

Podcast 139: Government of God, Part 2

This is the second part of a special series where Denver discusses what it is that makes God who and what God is, what that has to do with Godliness, and the power thereof, and how God governs on earth as it is in Heaven.

DENVER: It is our relationship to and our connection with God that matters. And you form that, not through me or through some other man, and not through the groups to which you belong. The groups to which you belong are a place to render service. They are a place where you can sacrifice to help others. I don't care if that group is Methodist, Presbyterian, Latter-day Saint, or one of the fellowships that have been organized. That is of little consequence. You can be a Christian soul wherever you are, serving whoever you happen to be in contact with.

I'm going to talk about Zion, and Zion is going to be gathered. But the gathering of that group will not necessarily come exclusively from any party, group, denomination or lineage.

Zion will be God's work, and in the end it will be His and His alone. He will own it; He will bring it; He will be the author of it, and He is the one who says that He will take credit for it. When it happens, however, it will conform to a pattern.

This is a verse that gets attributed to Enoch, who is in turn quoting a prophecy that was given by Adam. This is the original prophecy given at the beginning of the world through father Adam, who established in the beginning the covenant that God Himself intends to vindicate.

"Now this same priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also."
(Moses 6:7.)

That authority gets explained a little more fully when Abraham sought for the blessing that began in the beginning. He describes what it was that he wanted:

"I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments

of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers. It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me." (Abr. 1:2-3.)

There are some very bright, well studied, Latter-day Saints who think they know what the gospel and priesthood of Abraham was.

I'm here today to declare to you the truth, whether you accept it or not, whether you understand it or not, whether you think you can parse the scriptures otherwise or not. I'm telling you what the truth is today. Abraham sought for the right that came down through the fathers, from Adam, which was the right of the firstborn, which is that priesthood that must be restored in order to bring about the purposes of God in the last days. Abraham chapter 2 verse 11, the Lord says that through him:

...I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel.

Abraham's fatherhood reckons from priesthood. Although the right will continue through the literal seed, it reckons through priesthood. He sought for the right to be one of the fathers.

We're talking about a time in the last days, prophesied, and repeated by Jacob as his testimony in the Book of Mormon, when the natural fruit is going to reappear upon the earth. Natural fruit is always genealogical; it is always familial.

There is going to come a time in the last days when the Family of God will return again to the earth. "That same priesthood" includes a function that is not well understood. Abraham knew what this was when he said he desired to be a "father of many nations." He was identifying one of the attributes and one of the roles that necessarily must return.

If you go to Moses chapter 5 there is an incident that takes place in which Mother Eve celebrated because, after the apostasy of son after son, she rejoiced because – well, I'll read it to you. This is Moses 5:16:

And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to call upon God. And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said: [now this is her, she conceived, she bare Cain, and she said concerning this son] I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words. But behold, Cain hearkened not, saying: Who is the Lord that I should know him?"

That is to say, Mother Eve looked at Cain in contrast to those that had rejected the gospel message that had been born by her previously. And Cain, apparently an answer to her supplication to the Lord, came as what she anticipated would be the son upon whom the birthright would be conferred. The one through whom the lineage would continue; the one through whom the government of God would continue upon the earth. The replacement for Adam.

But Cain when he arrived at the age of accountability and beyond, "hearkened not, saying: Who is the Lord that I should know him?"

"And she again conceived and bare his brother Abel. And Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." (Moses 5:17.)

Now mind you, there is no attempt to set out the chronology here other than by milestones. But Cain had determined to reject the Lord and not hearken to Him by the time the replacement, Abel, was born. And when Cain, who thought it his birthright, found that he could be displaced by his younger brother, as an act of overthrowing the government of God, Cain slew Abel in order to prevent the birthright, in order to prevent the promised Messiah, in order to prevent the work of God progressing through any lineage other than his own. This was an act of treason. This was an act of overthrowing the government of God. This was an attempt to force God to place the Messiah, that should redeem all mankind, into a position inferior to Cain, his father.

But God replaced the slain Abel with Seth. And Seth was the one through whom then the promise would be realized.

As you go through the account in Moses chapter 6, at [verse] 10 and 11:

"...Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image, and called his name Seth."

So in "his own likeness after his own image" when Adam was created in God's own likeness after God's own image makes Seth, like Adam, a godly man.

"And the days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years, and he (that is [Adam]) begat many sons and daughters."

There is no indication that any of them were as rebellious as were the descendents of Cain. He begat many sons and daughters. And yet, in the next verses there is only one son who is identified.

"Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begat Enos, and prophesied in all his days, and taught his son Enos in the ways of God; wherefore Enos prophesied also." (Moses 6:13.)

So although there are many sons and many daughters, there is only one name. And you can follow it through. Seth, "many sons," all of whom are unnamed other than one — and that one that is named is Enos.

Enos had "many sons," all of whom are also unnamed other than one: Cainan. And Cainan has "many sons," all of whom are unnamed other than one; the one that is named is Mahalaleel. And although all of his predecessors had "many sons," Mahalaleel had "sons." So the fertility rate is collapsing as we got closer to the Flood. There is only one named son of Mahalaleel and that is Jared. There is only one named son out of all the sons of Jared, and that is Enoch. And there is only one named son out of all of the sons of Enoch, and that is Methuselah.

This is not a genealogy. This is a description of the government of God as it descended down through each generation. So that upon the death of one you then knew who stood next in line in order to be "the father of all, the father of many nations;" the role that is occupied by the head of the human family. It is a priesthood line, in which only one in each generation stands at the head as the father.

This one stands as "the father of all," and hence Abraham's desire to become "a father of many nations," because if he stepped into the line, he necessarily stepped into the role of providing the government of God. Christ is the one to whom all generations belong. He is the Redeemer of all mankind, and as the Savior of mankind He becomes the Father of all.

In Isaiah chapter 9 there is a verse that is dealing squarely with this issue. This is chapter 9 verse 6 of Isaiah:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

This is a prophecy about Christ coming to restore, in the meridian of time, the government of God in which He, Christ, represented the "Father" of all, as the Redeemer of all, as the bringer again of the holy covenant.

He is prophesied to return with the description provided in the Book of Revelation, chapter 19 verse 16, as "the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords."

In D&C section 76 He explains what His intention is with respect to mankind. He intends to make men:

"[T]hey are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fullness and glory, and are priests of the Most High after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son." (D&C 76:56.)

That's the intention that He has for all men; that men should become like Him: "kings and priests."

The government of God is the family. The government of God is not stakes and wards and districts and missions and areas and all that. It's family; the government of God is family....

One of the requests that the mother of John and his brother came and made of Christ was that when Christ got into his kingdom, the mother was asking if her boys could sit on his left and on his right. Christ said that "when I get my kingdom they can be there with me but I don't have the right to assign who's going to sit on my right and who's going to sit on my left. That's left up to the Father." The purpose of organizing the family on earth ... is to make sure that you get into the kingdom, but it's kind of foolish to say I have ambition to be way up high in the organization of the family of God, because Christ told parables about people that are capable of ruling over a city will be put in that position. People that aren't - his parable of the talents, his parable of the laborer in the vineyard - but what you really want is to get into the kingdom. Once you get into the kingdom then how the kingdom gets organized is going to be entirely up to the Father. How that will unfold will be the permanent resolution of all issues involving salvation pertaining to this planet at the very end, and all those who have lived or come through here. And that organization at the end is more relevant for what will come thereafter.

Zion is a mortal responsibility. Men must cooperate with God for God to be able to bring it. It is not something that heaven is going to provide for us.

When Enoch and his city were established, it was not until after it was established and people had gathered together that the Lord came and dwelt with them. They prepared the place, they extended the invitation, and the Lord came.

Likewise, in the city that was established by Melchizedek, it wasn't the angels who built his city. He preached repentance; men repented, and as a consequence of having repented Zion was taken up into heaven. Enoch's Zion fled. Melchizedek's Zion fled.

The last days Zion will be built not to flee. It will be built as an established beachhead to which the Powers of Heaven will return in order for He whose right it is to govern the earth can assume the responsibility of governing the earth. He intends to overthrowing every other government there is and to establish as the King and as the Prince of Peace, and as the Father of Righteousness, His rule and His reign over the earth once again at His coming.

Joseph Smith described the priesthood that will function in Zion preliminary to the Lord's return. This is a quote from one of his teachings: "That priesthood is a perfect law of theocracy and stands as God to give laws to the people." (That's from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* on page 322.) In that same talk there is a better elaboration made [by] one of the note-takers. You can find this in *The Words of Joseph Smith*, page 246. Joseph said: "It is understood by many by reading this chapter [referring to Hebrews chapter 7] that Melchizedek was a king of some country or nation on earth. But it was not so. In the original it reads 'king of shalom,' which signifies 'king of peace or righteousness' and not of any country or nation."

