

Podcast Episode 20: Angels, Part 2

QUESTION: What are angels like, how do we interact with them, what are they here to do, and how are they different from us and from other heavenly beings?

DENVER: There's also, in scripture, a teaching that says that all priesthood is one, the original name for which was the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. It's all that. But there are different degrees or portions of that one, unified priesthood. Therefore, if you have anything, if you have any priesthood at all, you have some portion of the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God, however limited that may be.

I gave a talk in Orem in which I explained that the best way to regard priesthood is as a fellowship. You can have priesthoods among all kinds of people. Women can have priesthoods-- it's a fellowship of women. But fellowship determines priesthood. If you have a fellowship with men, you have a priesthood of men. If you have a fellowship with angels, you have a priesthood that involves something called the "keys of the Aaronic priesthood" because your fellowship with angels has extended into the angelic realm. If you have fellowship with the Son of God, you have priesthood that's associated with that. And if you've been in the presence of the Father, you have an association with Him, and you hold priesthood that is a Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. And the degree to which a priesthood conferral upon a person takes effect is dependent upon the heed and diligence that they pursue the things of God and the degree to which they acquire fellowship with such heavenly things.

Joseph Smith said: "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." That's in *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* on pages 180-181.

Also, "*all they who receive this priesthood...*" In the singular-- now we're talking about that which is the fulness. We're now talking about something other than the different portions. We're talking about this priesthood. "...*Receive me, saith the Lord*" (D&C 84:35). Take the words literally, and say to yourself, if you've got this, if this is what you have managed to accumulate, then one of the evidences of having accumulated it will be receiving the Lord.

"For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me" (verse 36). I suggested in Centerville that the word "servants" in this context meant "angels." An "angel," the word is derived from a Greek word that simply means "messenger." And the messenger can't be on their own errand. They have to have a message that is being brought from another, the other being the Lord. Therefore, if the message originates with the Lord, and the message is delivered by a messenger, it does not matter if the one delivering the message is a mortal, as we find in the *Book of Mormon* where King Benjamin, I believe, said, "Last night the Lord told me this," or "Last night the angel taught me this, and so today I'm going to teach you this"-- in that context, King Benjamin was the angel. And therefore, as long as they bear a message from the Lord, they fit the definition.

"He that receiveth my servants receiveth me." That is, if it's the voice of God, and it's coming to you from Him, and it's authentically His message, and you receive it as if it were from His own mouth, then you've received from Him, at least, His voice. But it doesn't end there.

"He that receiveth me receiveth my Father" (verse 37). In this context, what he's talking about is the same thing that you find in the 14th chapter of the book of John, in which Christ says that He will not leave you comfortless, but He will come to comfort you. And then He and His Father will "take up their abode with you" (John 14:23). This is not an abstraction. The idea that this is something that happens in your heart, you can read in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, is an old sectarian notion and is false (D&C 130:3). It means a literal appearance of these holy beings to minister, to comfort, and ultimately to take up their abode.

"He that receiveth my Father...," and I would add, while yet in the flesh, *"...receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him. And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood" (verses 38-39).* And what is that oath and that covenant? It is the Father's word which cannot be broken. It's not something you aspire to, but it's something you accept by the conditions that are set out in Doctrine and Covenants section 84. It is something which, received by an oath and a covenant, given by the one who can give covenants-- just as we talked about in Centerville-- it's a covenant which originates from God. It is His word which cannot be broken. Therefore, when the Father covenants that you're going to inherit, it is a covenant that will surely come to pass.

This is Doctrine and Covenants 121:36, *"That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness."* I want to suggest to you that the word "Powers of Heaven" is a proper noun and not just a phrase encompassing some abstraction. If you are an Elder or you are a High Priest or you are a Seventy or you are a member of the Quorum of the Twelve-- whatever that office is, it is appropriate to refer to you by the nomenclature *Elder*-- Elder LeGrand Richards, Elder McConkie.

