

The Priesthood—The Second Advent—The Gathering—Spiritual Ministrations and Manifestations

Synopsis of an Address by President Joseph Smith, Delivered in Commerce, Illinois, Tuesday, June 2, 1839.

The Priesthood was first given to Adam. He obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the creation, before the world was formed, as in Gen. i. 20, 26, 28. He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel: he stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood. He was called of God to this office, and was the Father of all living in his day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held keys first on earth, and then in heaven.

The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. The keys have to be brought from heaven, whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from heaven, it is by Adam's authority. Daniel vii. speaks of the Ancient of Days. He means the oldest man—our Father Adam (Michael). He will call his children together and hold a council with them to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man. He (Adam) is the Father of the human family, and presides over the spirits of all men; and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council. This may take place before some of us leave this stage of action. The Son of Man stands before him, and there is given him glory and dominion. Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ—that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe, but retains his standing as head of the human family.

The spirit of man is not a created being: it existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity. Anything created cannot be eternal; and earth, water, &c., had their existence in an elementary state from eternity. Our Savior speaks of children and says, "Their angels always stand before my Father." The Father called all spirits before him at the creation of man, and organized them. He (Adam) is the head, and was told to multiply. The keys were first given to him, and by him to others. He will have to give an account of his stewardship, and they to him.

The Priesthood is everlasting. The Savior, Moses, and Elias gave the keys to Peter, James, and John, on the mount, when they were transfigured before him. The Priesthood is everlasting—without beginning of days or end of years—without father, mother, &c. If there is no change of ordinances, there is no change of Priesthood. Wherever the ordinances of the Gospel are administered, there is the Priesthood.

How have we come at the Priesthood in the last days? It came down, down, in regular succession. Peter, James, and John had it given to them, and they gave it to others. Christ is the Great High Priest; Adam next. Paul speaks of the Church coming to an innumerable company of angels; to God, the Judge of all—the spirits of just men made perfect; to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, &c. (Heb xii. 23.)

I saw Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. He called together his children and blessed them with a patriarchal blessing. The Lord appeared in their midst, and he (Adam) blessed them all, and foretold what should befall them to the latest generation. (See Doc. and Cov., sec. iii., pars. 28, 29.)

This is why Abraham blessed his posterity—he wanted to bring them into the presence of God. "They looked for a city," &c. Moses sought to bring the children of Israel into the presence of God, through the power of the Priesthood, but he could not. In the first ages of the world they tried to establish the same thing; and there were Eliases raised up who tried to restore these very glories, but did not obtain them; but they prophesied of a day when this glory would be revealed. Paul spoke of the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God would gather together all things in one, &c.; and those men to whom these keys have been given will have to be there; and they without us cannot be made perfect.

These men are in heaven, but their children are on earth. Their bowels yearn over us. God sends down men for this reason. (Matt. xiii. 41.) "And the Son of man shall send forth his angels, &c." All these authoritative characters will

come down and join hand in hand in bringing about this work.

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed. The mustard seed is small, but brings forth a large tree, and the fowls lodge in the branches. The fowls are the angels. Thus angels come down, combine together to gather their children, and gather them. We cannot be made perfect without them, nor they without us. When these things are done, the Son of Man will descend—the Ancient of Days sit; we may come to an innumerable company of angels—have communion with and receive instruction from them. Paul told about Moses' proceedings—spoke of the children of Israel being baptized, &c. He knew this, and that all the ordinances and blessings were in the Church. Paul had these things, and we may have the fowls of heaven lodge in the branches, &c.

The horn made war with the Saints and overcame them, &c., until the Ancient of Days came; judgment was given to the Saints of the Most High from the Ancient of Days; the time came that the Saints possessed the kingdom. This not only makes us ministers here, but in eternity.

Salvation cannot come without revelation: it is in vain for anyone to minister without it. No man is a minister of Jesus Christ without being a prophet. No man can be the minister of Jesus Christ, except he has the testimony of Jesus, and this is the spirit of prophecy. Whenever salvation has been administered, it has been by testimony. Men of the present time testify of heaven and of hell, and have never seen either; and I will say that no man knows these things without this.

