

Oath & Covenant of Priesthood

(Priest Lesson July 2015 – Roald Peterson)

Introduction

- Righteousness is much more than simply being good. To be righteous means to make and keep covenants.
- Our progression to godhood has been and will continue to be marked by making and fulfilling covenants which lead us to higher levels of righteousness.
- One of the greatest of these is the oath and covenant of the priesthood.

Progression in the New and Everlasting Covenant

- Years of purifying service are required to prepare us for celestial glory.
 - Our effort cannot be casual, but must include our whole heart, might, mind, and strength.
- Initially, we may serve out of a sense of duty, which is sufficient to provide blessings and shelter in the new and everlasting covenant.
- We leave behind telestial bondage and complacency, and a move toward greater knowledge, freedom, power, and commitment.
- As we have experiences we begin to be motivated by understanding the covenant, and we hunger and thirst for greater knowledge and experience -- we like the fruit we have tasted and want more.
- Keeping commandments holds is firmly on the strait and narrow path.
- We begin to understand that the covenant is not simply a set of laws, but instead is a relationship.
 - We see the covenant is about love from the Father and the Son -- which leads us to love them in return.
- As we continue our service our ability to love God and all those around us grows -- and we become Zion.
 - As Zion people we can stand in the presence of God.
- Finally, the covenant allows us to become like God, inherit all that he has, do all that he does, and draw upon his resources to build our own kingdom.

Steps of Receiving God's Name

1. At baptism and confirmation we agreed to take upon ourselves the name of Christ.
2. During the sacrament we take the name of Christ more specifically by partaking of emblems that represent his body and blood, sacrificed during the atonement.
3. Later, we receive the covenant of the priesthood where the Lord again puts his name upon us, and also gives us authority to do his work.
4. We then go to the Temple to receive the revelation of the priesthood. We receive, as Brigham Young said, sacred words, signs, and tokens that point Christ and the power of his name. (Discourses of BY, p416)
5. Finally, when we marry for time and eternity in the Temple, we enter into the patriarchal order of the priesthood. We are sealed to our spouse as securely as we are bound to the Father and the Son and we enter the door of exaltation. God's name is sealed upon us as his Father's name was sealed upon him.

Progression of Relationship

- Our relationship with God begins with being a (1) servant, then progresses to being a (2) friend, and culminates with our being called (3) son or daughter.
- We can see this progression in the ministry of Joseph Smith:
 - (DC 1:17) Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments;
 - (DC 93:45) Verily, I say unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., or in other words, I will call you friends, for you are my friends, and ye shall have an inheritance with me—
 - (DC 121:7) My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;
- If you desire exaltation you will need to follow the same progression.

Oath & Covenant of Priesthood

- As Aaronic priesthood holders you are in training to receive the Melchizedek priesthood. This priesthood is received with an oath and covenant. It is found in DC 84.
 - (DC 84:33–44) 33 For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.
 - Magnify = fulfill (grow into). Become more like God in each calling (nursery can teach just as much as being president of the church).
 - Sanctify = become pure and holy (consecrated).
 - Renewing = applies to both spiritual and temporal, longer life, to be made celestial again, even translation.
 - 34 They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.
 - Become heirs of the prophets – who are in turn heirs of God.
 - Church = Church of the Firstborn.
 - Kingdom = kingdom of heaven.
 - Elect = sons and daughters (errors) of God.
 - 35 And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;
 - Receive priesthood = receive fullness of priesthood power (not just being ordained).
 - Receive Lord = second comforter, attributes of Christ, to become a joint-heir with Christ. (Rom 8:16-17)
 - 36 For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;
 - Receive teachings of the apostles and prophets
 - 37 And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

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38 And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

39 And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.

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

41 But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come.

- Only we can break the covenant of the priesthood – God cannot because he is God.
- There is a warning here: if we receive this covenant (more than simple ordination - Holy Ghost must ratify it), and turn fully to the dark side, we become perdition.

42 And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye have received, which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice out of the heavens; and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you.

- This is the curse upon those who will not respond to the message of priesthood holders, and to those who refuse to become priesthood holders. It simply promises woe to them; it doesn't define what woe is.

43 And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

44 For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

This describes the original test that we were sent here to do:

(Abraham 3:25–26) 25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

26 And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.

- When we receive the higher priesthood we covenant with God to do our best to act in his name as he would. We fulfill this covenant by performing our priesthood callings, and learning to do what God would do in the many choices of life.
- In turn, God makes an oath that if we strive to fulfill our priesthood covenant he will help us, guide us, teach us, and strengthen us. And when we learn to fulfill the covenant – to be as he is – he will give us all that he has. We will become his heirs.
- There amount of work and change that we must accomplish is impossible – unless we seek the Savior's help. Then it becomes doable. And when we achieve what we set out to do we will receive everything – godhood – the ability to create universes without end,

populate them with our children, and help many of those children become gods also.

- Can you imagine a more worthwhile covenant or a greater oath? I think not.