In any event, there is within the structure of the afterlife different rungs on Jacob's ladder. And they leak through in our scriptures, though Joseph never bothers parsing them. And whether you are talking about an Angel or an Archangel or a Principality or a Power or a Dominion or a Throne or a Cherubim or a Seraphim-- it doesn't matter which one you are referring to, it is appropriate-- just like it is appropriate to refer to all those offices as *Elder*-- to refer to any and all of them as *Powers*-- the "Powers of Heaven." Whatever rung these ministers may be upon, they are all Powers.

Well, let's go to Moses 7:27, "*Enoch beheld angels descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son; and the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion.*" There they show up again-- the "Powers of Heaven," plural, in the same verse where it's talking about angels descending. This is the kind of thing that is littered throughout the scriptures if you have the eyes to see it, because there is actually a structure there.

If you go to Doctrine and Covenants 84:26, it talks about: "*The lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel.*" Even the lesser priesthood holds some connection with heaven. Even the lesser priesthood holds forth the opportunity to have some link with the Powers of Heaven. Therefore, in the lesser priesthood there is an association, a fellowship, that is anticipated.

And of course, the greater priesthood that we looked at before in those verses (describing what Moses...) is that a priesthood that has a power of godliness that gets manifest unto men, in the flesh, "for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father and live." Don't let anyone deceive you into believing that this association is merely meant for the afterlife. If it were so, the words "in the flesh" (D&C 84:21) would not appear here and other places in the scriptures that I pointed out to you as I have gone through these various talks. It was meant to be laid hold upon here. And as a consequence of laying hold upon it here, you qualify to receive that in the world to come. And if you fail to lay hold upon that here, then "wo unto you." That doesn't mean that you are condemned forever. That just means that you've wasted *an* opportunity, and therefore, the struggle for you will continue.

Okay, if you view priesthood as a brotherhood or an association, then I want to suggest that the way in which you should parse the three orders of priesthood, is to parse them this way: As among men, it's merely a brotherhood of men. As between mankind and the heavens, the first order is an order in which there is an association between men and angels. The second order is an order in which there is an association between mankind and the Son of God. And the third order, the highest order, the patriarchal order, brings one into contact with the Patriarch, who of all the names that He could choose to be called by, chooses to have us call Him "Our Father who art in

Heaven"-- the third grand order being sonship to the Father, an association with Him who sits in the bosom of eternity and sustains all the creation.

The highest priesthood is an association with the Father, brought about as a consequence of the Father calling "My son." It is the Holy Order after the Son of God, because those who inherit that become, by definition, His Sons. They are the Church of the Firstborn because they are in association with, and made by the Father equal to, all those who rise up to be Firstborn.

I want to mention that beyond there being a fellowship of man (or males) and a brotherhood, there is also a fellowship that is extended, as well, to women. If you find a woman in scripture who has had the ministry of angels, you have a sister who has joined in that association. I won't take time to do so, but if you look in Judges 13:2-5, you have Samson's mother being ministered to by an angel, promising the coming of the one who would be a judge in Israel. You have in Genesis 18:9-15, Abraham's wife with angelic ministrants. And the most obvious case being Mary in the book of Luke 1:26-31, in which Mary is ministered to by Gabriel, one of the Elohim, who came to announce that she would conceive and bear a child though she knew no man.

There's this interesting set of verses beginning in verse 8 of D&C 1: *"And verily I say unto you, that they who go forth, bearing these tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth, to them is power given to seal both on earth and in heaven, the unbelieving and rebellious; Yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure-- Unto the day when the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his work, and measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man."* These are all negative. These are all sealing up unto destruction. These are all condemnations. These are all, in a word, Aaronic. But bear in mind the Aaronic priesthood is not without hope, because within in it is the power to baptize, which is an ordinance of hope. Primarily, however, the purpose of Aaronic priesthood is to condemn.

"There are three grand orders of priesthood referred to here. First, the king of Shiloam (Salem) had power and authority over that of Abraham, holding the key and the power of endless life. Angels..." now remember what I said earlier about there being different ranks, "...Angels desire to look into it, but they have set up too many stakes" (TPJS, page 322).

