

Lesson 39: D&C 106–108, "To Have the Heavens Opened"

Overview

The Lord organized His priesthood in the last days 'line upon line'

Joseph Fielding Smith

“The Lord could not reveal to the Church in the beginning all the knowledge and organization which would be essential to the full and complete organization of the Church. Had this been done, it would have been like an overwhelming flood that would have brought destruction. The truth had to come piecemeal—line upon line, precept upon precept, just like knowledge comes to all of us. However, all that was revealed in this section was expedient for the government of the Church at the time of its organization.” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:95)

Aaronic Priesthood: 15 May 1829 (D&C 13)

Melchizedek Priesthood: May or June 1829 (D&C 128:20)

<Church organized 6 April 1830>

Elders, priests, teachers, and deacons: April 1830 (D&C 20)

Bishop: 4 Feb 1831 (D&C 41)

High priests: June 1831 (D&C 41)

First Presidency: March 1832 (D&C 81)

Patriarch: 18 Dec 1833 (D&C 107)

Stake Presidency: 17 Feb 1834 (D&C 107)

High Council: 17 Feb 1834 (D&C 107)

Quorum of the 12: 28 March 1835 (D&C 107)

Quorum of the 70: 28 March 1835 (D&C 107)

The keys of the restoration: 3 April 1836 (D&C 110)

“Fulness of the priesthood”: Nauvoo Temple (D&C 124:28)

Can you name the different priesthood quorums?

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Quorums of the Seventy

High Priests Quorum

Priesthood holder in a stake that hold positions that require them to be high priests - Includes the stake presidency, functioning stake patriarch(s), members of bishoprics (3 per ward), and the 12-member stake high council.

Elders Quorum

Others who have been set apart as high priests are members of the elders quorum

Priests Quorum

Teachers Quorum

Deacons Quorum

I ask this because as I studied this lesson it became clear that the organization of these quorums can, and have changed

Also note that every priesthood holder is a member of a quorum

Evangelical Minister

Verse 39 commands the Twelve to ordain evangelical ministers.

D&C 107:39

39 It is the duty of the Twelve, in all large branches of the church, to ordain evangelical ministers, as they shall be designated unto them by revelation—

What title do we usually use today instead of ‘evangelical minister’?

Patriarch

Ezra Taft Benson

"As defined by revelation, an evangelical minister is a patriarch..... Stake presidents may recommend calls and ordain a patriarch when approved by the Quorum of the Twelve. Approval of the calls of all patriarchs rests with the Quorum of the Twelve. (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, pg. 144)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"I am not sure that I know precisely why the words 'evangelical ministers' were used, rather than the word 'patriarchs.' It seems, however, significant to me that the term here used suggests very definitely the spiritual nature of the patriarchal office. It is not an administrative office, it is not an executive office, it is a spiritual office.

“The old patriarchs, of course, lived under a patriarchal system of government. The head of the family was, actually the head of their government, and that continued for a good many generations. We no longer live under a patriarchal form of government.” (CR, Oct. 1944)

Then Hyrum Smith was ordained to replace his father as a patriarch on 14 Sept. 1840, Joseph Smith said this in Hyrum’s blessing:

Joseph Smith

“[Hyrum] shall stand in the tracks of his father and be numbered among those who hold the right of Patriarchal Priesthood, even the Evangelical Priesthood.” (TPJS, pg. 40)

Note that it states that Hyrum will “hold the right of Patriarchal Priesthood.” Hyrum was the Presiding or Church Patriarch

Starting with Joseph Smith Sr. there was a Presiding or Church Patriarch. Do we have a Presiding Patriarch today?

The last one was Eldred G. Smith. He became patriarch emeritus on October 4, 1979 and no one was ordained to take his place

N. Eldon Tanner

"Before presenting the authorities for the vote of the conference, President Kimball has asked me to read the following statement: Because of the large increase in the number of stake patriarchs and the availability of patriarchal service throughout the world, we now designate Elder Eldred G. Smith as a Patriarch Emeritus, which means that he is honorably relieved of all duties and responsibilities pertaining to the office of Patriarch to the Church." (CR, Oct. 1979)

What can we conclude from President Kimball's statement, "Because of the large increase in the number of stake patriarchs and the availability of patriarchal service throughout the world"?

