

## Podcast 146: Shem, Part 5

This is the fifth part of a series about Shem, who came to be known as Melchizedek, one of the Patriarchal Fathers, who established a city of peace that ultimately achieved the status of "Zion" and was taken up into heaven.

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DENVER: These are the kinds of preparations that need to precede Zion. We are not going to get **there** in one step. We're only gonna get **there** incrementally. And there's a great deal of increments yet to be accomplished. It's not gonna happen by fairy dust. There's not gonna be someone who comes along and says to you, "Spiritu Sancto, Ave Maria." You know, get the holy water; get the incense, voodoo—voila, now you're Zion! It's not gonna happen. It doesn't matter if it's a Dominican in a brown robe or a Mormon Elder with a name tag. **You... You** must become holy. **You** must receive the guidance, blessing, benefit, and baptism of the Spirit. **You** must become the house of God. You're going to have to be the one that God visits with in order to have the preparations that are necessary take place. This is not something to be accomplished in a single step. Indeed, all of it must precede the gathering.

We looked (a while back, in one of the preceding talks) at how dangerous it would be for an unworthy person to attempt to be in Zion. Because when it finally is acceptable to the Lord—and when His presence does come, finally, to dwell there—it is unsafe for anyone unprepared to face that glory to be in that condition. Therefore, when the gathering takes place and you would like to join in, you do so at your peril if you've not accomplished the things that are expected to be accomplished beforehand.

We read those verses in Alma (yesterday) about Melchizedek's people. Melchizedek's people—Alma chapter 13—about how the people that Melchizedek gathered had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination and had all gone astray. It doesn't matter that you look about and see a tattered ruin of the Restoration. And it doesn't matter that we're filled with all kinds of false notions, inadequate and incomplete teachings. And it doesn't matter that we're a vain and a proud people. It's even worse when, recognizing that we are a vain and a proud people, we tend to gather together and to think of ourselves as even better than they are. Because **we** immediately import that same culture of arrogance. **We** immediately take what is offered, and instead of becoming (as we talked about yesterday) humbled by the greatness of the steps left in front of us, we tend to think that we ought to view this stuff comparatively ("and we **are** slightly better than them, after all") when the standard is absolute! And it doesn't matter if you're kinda, sorta, a little better. It's absolute! It's an on-and-off switch. And if it's on, it's on; and if it's off, it's off. There is no dimmer. It doesn't happen that way. And we aren't better than them. In some respects, we have greater reason to fall into the folly of our own pride. We have greater reason to think ourselves better than the people that think they're better than the rest of the people. And so, we move along incrementally to become yet further **away** from God. If we think we're better than them and they think they're better than the world, then we oughta become a fool for Christ's sake and go and serve among them. We oughta do like the missionary who went out and did

everything that the king bid him do and did it with such exactness and such fidelity, because he wasn't trying to serve the king; he was trying to serve the King of Heaven. He was trying to show—in the integrity of his heart and in the integrity of his soul—what was true. Maybe the way to fix some of the problems that exist with your own children is for you to go and ask the Bishop to let you be a Primary teacher. And then you're not only teaching and ministering to your own children, but you're teaching and you're ministering to others as well.

Hearts of people get hard the older they get (although, there is at least one exception, 'cuz I ran into a guy at my office who was like 85 years old, and he's still as young and as nimble and as open and as flexible as a child). That's why we have to become childlike—because we have to be willing to consider these things.

Well, in that Alma chapter 13 material, beginning at 14, it says:

*Yea, humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek, who was also a high priest after this same order which I have spoken, who also took upon him the high priesthood forever. And it was this same Melchizedek to whom Abraham paid tithes; yea, even our father Abraham paid tithes of one-tenth part of all he possessed. Now **these ordinances** were given after this manner, that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God, it being a type of his order, or it being his order, and this that they might look forward to him for the remission of their sins, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord. (Alma 13:14-16, emphasis added; see also Alma 10:1 RE)*

And what is *these ordinances* that are being talked about? That's what we looked at in the Orem talk in chapter 13, and we're not gonna repeat it here. That's the material that includes: Everything that God does, He does by an ordinance. Everything that He does and every blessing He confers, He confers by a covenant. One of the good news about the absence of a binding covenant is that you can't damn yourself by taking upon yourself an obligation that you will never honor.