See, the angels were unwilling to receive what they might have received, and as a consequence of that, they could not go. Look in Doctrine and Covenants 132:16, *"Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory."* Angels, in this context, if you will hear it, are included within Joseph's description of "Angels desire to look into it but they have set up

too many stakes." As a consequence of their unwillingness to receive what God freely offers to all, and they're hedging up their own way by their failure to develop that faith and confidence necessary to lay hold upon the blessings of heaven, because they believe that those blessings are reserved for others and not for them. Because as the de-canonized now *Lectures on Faith* suggest, they fear that they do not have the power to lay hold upon all the blessings which were entirely reserved and promised to them. Because they have not that faith required, they become limited in what they seek for and therefore, what they obtain.

Joseph Smith also said, "John wrested the keys, the kingdom, the power, the glory from the Jews, by the holy anointing and decree of heaven." That's *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 276. Doctrine and Covenants 84:28 points out that John: "...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."

John was sent forth, and in part, was sent forth to be rejected of the Jews so that he could wrest "the keys, the kingdom, the power and the glory from the Jews, and this by the holy anointing and decree of heaven," because an angel had established it and because it was the Powers of Heaven that were behind it.

Look what happens to Moses: "*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*" (Moses 1:4). Look at that! God's words never cease. Even when silence is caused to reign because the Powers of Heaven are so disgusted with humanity that they withdraw themselves, God's words don't cease at all! His words do not stop. And even if the angels refuse to minister, communicate, visit, yet will God still speak unto men.

Some people asked the question about God speaking to Cain as a result of the talk I gave at Idaho Falls, referring to your privilege of talking to God because He spoke to Cain. It doesn't say that God appeared to Cain; it says that God spoke to Cain. Cain heard the voice of God speaking to him. He didn't get caught up to the throne of God; he did not have a throne theophany; he was not brought back and redeemed from the fall; but he heard the voice of God. God spoke to Cain after the murder of Abel. The angels withdrew from him. The angels were grieved. They would have nothing to do, and yet God still spoke to him. His words are endless.

I don't care what malignancy you think you carry around within you. The fact is, none of you have done the same crap that Cain did, because Cain possessed greater knowledge that you did, at the time of the murder that he committed. And yet God spoke to him still. Therefore, have the confidence, even if you grieve angels, that God will talk to you: "*...My words for they never*

cease." Yeah, God is talkative. God desires us to know more than we know, if we will receive it. And the minute we tell Him to be quiet and withdraw and leave us alone, we are in the very act of damning ourselves. Because what we're saying is, "That which you offered unto us, we would prefer to be silence instead." Don't do that.

This is in section 132, beginning at verse 19: "*And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise....*" Then they are promised about midway through that verse that they'll "*...inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions.*" And it goes on to say: "*They....*" Notice it's not "he" and notice it's not "she"-- it is "they" because if you're going to pass by, you're going to have to be "they" and not "he" or "she", "*...they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.*"

The notion that you are going to succeed in acquiring the glory that is likened to God in a separate and single state is nowhere found as a promise in scripture. It's not a reasonable expectation. It's a non-scriptural expectation. It is a foolish hope, because it does not reckon to the things God created. Understand, those verses that we read in Genesis-- those verses were before the Fall. And the condition in which Adam and Eve found themselves at the time that those incidents took place-- they were immortal, they had not yet fallen. The marriage and the union of the two of them was intended to last forever because death had not yet entered into the world. And as God put it, it was "good." "Marry a wife," "sealed," "Holy Spirit of Promise," "pass by the angels," "enter into exaltation," "glory," "fulness"-- all of these words are applicable only to the man and the woman, together, as one. It's only applicable to the exalted state of a marriage that is worthy of preservation into eternity.

Everything that you hope to receive into the next life, even your expectations, all of that has to be obtained from God by covenant. I mentioned in answer to a question in Ephraim that the role of the woman was significant, even in the life of Christ. I mentioned that she anointed Him preliminary to His death and burial. One of the things that gave Him the expectation of coming forth out of the grave was the anointing that promised to Him-- why do you think in the temple the rites include preserving some of the functions of the body? It's not to make you healthy here and now; it's so that you can lay claim upon this as an expectation in the eternities. Because if you do not have the expectation conferred upon you by the Holy Spirit of Promise, you'll have to

get that in some other cycle. Because the only thing you will be able to take with you into eternity you obtain in this manner. Everything has to be obtained by a covenant.

