

Patriarchal Priesthood

Joseph Smith taught, using Hebrews 7 as background material, the "Three Grand Orders" of priesthood:

There are three grand orders of priesthood referred to here.

1st. The King of Shiloam (Salem) had power and authority over that of Abraham, holding the key and the power of endless life The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right from the eternal God, and not by descent from father and mother; and that priesthood is as eternal as God Himself, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.

The 2nd Priesthood is Patriarchal authority. Go to and finish the temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood.

The 3rd is what is called the Levitical Priesthood, consisting of priests to administer in outward ordinances, made without an oath; but the Priesthood of Melchizedek is by an oath and covenant.

The Holy Ghost is God's messenger to administer in all those priesthoods.
(*Words of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 245; *History of the Church*, 5:554-556)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie observed, "Joseph Smith says that in the temple of God there is an order of priesthood that is patriarchal. 'Go to the temple,' he says, 'and find out about this order.' So I went to the temple, and I took my wife with me, and we kneeled at the altar. There on that occasion we entered, the two of us, into an 'order of the priesthood,' When we did it, we had sealed upon us, on a conditional basis, every blessing that God promised Father Abraham—the blessings of exaltation and eternal increase. The name of that order of priesthood, which is patriarchal in nature, because Abraham was a natural patriarch to his posterity, is the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage"("Eternal Family," 7).

Three principles underlie the patriarchal order. First, the primal parents of the race were in their paradisiacal state in Eden united in eternal bonds before death entered their lives. Second, the fall of man and the continual source of degeneration in this world have resulted in the estrangement of parents from God, from each other, and from their children. Third, the healing of this broken harmony is the essence of eternal life, as is the perpetuation of powers of creation and procreation-eternal increase.

The patriarchal order is, in the words of Elder James E. Talmage, a condition where "woman shares with man the blessings of the Priesthood," where husband and wife minister, "seeing and understanding alike, and cooperating to the full in the government of their family kingdom" (*Young Woman's Journal* 25 [Oct. 1914]:602-603). A man cannot hold this priesthood without a wife, and a woman cannot share the blessings of this priesthood without a husband, sealed in the temple. (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism* "Patriarchal Order of the Priesthood")

A woman participates in the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood through temple sealing to a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder. Exaltation and eternal life in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom are achieved only as the fulness of the priesthood is attained through building and achieving an eternal marriage. The highest intellectual and spiritual development of both men and women is to become as God is. Becoming as God cannot be achieved by men alone or women alone. Only through the sealing ordinances of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, performed in the temple of the Lord and ratified by the Holy Spirit of Promise, and through faithful, righteous living can a man and a woman join in an eternal marriage unit wherein they may attain a fulness of the priesthood and exaltation together (see *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:18–19). All blessings, benefits, and inheritances of the Melchizedek Priesthood are equally shared and achieved by husband and wife if they keep their covenants and live in love, harmony, and cooperation in the Lord. (Elder Dale G. Renlund "The Melchizedek Priesthood" Chapter 1)

God offers to all His daughters multiple opportunities to have the fulness of His priesthood and to receive eternal power and blessings. This is where equality really matters. For some, the questions surrounding why God directs that only men are ordained to priesthood offices may be all consuming. They may feel that for God not to be a "respector of persons" He must delegate tasks equally. However, participating in eternal equality before God is infinitely more important than being equally delegated earthly tasks. (Elder Dale G. Renlund "The Melchizedek Priesthood" Chapter 1)

Boyd K. Packer "There are references to a patriarchal priesthood. The patriarchal order is not a third, separate priesthood. Whatever relates to the patriarchal order is embraced in the Melchizedek Priesthood. 'All other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to [the Melchizedek] priesthood.' [D&C 107:5] The patriarchal order is a part of the Melchizedek Priesthood which enables endowed and worthy men to preside over their posterity in time and eternity." *Packer, Boyd K. (Ensign February 1993), "What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government"*,

Those who shall hereafter rule and reign in eternity as exalted beings will form a patriarchal chain which will begin with Father Adam and spread out until every exalted person is linked in. Exaltation consists in the continuation of the family unit in eternity, and every family which so continues will find its proper place in the eternal organizational framework which the Almighty has ordained. None will be forgotten. Unworthy mortal links will be dropped in eternity, for there is no family in which all generations will attain exaltation; later generations of worthy families will be welded into the links formed by their ancestors who became worthy of a like exaltation with them. All those after the day of Abraham (of whatever literal lineage they may be) who so live as to be worthy of a

place in this great patriarchal chain will be welded into Abraham's lineage and shall rise up and bless him as their father." Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 558.

