

GD25 - Priesthood: "The Power of Godliness"  
Goose Creek Ward, Ashburn, VA Stake  
S. Kurt Neumiller  
July 15, 2001

### Context of the Quote

The quotation comes from a portion of D&C 84 where the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods are being compared. Moses attempted to give the Melchizedek Priesthood to Israel, but they hardened their hearts and were thus given the lesser Aaronic Priesthood.

D&C 84:19 And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. 20 Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, **the power of godliness** is manifest. 21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, **the power of godliness** is not manifest unto men in the flesh; 22 For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.

This phrase "the power of godliness" is referring to the great things a person can do when they live righteously. When a person has a godly walk they have the Spirit with them and can therefore do great works. Hence the admonition in D&C 121 to be full of charity and virtue so one's confidence will be strong in the presence of God:

D&C 121:45 Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. 46 The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.

If one is full of charity and virtue the Spirit will be with them constantly and they will have power in the Priesthood.

The power of godliness is that a person is not chained down by sin, so they may do great works. They have reconciled themselves to God and want to do His will, so God grants them great power in the ministry. The Nephi spoken of in the book of Helaman is a good example of such a person:

Helaman 10:4 Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unwearyingness declared the word, which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments. 5 And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will.

Here, the Lord grants Nephi all power in the ministry because He knows he will not do anything contrary to His will. There isn't any more power to obtain, Nephi has obtained it all as a result of his godliness.

## **The Purpose of the Priesthood**

In D&C 84 we are told Moses worked to sanctify Israel:

D&C 84:23 Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and **sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God**; 24 But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory.

This is the essential purpose of the Priesthood, to sanctify people. This is reflected in the commands the Lord gave Moses concerning how Aaron and his sons were administer in their office:

Exodus 28:1 AND take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, [even] Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.... 9 And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: 10 Six of their names on one stone, and [the other] six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth.... 12 And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod [for] stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and **Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial....** 15 And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment... 17 And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, [even] four rows of stones: ... 21 And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, [like] the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.... 29 **And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy [place], for a memorial before the LORD continually.** 30 And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and **Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually....** 36 And thou shalt make a plate [of] pure gold, and grave upon it, [like] the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.... 38 **And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD....** 40 And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. 41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt **anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.**

The Lord has Moses construct a breastplate and shoulder pieces

with the names of the tribes of Israel on them and a head piece that says "Holiness to the Lord" so they may know what their calling is. Their calling is to be holy and to make Israel holy as well.

Leviticus 1:1 AND the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, [even] of the herd, and of the flock. 3 If his offering [be] a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. 4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and **it shall be accepted for him [Aaron] to make atonement for him [Israel]**. 5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and **the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar** that [is by] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Israel is to bring their sacrifices to the Tabernacle where Aaron will make atonement for them by sacrificing it. In doing so, Aaron and the priests are bearing the iniquity of Israel:

Numbers 18:1 AND the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall **bear the iniquity of the sanctuary**: and thou and thy sons with thee shall **bear the iniquity of your priesthood**. 2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee [shall minister] before the tabernacle of witness.

There is nothing sinful about the Priesthood, it is that the Priesthood is designed to bear the sins of the people and thereby expiate them. Whenever the people of Israel sinned, they were to make atonement through the priest's sacrifices:

Leviticus 4:13 And **if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance**, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done [somewhat against] any of the commandments of the LORD [concerning things] which should not be done, and are guilty; 14 When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.... 20 And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and **the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them**.

22 **When a ruler hath sinned, and done [somewhat] through ignorance** [against] any of the commandments of the LORD his God [concerning things] which should not be done, and is guilty; ... 24 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD: it [is] a sin offering.... 26 And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and **the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him**.

27 And **if any one of the common people sin through ignorance**,

while he doeth [somewhat against] any of the commandments of the LORD [concerning things] which ought not to be done, and be guilty; ... 29 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering.... 31 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn [it] upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the LORD; and **the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.**

The priest's duty and responsibility is to sanctify Israel, as is made plain in the description given for the symbolism of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement:

Leviticus 16:29 And [this] shall be a statute for ever unto you: [that] in the seventh month, on the tenth [day] of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, [whether it be] one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: 30 **For on that day shall [the priest] make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, [that] ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.**

While the ancient practice of animal sacrifice for expiation of sins has ceased, the role of the Priesthood in bringing about the sanctification of Israel has not ceased.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Jesus makes it very plain that it is essential to be born of both the water and the Spirit in order to obtain the Kingdom. Clearly, the water refers to baptism and the Spirit refers to the reception of the Holy Spirit. Both of these ordinances are performed by the Priesthood.