One of the good things about the Restoration is that there are covenantal examples that are given that give you an idea of the kind of behavior that God would want. I wish **everyone** would go to the temple. I wish **everyone** would go to the temple and take on them covenants, learn what they are, and then try to live them. But if you fail (unlike the stuff that comes into play with this Melchizedek character), there is no severe penalty, because it's for your good and for your practice and for your instruction. And if you honor that, there's no reason why God and the angels cannot ratify whatever it is you do if you qualify for it. The Holy Spirit of Promise is embedded within the architecture of the Church's teachings. And it was as recent as—what? General Conference before last?—when President Eyring got up, and he talked about how they had the sealing power, and then he threw in that caveat that everything has to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. I put that up on my blog; I quoted it, and I said, "That's good doctrine." And that is good doctrine.

Go to the temple, get your ordinances, and then work to have this Holy Spirit of Promise. Because the Keeper of **that** Gate is the Holy One of Israel, and there's no employee there. It is the Holy One of Israel, and **you** qualify to receive that directly with heaven. There's no other gatekeeper opening and closing doors—there **is** the Holy One of Israel; He employeth **no** servant there.

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."

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, 28<sup>th</sup> of September 1843, Joseph was anointed a king and a priest, and the month after that, on October [28], 1843, Hyrum Smith was likewise ordained to be a king unto God.

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.

Christ was born a King. In fact, wise men from the East came inquiring saying: "Where is he that was born King of the Jews?" Because that was His status, that was what the prophecies said of Him. That was the role He occupied. And the person they approached to find out where they might identify the newborn king was the king of the land who knew nothing about the matter, and had to go to the scribes to ask them, who after some fumbling came up with "Bethlehem." Bethlehem of Judea, thou art not the least.

Christ was born as a King, but He explained how He discharged His Kingship. In John chapter 18 beginning at verse 36, Jesus answered. This is when he was on trial for His life:

*"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."*

That's the King. He suffered Himself to be surrendered into the hands of wicked men who despitefully used, abused, beat, and humiliated Him and then killed Him publicly on a thoroughfare where the notoriety of His death would be on public display. No one entering

or leaving on that day, the city of Jerusalem, could do so without noticing the humiliation of our Lord. That's our King.

He explained Himself further in contrasting who He, the King, the Almighty Father, the Wonderful, Counselor, of the end of His government there shall not be a failure of increase, He explained Himself and how He rules to his disciples. This is in Luke chapter 22 beginning at verse 25:

*"And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doeth service."*

The great King came, above all else, to serve. Zion will come. It will come, not because of the worthiness of any of us, it will come because of the repentance of us, and the worthiness of those with whom God covenanted to bring it to pass, including Adam and Enoch and Abraham and Melchizedek. It will come as a consequence of the righteousness of those who went before and with whom God, who cannot lie in a covenant, made a covenant to cause it to happen in the last days. It will surely come.

Mormon wrote his book and had us in mind as his audience. After Mormon finished his book there was one reader, and that was his son Moroni, who buried it. Everything Mormon did he did for this audience today, the last days, the gentiles. As he is finishing up his record – this is in Mormon 8:31 – he talks about us and says:

*"There shall be many who will say, Do this, or do that, and it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day. But wo unto such, for they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity."*

There is a right way, and it will be done according to the Lord's will. And the Lord is actively working to bring that about right now in our day. The potential for Zion and the covenants being fulfilled in our day is as great as it has been in any generation from the days of Adam until now. And yet in all those generations there have only been two successes that the scriptures have captured.

Well, the original priesthood and the original pattern will have to return in order for the last days Zion to exist. The first Zion, in Moses chapter 7 verse 13:

*"And so great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, ...so great was the power of the language which God had given him."*

When the government of God is upon the earth in the form of Zion, as it was established by Enoch in his day, then God protects and defends it. God will be the force with which the nations of the earth must contend if they intend to do harm to Zion. Because it is His

government, it is His handiwork, and it is an affront to Him to challenge His authority in attacking Zion, hence Enoch's ability to speak the word of God and to have those that would bring harm upon Zion vanquished.

Hence, further, the reason why, before the Flood, it was necessary to remove Zion, because God cannot destroy the [righteous]. The wicked can destroy the wicked, and the wicked can destroy the righteous. But when Zion is here, the wicked cannot destroy Zion because God is asserting His government. And because the wicked cannot destroy Zion, and God will not do so, Zion necessarily was taken up into heaven. The same thing happened with Melchizedek's city.

The Lord lamented: "How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and ye would not!" There have been occasions on which it would have been possible to have established Zion, but men would not. When that happens, and men will not, the same rules apply as applied at the beginning. Hence the necessity for removing Moses out of the midst of Israel because through Moses we could have had Zion, but the children of Israel were not interested. Hence the reason why Elijah was taken up into heaven, because Elijah was an opportunity in which it would have been possible for Zion to have been established.