PATRIARCHAL ORDER: FROM ADAM TO MOSES. The order of this priesthood which was established in the beginning was patriarchal. The authority descended from father to son, and those who held it were high priests. This order of descent from Adam to Noah is given in the Doctrine and Covenants. Noah, who stands next to Adam in authority, brought this priesthood through the flood, and it continued from generation to generation. Abraham, the 10th from Noah, received special blessings from the Lord, and the priesthood continued through him and his seed with the promise that all who received the gospel should be counted as Abraham's seed and partake of his blessings. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol.3, p.160 - p.161

The patriarchal authority has come down from Abraham through Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim. Why Manasseh, the older son of Joseph, was not chosen we do not know. If we had the full record, this matter would no doubt be made clear. **All through the centuries from the beginning to the days of Moses, the patriarchal priesthood prevailed.** Those who held this authority were high priests. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol.3, p.161

From this we learn the government of Egypt was one of the first organized after the flood, and that the first ruler established it after the pattern which had come down from the beginning. We judge that the same custom prevailed in all other countries in the past, for it seems to have been taken for granted that the oldest son was by right heir to governmental authority. This practice prevailed not only among those holding the Priesthood but was also followed by all peoples who rejected the Gospel and the power of divine authority. In those countries where kingdoms yet obtain we find this custom still in vogue. But today a change is taking place in **worldly governments, and the patriarchal order**, or that which is called the right of primogeniture, is fast fading away. In its stead republican forms of government are being established. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., *The Way to Perfection*, p.113

The curse pronounced by Noah on Pharaoh 'pertaining to the priesthood' was not because of the color of his skin. The first Pharaoh established an **imitation patriarchal order** of government patterned after the patriarchal reign of Adam, and also Noah. He could not have that 'right of priesthood' that is, the right of the patriarchal order, because he was not of the proper lineage. The right of that order was conferred upon Shem, the rightful heir." Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol.2, p.173

How did Adam bring his descendants into the presence of the Lord? The answer: **Adam and his descendants entered into the priesthood order of God. Today we would say they went to the house of the Lord and received their blessings. The order of priesthood spoken of in the scriptures is sometimes referred to as the patriarchal order** because it came down from father to son. But this order is otherwise described in modern revelation as an order of family government **wherein a man and woman enter into a covenant with God just as did Adam and Eve to be sealed for eternity**, to have posterity, and to do the will and work of God throughout their mortality. Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.257

Revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith supplement those of the New Testament to indicate that the Church of the Firstborn consists of those who have the inheritance of the Firstborn and become joint-heirs with Christ in receiving all that the Father has (Rom. 8:14-17; D&C 84:33-38; see Heirs of God). The Lord said, "If you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; Y IY am the Firstborn; Y And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the Church of the Firstborn" (D&C 93:20-22). **The Church of the Firstborn is the divine patriarchal order in its eternal form. Building the priesthood family order on this earth by receiving sealings in the temple is a preparation and foundation for this blessing in eternity** (see Gospel of Abraham). *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Vol.1, CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN

As pertaining to mortality, the priesthood was first given to Adam. (Moses 6:67-68.) He stands at the head as the presiding high priest (under Christ) over all the earth for all ages. (Teachings, pp. 157-158.) This priesthood of the holy order continued with his worthy descendants until the day of Moses. (D. & C. 84:5-16; 107:41-53.) **Through Moses the Lord attempted to set up the house of Israel as a kingdom of priests of the holy order, with each man and his family enjoying the full blessings of the patriarchal order and priesthood.** (Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6.) Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p.477 MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD

Those mortal Israelites who are faithful in all things, who obey the full law of the gospel, will continue on as members of the house of Israel in a future eternity, there **ruling as kings and priests forever in the patriarchal chain.** Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p.389 ISRAEL

It appears that anciently **under the Patriarchal Order certain special blessings, rights, powers, and privileges -- collectively called the birthright -- passed from the father to his firstborn son.** (Gen. 43:33.) In later ages special blessings and prerogatives have been poured out upon all the worthy descendants of some who gained special blessings and birthrights anciently. (3 Ne. 20:25-27.) Justification for this system in large part, lies in the pre-existent preparation and training of those born in the lines destined to inherit preferential endowments. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p.87 BIRTHRIGHT

Among the saints the **family is the basic unit of the Church** and of society, and its needs and preservation in righteousness take precedence over all other things. **True family organization is patriarchal** in nature; it is **patterned after that organization which exists in heaven** (Eph. 3:15); it always **consists of a husband and wife who have entered into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage**; and if the couple so united are blessed with children, they too become members of the family. Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.273 FAMILY

What a wondrous thing it is to behold mortal men -- **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our patriarchal fathers -- receiving the divine word that in them and in their seed all generations shall be blessed**, and that their posterity, through the continuation of the eternal family unit, shall be as the dust of the earth in number, as the sands upon the seashore in multitude, as the stars in the sidereal heavens in endless continuance! As we ponder such a glorious thought, may we ask: Is it conceivable that such a mighty seer as Joseph Smith might also have received this promise? As we shall see shortly, he did; it was the same promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Would we dare go further and ask if the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints might also be in I this category? He is, as are his counselors. And what of the Twelve? They too have been so blessed, as have all the First Quorum of the Seventy. And as the crowning cause for wonderment, I that God who is no respecter of persons has given a **like promise to every elder in the kingdom who has gone to the holy temple and I entered into the blessed order of matrimony there performed. Every person married in the temple for time and for all eternity has sealed upon him, conditioned upon his faithfulness, all of the blessings of the ancient patriarchs, including the crowning promise and assurance of eternal increase, which means, literally, a posterity as numerous as the dust particles of the earth.** Bruce R. McConkie, The Millennial Messiah, p.264

Celestial marriage is an "order of the priesthood." It is the patriarchal order that opens the door to a continuation of the family unit in eternity. Those who enter this order of matrimony, "meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2), and who are true and faithful, will have "a continuation of the seeds forever and ever." They will have a "continuation of the lives" in the realms ahead. Their reward will be "eternal lives," meaning endless lives or eternal increase. (D&C 132:19-24.) Thus Joseph Smith said: "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life," and who are true and faithful in all things, "and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory." (Teachings, pp. 300-301.) Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, p.312

When we receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, we enter into a covenant with the Lord. It is **the covenant of exaltation**. In it, we promise to magnify our callings in the priesthood, to keep the commandments, "to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life," to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God," and **to enter the patriarchal order which leads to a continuation of the family unit in the realms ahead**. In return, the Lord covenants and promises that we shall inherit eternal life. Of those who keep their part of the covenant, he says: "[They] are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies." That is, they are born again; they become alive in Christ; they are new creatures of the Holy Ghost; they become the sons of God and thus joint-heirs with Christ. "They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God." **They become heirs of the promises made to the fathers, the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their seed after them would have the right to the gospel and the priesthood and eternal life**. In setting forth as much as can, with propriety, be spoken outside of the temple, the Lord says that "the fulness of the priesthood" is received only in the temple itself. This fulness is received through washings, anointings, solemn assemblies, oracles in holy places, conversations, ordinances, endowments, and sealings. (D&C 124:40.) **It is in the temple that we enter into the patriarchal order, the order of priesthood that bears the name "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage."** Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, p.315

