the omniscient God who knows their hearts determines who actually holds priesthood, and what powers are actually authoritative.

Priesthood is not viewed as any sort of right to preside, take charge, or control the actions of others; rather, it is only an opportunity to serve. Holding priesthood makes a man a servant to others, and nothing else.

*“Priesthood in its highest form is an opportunity, afforded you by God, to serve and bless others...It is a call to save, redeem, and rescue others from destruction.” (Preserving the Restoration, Denver Snuffer, page 172.)*

That is what Christ did; that is what those on His errand do.