What Melchizedek established was a community of peace, and as the one who preached the peace to which the people came he was acknowledged as the prince of peace or the King of righteousness.

At the beginning of the restoration, while Joseph was still alive, there was an abortive attempt to get founded what would necessarily need to be reestablished in order for there to be Zion. In a sermon that he delivered in August of 1843, he said that the fullness did not exist in the church; if it did he wasn't aware of it, because the fullness required a man to become a king and a priest. Joseph Smith was made a king by anointing the following month on September 28 of 1843. The month before his anointing he explained, "no one in the Church held the fullness of the priesthood; for any person to have the fullness of that priesthood must be a king and a priest. A person may be anointed a king and priest before they can receive their kingdom." (Wilford Woodruff recorded that in his journal on August 6, 1843.) The following month then, 28th of September 1843, Joseph was anointed a king and a priest, and the month after that, on October [8], 1843, Hyrum Smith was likewise ordained to be a king unto God.

Now, I want to clarify a point, because Joseph Smith actually knew what he was doing and — had he been around long enough — would have accomplished a work that was still at its very incipient stage at the time that he was slain. In the Council of Fifty, which he called the Kingdom of God (which was nondenominational because members of other religious beliefs were invited into the Kingdom of God) —

The Kingdom of God was not the church. The church was simply a mechanism for promulgating the gospel, disseminating the Book of Mormon, and accomplishing a certain work. But the Kingdom of God was something different. Inside that Kingdom of God, Joseph Smith had himself anointed a king; and Emma, a queen

Hold that thought for a moment while we turn to 2 Nephi chapter 10 beginning at verse 11:

And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations. And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God. For he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish, for I, the Lord, the king of heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them forever, that hear my words."

So now we have a paradox. There must be a return of the "same priesthood that was in the beginning," in which there is a theocratic father or king, but God commands there shall not be one, and if you raise one up then God will destroy him.

In solving the paradox I would suggest we go to the Book of Mormon first, in order to find out exactly how was it that at the time of the Nephites we had successful kings. One of whom is most notable is King Benjamin. We don't even call him "Benjamin," we call him "King Benjamin," because his identity with his role is so linked together that we can't talk about the man without talking about his status. This is King Benjamin in Mosiah chapter 2 explaining himself and explaining the greatness of the kingship which he held.

*But I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind; yet I have been chosen by this people, and consecrated by my father, and was suffered by the hand of the Lord that I should be a ruler and a king over this people; and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power, to serve you with all the might, mind and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me. I say unto you that as I have been suffered to **spend my days in your service**, even up to this time, **and have not sought gold nor silver nor any manner of riches of you**; Neither have I suffered that ye should be confined in dungeons, nor that ye should make slaves one of another, nor that ye should murder, or plunder, or steal, or commit adultery; nor even have I*

*suffered that ye should commit any manner of wickedness, and **have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord, in all things which he hath commanded you**— And even **I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you**, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne—and of all these things which I have spoken, ye yourselves are witnesses this day. Yet, my brethren, **I have not done these things that I might boast**, neither do I tell these things that thereby I might accuse you; but I tell you these things that ye may know that **I can answer a clear conscience before God** this day. Behold, I say unto you that because I said unto you that I had spent **my days in your service**, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that **when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God**.*

This is King Benjamin explaining kingship; one that God recognized and ratified; one that was approved by Him; one that brought about peace in his day.

...for he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish. For I the Lord, the King of Heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them for ever that hear my words. (2 Nephi 7:2 RE)

Joseph Smith knew exactly what he was doing. He intended to be a king, **subordinate to** the King of Heaven. He intended to create other kings, subordinate to **him**, all of them subordinate to God. Because the God of this land and the King that will rule over this land is Christ. *He that raiseth up a king **against me** shall perish* (2 Nephi 7:2 RE). Joseph Smith was not seeking to establish a kingdom **against** God. He was seeking to establish a kingdom **subordinate to** and **obedient to** the overall King of Heaven-as a subordinate to Him. Joseph Smith intended to establish the Kingdom of God and to be a king because that is what the Kingdom of God consists of.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's talk entitled "Zion Will Come" given near Moab, UT on April 10th, 2016;
- A fireside talk entitled "Cursed, Denied Priesthood", given in Sandy, UT on January 7th, 2018; and
- Denver's talk entitled "Authority, Keys and Kingdom" given at a regional conference in Sandy, UT on July 14, 2019