At this time the Church does not need a Presiding Patriarch

Standing and Traveling High Council

Verse 36 refers to 'standing high council' and 'traveling high council'.

D&C 107:36

36 The standing high councils, at the stakes of Zion, form a quorum equal in authority in the affairs of the church, in all their decisions, to the quorum of the presidency, or to the traveling high council.

What title do we usually use today instead of 'quorum of the presidency'?

The First Presidency

What title do we usually use today instead of 'traveling high council'?

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

D&C107:23-24

23 The twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling.

24 And they form a quorum, equal in authority and power to the three presidents previously mentioned.

Which quorum holds authority equal to the First Presidency?

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

This principle comes into effect then the First Presidency ceases

What do you think it means to be a “special witnesses of the name of Christ”?

Some quotes from modern-day apostles:

Boyd K. Packer.

"The Twelve Apostles 'are called to be... special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world.' Each carries that certain witness that Jesus is the Christ." ("The Twelve Apostles," Ensign, Nov. 1996)

Henry B. Eyring

"I am grateful that I know as surely as did the Apostles Peter, James, and John that Jesus is the Christ, our risen Lord, and that he is our advocate with the Father." ("Witnesses for God", Ensign, Nov. 1996)

Ezra Taft Benson

"As one of those called as special witnesses, I add my testimony to those of fellow Apostles: He lives! He lives with resurrected body. There is no truth or fact of which I am more assured, or know better by personal experience, than the truth of the literal resurrection of our Lord." ("Five Marks of the Divinity of Jesus Christ," Ensign Dec. 2001)

James E. Faust

"Mine is the certain knowledge that Jesus is our divine Savior, Redeemer, and the son of God the Father. I know of his reality by a sure perception so sacred I cannot give utterance to it." (CR, April 1995)

Spencer W. Kimball

"'I know that God lives. I know that Jesus Christ lives,' said John Taylor, my predecessor, 'for I have seen him.' I bear this testimony to you." ("Strengthening the Family", Ensign, May 1978)

Boyd K. Packer

"I bear my witness that the Savior lives. I know the Lord. I am His witness. I know of His great sacrifice and eternal love for all of Heavenly Father's children. I bear my special witness in all humility but with absolute certainty" ("The Witness", Ensign, May 2014)

Who selected the original 12?

The 3 Witnesses were told that this would be their responsibility in Section 102

Joseph Smith

“The Three Witnesses, viz., Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, united in prayer.

“These Three Witnesses were then blessed by the laying on of the hands of the Presidency.

“The Witnesses then, according to a former commandment, proceeded to make choice of the Twelve. Their names are as follows:

1. Lyman E. Johnson,
 2. Brigham Young,
 3. Heber C. Kimball,
 4. Orson Hyde,
 5. David W. Patten,
 6. Luke S. Johnson,
 7. William E. M'Lellin,
 8. John F. Boynton,
 9. Orson Pratt,
 10. William Smith,
 11. Thomas P. Marsh,
 12. Parley P. Pratt”
- (HC 2:186)

What title do we usually use today instead of ‘traveling high council’?

Stake High Council

Two high councils were established in the early days of the church

In February 1834, Joseph Smith met with a group of high priests in Kirtland and said he would teach them “the order of councils in ancient days... as shown to him by vision.” He then proceeded to organize the first standing high council, consisting of 12 high priests, which would handle administrative and disciplinary issues affecting the Church in Kirtland. That summer, a second high council was organized in Missouri for the purpose of “settling important business that might come before them which could not be settled by the Bishop and his council.” (www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/high-council)

What is the purpose of the stake high council?