As an interesting side note, consider the symbolism of the necessity of a spiritual birth at the hands of a Priesthood holder. Priesthood holders are males who administer the ordinances necessary for a spiritual birth. The physical birth through a female is also clearly essential in order to obtain the Kingdom, hence the War in Heaven and the adversary and his minions being cut off from the opportunity of having a physical birth. So, we have a complimentary set of births, both which are essential for obtaining the Kingdom. The physical birth by the woman, and the spiritual birth by the man.

1 Peter 2:1 WHEREFORE **laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,** 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious. 4 To whom coming, [as

unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, **an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.** 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But **ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation,** a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Peter admonishes the Priesthood to lay aside all sin so they may be holy and offer up spiritual sacrifices. Then they will be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and ultimately the whole nation of Israel will be holy.

D&C 13:1 UPON you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer **the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins;** and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.

John Baptist confers the Aaronic Priesthood on Smith and Cowdery and tells them the purpose of the Priesthood is to preach repentance and baptize so people can be forgiven of their sins.

D&C 20:38 The duty of the elders, priests, teachers, deacons, and members of the church of Christ... 40 And **to administer bread and wine--the emblems of the flesh and blood of Christ--** 41 **And to confirm those who are baptized** into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures; 42 **And to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church** ... 46 The priest's duty is to **preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament,** 47 **And visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties....** 53 The teacher's duty is to **watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them;** 54 **And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking...** 58 But neither teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize, administer the sacrament, or lay on hands; 59 They are, however, to **warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ.**

In modern times the Lord reiterates the role of the various offices of the Priesthood is to sanctify the members of the Church by administering the ordinances and watching over them.

D&C 68:2 And, behold, and lo, this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth-- 3 And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost.... 8 Go ye into all the

world, **preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

All those ordained to the Priesthood are to preach the gospel of repentance and to baptize.

The purpose of the Priesthood is also reflected in the words used to identify it. In the New Testament Greek, the term translated to the English "priesthood" in 1 Peter 2:5 is "hierateuma" and would most literally translate to "sacred-effect". The term translated to "priesthood" in Hebr. 7:11 is "hierosune" and would most literally translate to "sacred-togetherness".

The Hebrew term translated to the English "priest" is "kohen", which is an active participle of "kahan". Strong's concordance states "kahan" is "a primitive root, apparently meaning to mediate in religious service". So, a "kohen" is a mediator.

It is plain the purpose of the Priesthood is to sanctify Israel. The Priesthood is not an administrative framework for a male-dominated institutional bureaucracy. It is a call to service where men are to administer saving ordinances to the children women have brought forth so all may obtain the kingdom of heaven. Once those ordinances have been administered, men are to support and keep people in the gospel and sanctify them.

### **The Authority of the Priesthood**

The Purpose of the Priesthood is to sanctify Israel and the Lord makes ties between Himself and those He calls to serve Him. His servants are granted His authority so the saving ordinances they perform will be of eternal consequence.

Exodus 40:12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. 13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: 15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may **minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood** throughout their generations.

The Lord chooses people to be His servants, they are to be sanctified and set apart to do His work. Their work is to be a mediator between Himself and Israel and it is work that has everlasting consequences.

Matthew 10:1 AND when he had called unto [him] his twelve disciples, he **gave them power** [against] unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

The Lord grants His servants power over the adversary and the effects of the Fall.

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee **the keys of the kingdom of heaven**: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Peter is granted special "keys" that enable him to perform acts on earth which will apply in an eternal heavenly context.

Matthew 22:23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, 24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor **the power of God**. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

In a confrontation with Sadducees, Jesus points out to them they do not understand the power, or authority, of God. If a person marries according to the dictates of men and not God, then God is under no obligation to pay attention to that marriage.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but **I have chosen you, and ordained you**, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] **your fruit should remain**: that whatsoever ye shall **ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you**.

Jesus chooses and ordains the apostles to go and preach the gospel and win converts so they may be saved eternally in the kingdom of heaven. He tells them their calling gives them access to divine support.

D&C 110:11 After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and **committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel** from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north. 12 After this, Elias appeared, and **committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham**, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed. 13 After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said: 14 Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi--testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come-- 15 To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse-- 16 Therefore, the **keys of this dispensation are committed into**

**your hands**; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

Smith is given all of the keys necessary to assist in the Lord's great and final effort to gather Israel, both mortally and post-mortally, which is His promise to Abraham. The granting of these keys implies the responsibility to make good use of them, "lest the whole be smitten with a curse".