Look at verse 13: *"Everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities,...."* It doesn't matter if it's ordained by men, and it doesn't even matter if someone sitting in eternity on a throne, who has authority in the presence of God, ordains it. Does not matter. *"...or principalities...."* That is talking about angels. That is talking about people from the other side. Even if they are in a position of authority in the presence of God, it doesn't matter-- *"Everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God"* (D&C 132).

The Keeper of the Gate is the Holy One of Israel, indeed! These words should mean something to you if you've listened to or read the text that we reviewed in Orem on priesthood. You should understand what God is saying here. You should understand that when it comes to some things that you hope to have continue into eternity, it is not enough to have even one of the "noble and great," even one of those who we regard as an Archangel, it doesn't matter. God, and God alone, holds the keys of death and hell. Christ paid that price. Christ has to be the one because He is the only one qualified to do this. He has to be the one. This is a non-delegable responsibility by He, who by virtue of bringing you back and promising you, becomes your Father in Heaven. If Christ is going to become your Father in Heaven, He's got that same responsibility to you that He imposed upon you as a parent in Zion, that we looked at before the break. He doesn't spare Himself.

"For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed." That's Christ's word. That's what He says is going to happen. *"Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world"* (D&C 132:14-15).

Although God is talking about the eternity of the marriage covenant, He extends this into everything. *Everything*, even your associations-- all of them are obtained by a covenant from Him because His word and His word, alone, will endure.

"Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory" (D&C 132:16). Partners

in such marriages become angels that are ministering servants. Angels look to receive the things that God has offered to men, but unless they come down and participate here, they cannot obtain them, for they are only to be had here.

Verse 19: *"And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise... [skipping down...] they shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths... [skipping down...] they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever."*

You cannot receive these things unless you enter in by the gate, the Keeper of whom is the Holy One of Israel who employs no servant. If you do that however, *"...then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them"* (D&C 132:20).

These are people who have qualified for the kind of trust from God that makes sure that eternity will not be infected by the kinds of abuse, by the kinds of neglect, by the kinds of unworthiness that typifies those things which God wants to throw down-- those things that God wants to have come to an end-- not because He's mean, but for the protection of yourself, for the protection of eternity, for the protection of the potential offspring that may arise as a result of the continuation of the seed.

The Powers of Heaven-- and this is the reason why that third form of priesthood is so rare a commodity, because even the angels desire to inquire into it, but the angels don't possess it. And it doesn't matter if in that hierarchy of those that exist on the other side of the veil you manage to wrestle something from those who are Powers there and possess thrones or principalities-- God is saying in this revelation, if you can understand the words, that even His angels and those who have ascended far up must, in every case, only establish that which comes by the will and covenant of the Son and the Father-- the Son, because He possesses the keys to do so, the Father, because He is the one from whom the original covenant began in the preexistence. You have to connect up with the Father.

The connection that needs to be formed is between you and the fathers who dwell in glory. And who are the fathers who dwell in glory? Well, if we go back to the revelation in which Joseph Smith received the sealing power (and he received the sealing power sometime before 1831), in that portion of the revelation known as Doctrine and Covenants 132:49, just before that portion of the revelation, in verse 37, he talks about Abraham, he talks about Isaac, and he talks about

Jacob. And then concerning those three, the Lord says to Joseph: *“Because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods”* (verse 37). This is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These are the ones who are gods.

God doesn't judge righteousness the way we do. If you've read the 10th parable (*Ten Parables*, Denver C. Snuffer), what was it that attracted the attention of the angels? They looked at the marriage, and they said, "This! This looks like what we come from! This-- this relationship, this marriage, the man and the woman-- this is what heaven itself consists of. And look! Look, it's on the earth!" And the angels go, and they bring the Lord. And they say, "Behold the man and the woman!" And the Lord set in motion everything that was needed.