D&C 107:78-81,84

78 Again, verily, I say unto you, the most important business of the church, and the most difficult cases of the church, inasmuch as there is not satisfaction upon the decision of the bishop or judges, it shall be handed over and carried up unto the council of the church, before the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

79 And the Presidency of the council of the High Priesthood shall have power to call other high priests, even twelve, to assist as counselors; and thus the Presidency of the High Priesthood and its counselors shall have power to decide upon testimony according to the laws of the church.

80 And after this decision it shall be had in remembrance no more before the Lord; for this is the highest council of the church of God, and a final decision upon controversies in spiritual matters.

81 There is not any person belonging to the church who is exempt from this council of the church.

84 Thus, none shall be exempted from the justice and the laws of God, that all things may be done in order and in solemnity before him, according to truth and righteousness.

What are some of the responsibilities of the stake high council?

(to decide upon testimony according to the laws of the church
a final decision upon controversies in spiritual matters)

These verses reference the ‘Presidency of the council of the High Priesthood’
What title do we usually use today to refer to this presidency?

Stake Presidency

What are some of the responsibilities of the Stake Presidency?

Oversee the business and responsibilities of the high council
(power to call other high priests, even twelve, to assist as counselors)

Quorum of the 70

He discusses the office of the Seventy

D&C 107:25-26,38

25 The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling.

26 And they form a quorum, equal in authority to that of the Twelve special witnesses or Apostles just named.

38 It is the duty of the traveling high council to call upon the Seventy, when they need assistance, to fill the several calls for preaching and administering the gospel, instead of any others.

In what way is the quorum of the seventy equal in authority to 12 apostles?

Gordon B. Hinckley

"The Seventy, who serve under the direction of the Twelve, would become equal in authority only in the event that the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve were somehow destroyed." ("The Quorum of the First Presidency", Ensign, Dec. 2005)

What is the underlying duty of Seventy?

(assistance [the 12] to fill the several calls for preaching and administering the gospel)

These verse speak of the presidents of the seventies

D&C 107:93-97

93 And it is according to the vision showing the order of the Seventy, that they should have seven presidents to preside over them, chosen out of the number of the seventy;

94 And the seventh president of these presidents is to preside over the six;

95 And these seven presidents are to choose other seventy besides the first seventy to whom they belong, and are to preside over them;

96 And also other seventy, until seven times seventy, if the labor in the vineyard of necessity requires it.

97 And these seventy are to be traveling ministers, unto the Gentiles first and also unto the Jews.

The seventies in the first quorum became the seven presidents for each of the other quorums; that is, there were 63 presidents, 7 for each of the 9 other quorums, and the seven remaining members were the presidency of the first quorum.

History

By 1845, there were ten quorums of seventy. Elders were often ordained to the office of seventy immediately before they left on a mission, so individual quorums were scattered all over the world.

In 1883, church president John Taylor localized the quorums of seventy. Each stake was given a quorum of seventy, and seventies in that stake would belong to that quorum. The first presidency of the first quorum became known as the First Council of the Seventy.

In 1975, under Kimball's direction, the First Quorum of the Seventy was reconstituted. The First Quorum was composed of the former members of the First Council of the Seventy as well as new individuals selected by Kimball.

In 1976 the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were all merged into a new First Quorum of the Seventy under a newly created seven-member Presidency of the Seventy.

In 1984 the Second Quorum of the Seventy was organized. Members of the Presidency of the Seventy, and the First and Second Quorums of the Seventy are general authorities of the church, have the sealing power, and their responsibility covers the church as a whole.

In 1986, all stake quorums of the seventy were discontinued. The church encouraged local leaders to have ordained seventies meet with the local elders quorum or to ordain them as high priests

In April 1995 regional representatives were replaced with the newly created calling of Area Authorities.