Men profess to prophesy. I will prophesy that the signs of the coming of the Son of Man are already commenced. One pestilence will desolate after another. We shall soon have war and bloodshed. The moon will be turned into blood. I testify of these things, and that the coming of the Son of Man is nigh, even at your doors. If our souls and our bodies are not looking forth for the coming of the Son of Man, and after we are dead, if we are not looking forth, &c., we shall be among those who are calling for the rocks to fall upon us, &c.

The hearts of the children of men will have to be turned to their fathers, and the fathers to the children, living or dead, to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man. If Elijah did not come, the whole earth would be smitten.

There will be here and there a Stake for the gathering of the Saints. Some may have cried peace, but the Saints and the world will have little peace from henceforth. Let this not hinder us from going to the Stakes; for God has told us to flee, not dallying, or we shall be scattered, one here, and another there. There your children shall be blessed, and you in the midst of friends, where you may be blessed. The Gospel net gathers of every kind.

I prophesy that that man, who tarries after he has an opportunity of going will be afflicted by the Devil. Wars are at hand; we must not delay, but are not required to sacrifice. We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object. When wars come, we shall have to flee to Zion. The cry is to make haste. The last revelation says, "Ye shall not have time to have gone over the earth, until these things come." It will come as did the cholera, war, fires, and earthquakes, one pestilence after another, &c., until the Ancient of Days come; then judgment will be given to the Saints.

Whatever you may hear about me or Kirtland, take no notice of it; for if it be a place of refuge, the Devil will use his greatest efforts to trap the Saints. You must make yourselves acquainted with those men who, like Daniel, pray three times a day to the house of the Lord. Look to the Presidency and receive instruction. Every man who is afraid, covetous, &c., will be taken in a snare. The time is soon coming when no man will have any peace but in Zion and her Stakes.

I saw men hunting the lives of their own sons, and brother murdering brother, women killing their own daughters, and daughters seeking the lives of their mothers. I saw armies arrayed against armies; I saw blood, desolation, fires, &c. The Son of Man has said that the mother shall be against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, &c. These things are at our doors. They will follow the Saints of God from city to city. Satan will rage, and the spirit of the Devil is now enraged. I know not how soon these things will take place; and with a view of them, shall I cry peace? No. I will lift up my voice and testify of them. How long you will have good crops, and the famine be kept off, I do not know. When the fig tree leaves, know then that summer is nigh at hand.

We may look for angels and receive their ministration, but we are to try the spirits and prove them, for it is often the case that men make a mistake in regard to these things. God has so ordained that, when he has communicated, no vision is to be taken but what you see by the seeing of the eye, or what you hear by the hearing of the ear. When you see a vision, pray for the interpretation. If you get not this, shut it up. There must be certainty in this matter. An open vision will manifest that which is more important. Lying spirits are going forth in the earth. There will be great manifestations of spirit, both false and true. Being born again comes by the Spirit of God, through ordinances. An angel of God never has wings. Some will say that they have seen a spirit—that he offered them his hand, but they did not touch it. This is a lie. First, it is contrary to the plan of God. A spirit cannot come but in glory. An angel has flesh and bones: we see not their glory. The Devil may appear as an angel of light. Ask God to reveal it. If it be of the Devil, he will flee from you; if of God, he will manifest himself, or make it manifest. We may come to Jesus and ask him: he will know all about it. If he comes to a little child, he will adapt himself to the language and capacity of a little child.

Every spirit, or vision, or singing is not of God. The Devil is an orator. He is powerful. He took our Savior onto a pinnacle of the Temple, and kept him in the wilderness for forty days. The gift of discerning spirits will be given to the Presiding Elder. Pray for him that he may have this gift. Speak not in the gift of tongues without understanding it, or without interpretation. The Devil can speak in tongues: the Adversary will come with his work. He can tempt all classes—can speak in English or Dutch. Let no one speak in tongues, unless he interpret, except by the consent of the one who is placed to preside; then he may discern or interpret, or another may. Let us seek for the glory of Abraham, Noah, Adam, the Apostles, who have communion with these things, and then we shall be among that number when Christ comes.