

***The.
Promised
Messiah***
The first coming of Christ

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then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the saints. . . .

“Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even he will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions—Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn.” (*Teachings*, pp. 149-51.)

There are, of course, those whose callings and election have been made sure who have never exercised the faith nor exhibited the righteousness which would enable them to commune with the Lord on the promised basis. There are even those who neither believe nor know that it is possible to see the Lord in this day, and they therefore are without the personal incentive that would urge them onward in the pursuit of this consummation so devoutly desired by those with spiritual insight.

Priesthood Prepares Men to See God

When we speak of seeing the Lord and of talking to him face to face, we have reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, to our Messiah, to the Son of the Father who comes to represent his Father, to minister for and on his behalf and to act in his place and stead. But as we are aware, those who receive the Second Comforter not only have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend them from time to time, but the Son

manifests the Father unto them, and the two of them take up their abode, as it were, with mortal men, men who also hold “communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn.” (*Teachings*, p. 151.)

It follows that both the Father and the Son may be and often are involved in the appearances of Deity to man. In his own discourse on the Second Comforter, and after having said that he himself would come to his disciples, the Lord Jesus said: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23.) With reference to this, speaking by the spirit of revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: “John 14:23—The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse, is a personal appearance; and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man’s heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false.” (D&C 130:3.) In point of practical reality, it is fair to say that there have been, as we shall note shortly, “many, exceeding great many” appearances of the Lord, meaning Christ, and a more limited number of appearances of the Lord, meaning the Father. And we shall also hereafter note the limitations that the Father imposes upon himself with reference to his own personal appearances.

Brethren whose calling and election is made sure always hold the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. Without this delegation of power and authority they cannot be sealed up unto eternal life. Our revelation itself says: “The more sure word of prophecy means a man’s knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood.” (D&C 131:5.)

It follows that the priesthood is the power, authority, and means that prepares men to see their Lord; also, that in the priesthood is found everything that is needed to bring this consummation to pass. Accordingly, it is written: “The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of

the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." (D&C 107:18-19.)

"The keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church"! Clearly no spiritual blessing is available to mortal man on earth that can compare with personal communion and converse with the Gods of heaven. Such attainments on the part of the prophets of old are the very things that set them apart above all their fellows. Keys open doors; keys are the directing and controlling power where priestly things are concerned. Thus, through the priesthood the door may be opened and the way provided for men to see the Father and the Son. From all of this it follows, automatically and axiomatically, that if and when the holy priesthood operates to the full in the life of any man, he will receive its great and full blessings, which are that rending of the heavens and that parting of the veil of which we now speak.

Truly, as Paul said of holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood who magnified their callings, thus qualifying to receive all of the blessings held in store for such faithful persons: "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels"; that is, the heavens are opened unto you, and as with Enoch and Moses and the brother of Jared, nothing is withheld from your view and understanding. "Ye are come . . . To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect"; that is, you are in communion with the faithful of all ages past who now mingle together in a state of exaltation, you see God who is the Judge of all, and you commune with the departed spirits of the just. "Ye are come . . . To Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel"; that is, you see Jesus, by the sprinkling of whose blood, as it were, salvation

comes. Having so taught, Paul issues this warning: "See that ye refuse not him [the Lord] that speaketh." (Heb. 12:22-25.) Rather, accept the priesthood and let it operate in your life to the full until all these blessings flow to you as they flowed to those of old who magnified their callings.

All of the holy prophets and righteous men of old held the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. This "priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations, and is without beginning of days or end of years. . . . 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." God is known in and through and because of the priesthood; without it he would remain unknown. Through the priesthood the Holy Ghost is given to men, which Comforter is sent forth to bear record of the Father and the Son; also, through the priesthood men are able to progress in spiritual things until they gain personal communion with Deity. "Therefore, in the ordinances thereof," the revelation continues, "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; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live." That is to say, in and through the holy priesthood, including all the laws and rites that go with it, the power of godliness, or in other words the power of righteousness, is brought to pass in the lives of men. Without these priesthood laws and powers, God's power and glory would not be revealed to man on earth. Without them they would not see the face of God, for if they did, his glory would destroy them. Sinful men cannot see the face of God and live. (JST, Ex. 33:20.)

"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 while in

the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also." (D&C 84:17-26.) What a calamity! Because they did not use the priesthood for the purpose for which it was given—and it was given that they might sanctify themselves so as to "behold the face of God"—the Lord withdrew the very priesthood itself. Israel, as a people, was left with the preparatory gospel only, with the law of Moses. Her people were denied what they might have had because they did not magnify their callings in the priesthood. A little thoughtful reflection will cause us to conclude that there are those in latter-day Israel who are not striving to use the Melchizedek Priesthood for the purpose for which it was given any more than did our ancient ancestors. Again—what a calamity!