In 1997, it was announced that area authorities would be ordained to the office of seventy and that these new seventies would become members of the newly created Third, Fourth, and Fifth Quorums of the Seventy and their title became Area Seventies

Area seventies serve in the various geographic regions of the world:
Third Quorum—Africa Central,[21] Africa South, and Africa West areas.
Fourth Quorum—Asia and Asia North areas.
Fifth Quorum—Brazil Area.
Sixth Quorum—Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico areas.
Seventh Quorum—Europe, Europe East, and Middle East/Africa North areas.
Eighth Quorum—Philippines and Pacific areas.
Ninth Quorum—South America Northwest and South America South areas;
Tenth Quorum—North America Central, North America Northeast, and North America Southeast areas.
Eleventh Quorum—North America Southwest and North America West Areas.
Twelfth Quorum—Utah Area.

Aaronic Priesthood

107:13-15

13 The second priesthood is called the Priesthood of Aaron, because it was conferred upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations.

14 Why it is called the lesser priesthood is because it is an appendage to the greater, or the Melchizedek Priesthood, and has power in administering outward ordinances.

15 The bishopric is the presidency of this priesthood, and holds the keys or authority of the same.

Who is the presidency of the of the Aaronic Priesthood?

Presiding Bishopric

Note the word ‘presidency’. The Bishop (not Bishopric) is the president of the Aaronic priesthood in his ward

Are the members of the Presiding Bishopric number among the General Authorities?

Yes

We will soon read that the Bishop of the Ward is president of the priest quorum and that he is over the Aaronic priesthood in his Ward

The Aaronic priesthood is organized so a literal descendant of Aaron is the president of the Aaronic priesthood but that position can be filled by a high priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood

107:15-17

15 The bishopric is the presidency of this priesthood, and holds the keys or authority of the same.

16 No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant of Aaron.

17 But as a high priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood has authority to officiate in all the lesser offices, he may officiate in the office of bishop when no literal descendant of Aaron can be found, provided he is called and set apart and ordained unto this power by the hands of the Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

What is the maximum number of that a Ward can have in a deacon quorum, teachers quorum, priests quorum, and elders quorum?

D&C 107:85-89

85 And again, verily I say unto you, the duty of a president over the office of a deacon is to preside over twelve deacons, to sit in council with them, and to teach them their duty, edifying one another, as it is given according to the covenants.

86 And also the duty of the president over the office of the teachers is to preside over twenty-four of the teachers, and to sit in council with them, teaching them the duties of their office, as given in the covenants.

87 Also the duty of the president over the Priesthood of Aaron is to preside over forty-eight priests, and sit in council with them, to teach them the duties of their office, as is given in the covenants—

88 This president is to be a bishop; for this is one of the duties of this priesthood

89 Again, the duty of the president over the office of elders is to preside over ninety-six elders, and to sit in council with them, and to teach them according to the covenants.

What is done within a Ward when the number of those who hold an office in the priesthood exceed these numbers?

Additional quorums are created

Adam-Ondi-Ahman

In verses 40 thru 57 we have some details about Adam ordaining many of his decedents to the Melchizedek priesthood. And before Adam dies he gathers his decedents together

107:53-57

53 Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing.

54 And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel.

55 And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever.

56 And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation.

57 These things were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time.

Before the second coming Adam will hold another council with many of his righteous decedents

Joseph Smith

"[Adam] will call his children together and hold a council with them to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man. He (Adam) is the father of the human family, and presides over the spirits of all men, and all that have had the keys must stand before him in this grand council.... The Son of Man stands before him, and there is given him glory and dominion. Adam delivers up his stewardship to Christ, that which was delivered to him as holding the keys of the universe, but retains his standing as head of the human family." (TPJS, pg. 157)

Conclusion

D&C 107:99-100

99 Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.

100 He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved shall not be counted worthy to stand. Even so. Amen.

Ezra Taft Benson

"There are really two great obligations resting upon the priesthood quorum, or brotherhood. First, is the obligation of looking after the welfare of our members.

Anything pertaining to the social, economic, or spiritual welfare of members should be the concern of the quorum. In addition, it is the great obligation of quorums to assist in promoting the program of the Church." (CR, Oct. 1948)