Well, that same priesthood which was in the beginning that allowed [Melchizedek] to establish the city of peace, the city of righteousness, the city that God Himself would defend, necessarily must return. If you look at D&C Section 133 beginning at verse 26:

*"And they who are in the north countries shall come in remembrance before the Lord; and their prophets shall hear his voice, and shall no longer stay themselves; and they shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down at their presence. And an highway shall be cast up in the midst of the great deep. Their enemies shall become a prey unto them, And in the barren deserts there shall come forth pools of living water; and the parched ground shall no longer be a thirsty land. And they shall bring forth their rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim, my servants. And the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall tremble at their presence. And there shall they fall down and be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim. And they shall be filled with songs of everlasting joy. Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows."*

Heaven will protect the last day's Zion. It will belong to Him, and therefore God will not allow it to be overtaken or overcome. D&C Section 45 has another prophecy about the last day's Zion. Beginning at verse 66:

*"And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion. And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety. And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one*

*with another. And it shall be said among the wicked: Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand."*

When they came to arrest the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane after His suffering, even though He intended to submit Himself, and to be abused and ultimately killed. When they entered the Apostle John records that Christ, despite the ordeal he had just concluded, stood up, confronted them in their arms and said: "Whom seek ye?" And they said: "Jesus of Nazareth." And He said: "I am he." And they stumbled backwards, tripped over one another's feet, and they fell down.

An armed group bearing swords and weapons were intimidated by the Lord identifying Himself. He made no attempt to defend Himself, but had He elected to do so, they could not have taken Him. He went as a lamb to the slaughter because he intended, though the Lion of Judah, to become the sacrificial lamb.

Heaven protected Zion in its first iteration and heaven is going to protect the last day's Zion. As a consequence of that, the time is going to come when it will not be the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt that people cite as evidence of the power of God. You see, Egypt had to be subdued. Moses was sent to subdue them because Egypt was, at the time, the greatest kingdom, the greatest nation on the earth. Moses was sent to them to establish the government of God. When you confront the government of God against the most powerful nation on the earth, it's the most powerful nation that must yield the field, and not the Lord.

In the last days Jeremiah prophesied that the time is going to come when the talk about the power of God is no longer making reference to what the Lord did anciently with Egypt. It's going to be what the Lord intends to do with the last days Zion. This is Jeremiah chapter 16 beginning in verse 14:

*"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers."*

That will be the reference point to which people will point as evidence of God's intention to establish His rule, His reign upon the earth, His authority over the nations of the earth.

It is going to come to pass. In your enthusiasm, it would be better to demonstrate the virtue of patience as the Lord brings His work about, than to exhibit the character flaw of impatience and enthusiasm in trying to bring about what the Lord intends Himself to cause to happen because you cannot give birth prematurely to a living Zion, or it will choke and it will die because it is unable to be viable outside of the hands of the Lord. We have to wait on Him.

Don't be misled by a false model that you look out and you see somewhere else. Look, we admire a man -- we -- believers and followers of the Lord -- admire **a man** so much so that the priesthood was renamed after him, because he was the last one to really accomplish



Zion, that is Melchizedek, priesthood was named after him. You go and you look carefully at why Melchizedek qualified to obtain the priesthood, and it was because he, by faith, quenched the violence of fire, he subdued lions, by faith he achieved all these things -- **not by priesthood; By faith.**

If you wanna know what one can accomplish without faith but with an ordination to the priesthood, there's a whole discussion of that in *A Man without Doubt* about the first attempt to distribute the highest order of priesthood in Joseph's day. There's a description of what an utter failure that was. In fact it was so great a failure that what Joseph did was he backed up, and he started over again with trying to solve the problem. And The problem did not consist of priesthood -- it consisted of the lack of faith. The lectures on Faith are an attempt to create faith that will have power which is separate from Priesthood.

Men, women, and children can have faith. There was a time when the Mary Fielding story had her anointing her oxen and healing them. In the world of the correlated LDS model, she's now calling for the equivalent of Home Teachers to come anoint her oxen. Mary Fielding's faith was what healed the oxen.

Would you rather have priesthood without faith, or faith without priesthood? If you have faith, everything else is possible. Faith is what is lacking.

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The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #9 entitled "Marriage and Family" given in St. George, UT on July 26th, 2014;
- His talk entitled "Zion Will Come" given near Moab, UT on April 10th, 2016; and
- His conference talk entitled "The Doctrine of Christ", given in Boise, ID on September 11th, 2016.