The Church of the Firstborn is the church among exalted beings in the highest heaven of the celestial world. It is the church among those for whom the family unit continues in eternity. In a sense it is the inner circle within the Lord's church on earth. **It is composed of those who have entered into that patriarchal order which is called the new and everlasting covenant of marriage**. As baptism admits repentant souls to membership in the earthly church, so celestial marriage opens the door to membership in the heavenly church. Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, p.337

The prophet Elias conferred the keys of the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham (D&C 110:12), restoring the patriarchal order of marriage and the gifts and blessings given to Abraham and his posterity (Joseph Fielding Smith DS 3:127; Bruce R. McConkie MD, p. 203). Abraham also sought for the priesthood of the "fathers concerning the seed" or the Patriarchal Priesthood (Abr.1:2-4). This priesthood was also given unto him (Abr. 1:16-19) and "rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promises were made" (D&C 107:40). **This priesthood, which is a part of the Melchizedek, has two main functions. One function is the sealing together of families through patriarchal lineage and is obtained through the temple ordinances** TPJS 308, 322-23).

THE PATRIARCHAL ORDER. We find that after the days of Noah an order was introduced called the **patriarchal order, in which every man managed his own family affairs. And prominent men among them were kings and priests unto God, and officiated in what is known among us as the priesthood of the Son of God, or the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek**. Man began again to multiply on the face of the earth, and the heads of families became their kings and priests, that is, the fathers of their own

people. And they were more or less under the influence and guidance of the Almighty. JD, 17:207, October 7, 1874. John Taylor, The Gospel Kingdom, p.139

But does not the patriarch stand in the same relationship to the church as Adam did to his family, and as Abraham and Jacob did to theirs? No. This is another mistake which is made by our junior, and one that may be very easily made inadvertently. **Adam was the natural father of his posterity, who were his family and over whom he presided as patriarch, prophet, priest, and king.** Both Abraham and Jacob stood in the same relationship to their families. But not so with Father Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, or William Smith. They were not the natural fathers of the church, and could not stand in the same capacity as Adam, Abraham, or Jacob; but inasmuch as there had been none to bless for generations past, according to the ancient order, they were ordained and set apart for the purpose of conferring patriarchal blessings, to hold the keys of this priesthood, and unlock the door, that had long been closed upon the human family: that blessings might again be conferred according to the ancient order, and those who were orphans; or had no father to bless them, might receive it through a patriarch who should act as proxy for their father, and **that fathers might again be enabled to act as patriarchs to their families, and bless their children. For like all other ordinances in the church, this had been neglected and must needs be restored.** John Taylor, The Gospel Kingdom, p.148

Then came the prophets Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah, each in turn, with the scripture saying that "Noah prophesied, and taught the things of God, even as it was in the beginning." (Moses 8:16.) From Noah the prophetic powers passed to Shem and his descendants, including Melchizedek, **up to this point the perfect patriarchal system had prevailed and the prophetic powers and patriarchal priesthood had passed from father to son.** Melchizedek conferred the priesthood upon Abraham, and soon it was spread out among peoples and nations of whom we have no knowledge, spread out without apparent reference to the perfect system of patriarchal descent. By way of lineage, it went from Abraham to Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, and to the increasing hosts of Israel. But from Esaias, who lived in the days of Abraham and of whom we know nothing else, it went successively to Gad, Jeremy, Elihu, Caleb, and Jethro, who was the father-in-law of Moses and the one who conferred the priesthood upon Israel's greatest prophet. (D&C 84:5-16.) Bruce R. McConkie, The Promised Messiah, p.80

After the flood, Shem and Melchizedek and others unknown to us **continued to exercise divine power among the righteous in the Old World through the patriarchal order.** In the New World the Jaredite prophets held similar sway. **Abraham received from Melchizedek the power to perpetuate the patriarchal system,** a system that would make him the Father of the Faithful from that day onward as long as the earth should stand. He was called by the Lord to "be a father of many nations." To him the Lord said: "I will establish my covenant [the gospel covenant] between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." (Genesis 17:4, 7.) "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22: 18), meaning that all who thereafter believed what Abraham believed and lived as Abraham lived would bless themselves through the everlasting gospel covenant. Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, p.36