However sad it is that Israel (except for isolated groups and occasional instances) failed to use the holy priesthood to sanctify themselves so as to be able to see the face of God and live, it is refreshing to know that there were other peoples in other places who did take advantage of these blessings when they were offered to them. From Alma's great discourse on the higher priesthood we learn: "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; Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. 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, exceeding great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God." Though Israel failed to sanctify themselves and enter into the rest of the Lord, others did; others by faith and righteousness attained the fulness of the glory of God. And

note how many were so involved: "There were many, exceeding great many."

After having recited what others had obtained through righteousness, Alma exhorted his own people in these words: "My brethren, I would that ye should humble yourselves before God, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest." (Alma 13:10-13.) Along this same line, the Prophet Joseph Smith said to his brethren, the elders of latter-day Israel: "It is the privilege of every elder to speak of the things of God; and could we all come together with one heart and one mind in perfect faith the veil might as well be rent today as next week, or any other time, and if we will but cleanse ourselves and covenant before God, to serve him, it is our privilege to have an assurance that God will protect us." (*Teachings*, p. 9.)

In November 1831, the Lord said to the little flock of elders so far ordained in his newly established latter-day kingdom: "It is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am—not with the carnal neither natural mind, but with the spiritual. For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God. Neither can any natural man abide the presence of God, neither after the carnal mind. Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected. Let not your minds turn back; and when ye are worthy in mine own due time, ye shall see and know that which is conferred upon you by the hands of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun." (D&C 67:10-14.) That which had been conferred upon them by the Prophet was the power to see the Lord. The name of that power is the Melchizedek Priesthood. Many of these first elders in the kingdom did qualify in due course, while they yet dwelt in

the flesh, to see the face of their King. How much spiritual progress we have made in the Church since the day of this revelation may be measured in terms of the number of the elders of Israel for whom the veil has been rent and who have seen the face of Him whose we are.

Apostles and Elders Should See God

All Christendom knows, or should know, that the ancient apostles were special witnesses of the Lord's name; that they saw him after he rose from the dead; that he spent forty days with them as a resurrected being, teaching them all things that it was expedient for them to know pertaining to his kingdom. Those who believe the Book of Mormon are aware that, as with the Twelve in Jerusalem, so with the Twelve on the American continent: they were all witnesses of the Lord—they all felt the nail marks in his hands and feet; they all thrust their hands into his side. There is general awareness in the Church that the latter-day Twelve hold the same office, possess the same priesthood and keys, and bear the same witness of the divine Sonship of him who redeemed us as did their predecessors in days of old. It is true that the witness of the Holy Ghost is sure and absolute and that a man can know with a perfect knowledge, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God who was crucified for the sins of the world. This unshakeable certainty can rest in his soul even though he has not seen the face of his Lord. But it is also true that those who have this witness of the Spirit are expected, like their counterparts of old, to see and hear and touch and converse with the Heavenly Person, as did those of old.

Oliver Cowdery, the Associate President of the Church, who held the keys of the kingdom jointly with the Prophet Joseph Smith, having received them from holy angels sent to earth for that very purpose, was appointed to give the apostolic charge to the first quorum of apostles called in this dispensation. Speaking by the spirit of inspiration and by virtue

of visions he had received, Elder Cowdery set forth, in the spirit of pure inspiration, the nature of the apostolic office and what is expected of those who hold it. We shall quote those portions of his charge which deal with the obligation that rests upon all members of the Council of the Twelve to see the face of Him whose witnesses they are.

In a special charge to Elder Parley P. Pratt, we find these words: "The ancients . . . had this testimony—that they had seen the Savior after he rose from the dead. You must bear the same testimony; or your mission, your labor, your toil, will be in vain. You must bear the same testimony, that there is but one God, one Mediator; he that hath seen him, will know him, and testify of him."

In the general charge to all of the Twelve, Elder Cowdery said: "It is necessary that you receive a testimony from heaven to yourselves; so that you can bear testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and that you have seen the face of God. That is more than the testimony of an angel. When the proper time arrives, you shall be able to bear this testimony to the world. When you bear testimony that you have seen God, this testimony God will never suffer to fall, but will bear you out; although many will not give heed, yet others will. You will therefore see the necessity of getting this testimony from heaven.

"Never cease striving until you have seen God face to face. Strengthen your faith; cast off your doubts, your sins, and all your unbelief; and nothing can prevent you from coming to God. Your ordination is not full and complete till God has laid his hand upon you. We require as much to qualify us as did those who have gone before us; God is the same. If the Savior in former days laid his hands upon his disciples, why not in latter days? . . .

"The time is coming when you will be perfectly familiar with the things of God. . . . You have our best wishes, you have our most fervent prayers, that you may be able to bear this testimony, that you have seen the face of God. Therefore call upon him in faith in mighty prayer till you