What more do you need to see from the theme of the *Book Mormon* than this passage in order to realize that when it comes to the relationship of marriage, this is the image of God? This is what God would like to preserve into eternity. It is so much easier to take people who have this kind of a marriage and to preserve them into eternity, than it is to take someone who may know all mysteries but whose marriage is a tattered ruin and attempt to preserve them.

And now it says in passing, they're given in marriage, and He blessed them according to these promises (4 Nephi 1:11). Well, what's he telling us? Yeah, it's the covenant of Abraham-- it's the temple marriage. He's saying that these people enter into the covenant of marriage, and as a consequence of the covenant of marriage, they realize the benefits of the promises made. And what are the promises made that you associate with the covenant of Abraham? Well, it's not just benefits that pertain to this life; it's benefits that pertain to all eternity. It's the promise of exaltation. It's the promise that you become part of the Church of the Firstborn; you become part of the general assembly. You become part of the citizens, not just of a society here on this earth, but a society that includes a heavenly body. And you have the right to commune with all of those that are participants in this, in this larger organization.

You need to go through and read the descriptors of those in D&C 76, beginning at verse 66-- and I apologize, I do have a set of the D&C from the RLDS church, but it's at home, and I didn't bring it with me, so I can't give you the cross reference-- but D&C 76 beginning at verse 66: *“These are those who are come unto Mount Zion....”* See Zion, in this context, is a mount because it's up, a symbolic elevation of the way folks live, *“...Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all.”* Oh my. *“These are they who have come to an innumerable company of the angels, to the general assembly and the church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn. These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are judge of all. These are just men made perfect.”*

Now while this is a description in Section 76 of the afterlife and the ultimate arrival, the description, as is often the case, is not merely a description of the afterlife alone, because verse 117 of this same revelation, after talking about those who love Him and purify themselves before Him, it's added: *"...to whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves; that through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory."*

So, keep that in mind as you read verse 11: *"...blessed according to the multitude of the promises, which the Lord had made unto them"* (4 Nephi 1). These now are citizens with dual citizenship. They may be born in Mexico, but they have a work permit in the United States. They are still confronted with the obligation of enduring to the end, but they have a residency prepared for them elsewhere, and these folks, tying the marriage covenant and the blessings, according to the multitude, the multitude of the promises which the Lord had made unto them, should not be constricted.

"Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels..." because this decree, in this circumstance, may require those who are watching to obey the word of the man. Therefore, the angels, the Powers of Heaven, must give heed because God is declaring it in the presence of the Hosts, who are standing before Him. *"I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels that ye shall have power over this people, and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people"* (Helaman 10:6). That is a rather Aaronic behavior.

"Behold, I give unto you power, that whatsoever ye seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and thus shall ye have power among this people" (Helaman 10:7). This is rather Melchizedek because you can seal up unto eternal life. This is the positive side. This is the thing which those who are given this authority seek earnestly to do.

The foregoing are excerpts taken from remarks given by Denver at various lectures, discussions, and meetings over the past 11 years, including:

- Denver's talk entitled "Christ's Discourse on the Road to Emmaus," given in Fairview Utah on April 14, 2007;
- His talk given at the "Zion Symposium" in Provo, Utah on February 23rd, 2008;
- His talk entitled "The Mission of Elijah Reconsidered", given in Spanish Fork, UT on October 14th, 2011;

- Denver's 40 Years in Mormonism Series, Talk #1 entitled "Be of Good Cheer" given in Boise, ID on September 10th, 2013;
- Denver's 40 Years in Mormonism Series, Talk #2 entitled "Faith" given in Idaho Falls, ID on September 28th, 2013;
- Denver's 40 Years in Mormonism Series, Talk #5 entitled "Priesthood" given in Orem, UT on November 2nd, 2013;
- Denver's 40 Years in Mormonism Series, Talk #9 entitled "Marriage and Family" given in St. George, UT on July 26th, 2014;
- The presentation of "Answer and Covenant", given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3rd, 2017; and
- His talk entitled "Other Sheep Indeed", given at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, UT on July 29th, 2017.