### **The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood**

The "oath" and "covenant" of the Priesthood as a topic is first introduced in Hebr. 7-8, specifically Hebr. 7:20-22. In those two chapters, Paul is contrasting the Levitical Priesthood with the Melchizedek Priesthood and states Christ is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, citing Ps. 110:4 as a proof text. He states the Levitical Priesthood came without an oath whereas Christ's High Priesthood came with an oath and covenant (cf. Hebr. 7:21-22). In other words, the Levitical Priesthood does not carry the promise of salvation in the Kingdom, whereas the Melchizedek Priesthood does.

Jesus being a sinless High Priest became an eternal sacrifice (cf. Hebr. 7:24-28), so that eliminates the need for the temporal sacrifices performed by the priests of the Levitical Priesthood (cf. Hebr. 7:23). Jesus is therefore "the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (cf. Hebr. 8:6). The better covenant is the granting of salvation in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thus, the oath and covenant of the Priesthood is referring to the Lord's word and promise that salvation comes through the Melchizedek Priesthood. This oath and covenant could not be given through the Levitical Priesthood because it was strictly a Priesthood of carnal commandments.

D&C 84:35 And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; 36 For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; 37 And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; 38 And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him. 39 And this is **according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.** 40 **Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father,** which he cannot break, neither can it be moved.

Whoever receives both the Levitical and Melchizedek Priesthoods, or the Priesthoods of Moses and Aaron in the parlance of D&C 84, receives the word and promise of the Father that they will be exalted in the Kingdom. These Priesthoods, more specifically the Melchizedek Priesthood, give a person the right to administer and receive the saving ordinances to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven, so with it comes the promise of obtaining that Kingdom.

Hence the warning in the subsequent verses:



D&C 84:41 But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come. 42 And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye have received, which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice out of the heavens; and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you. 43 And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

If someone has the power to save and they then reject it, or they reject it outright, then they are damning themselves. So, the Lord warns them to "beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life". Because if they don't after receiving the Priesthood of eternal life, then they are going to end up damned.

Sometimes, when speaking of the "Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood" people think there is some kind of formal overt oath and/or covenant associated with the Priesthood. This is not the case. The oath and covenant being referred to is the Father's word and promise that whoever is faithful in obtaining, and obviously administering, the Melchizedek Priesthood will be saved in the Kingdom of Heaven. Being ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood is the formal act on our part.

### **Encroaching on the Priesthood**

Throughout history there have been incidents where people have infringed upon the rights of the Priesthood. The more prominent incidents are below.

Numbers 16:1 NOW Korah... took [men]: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, [Ye take] too much upon you, seeing all the congregation [are] holy, every one of them, and the LORD [is] among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

4 And when Moses heard [it], he fell upon his face: 5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who [are] his, and [who is] holy; and will cause [him] to come near unto him: even [him] whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. 6 This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; 7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be [that] the man whom the LORD doth choose, he [shall be] holy: [ye take] too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.

8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 [Seemeth it but] a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near [to him], and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and **seek ye the priesthood also?** 11 For which cause [both] thou and all thy

company [are] gathered together against the LORD: and what [is] Aaron, that ye murmur against him? ...

16 And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow: 17 And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each [of you] his censer. 18 And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. 19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

20 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. 22 And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24 Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. 25 And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for [I have] not [done them] of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; [then] the LORD hath not sent me. 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that [appertain] unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that [was] under them: 32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that [appertained] unto Korah, and all [their] goods. 33 They, and all that [appertained] to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34 And all Israel that [were] round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up [also]....

Korah, a notable political figure among Israel and a son of Levi but not a son of Aaron, starts a popular uprising against Moses and Aaron. He accuses Moses and Aaron of using the Priesthood to control Israel, and threatens rebellion given his popular support.

Clearly, the problem is a political one and Korah attempts to obtain power over Israel by discounting and usurping those rights exclusive to the Priesthood. If Korah can invalidate Moses and Aaron's claims to Priesthood leadership by breaking the regulations of the Priesthood, then he can take political control of Israel because then Moses can not claim his dictates are from the Lord.

Numbers 12:1 AND Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the

Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 And they said, **Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?** And the LORD heard [it]. 3 (Now the man Moses [was] very meek, above all the men which [were] upon the face of the earth.)

4 And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. 5 And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood [in] the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. 6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, [I] the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, [and] will speak unto him in a dream. 7 My servant Moses [is] not so, who [is] faithful in all mine house. 8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? 9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.

Miriam and Aaron, Moses' older sister and brother, are upset with Moses because he marries an Ethiopian woman, a Cushite, a woman who is black. Moses married Zipporah the Midianite when he was not living among the Israelite and before the Lord had chosen him as prophet, so perhaps that was seen as forgivable. But, now Moses was the prophet and was among Israel so his marrying a woman who is obviously not an Israelite causes them to find fault with him.

Miriam finds fault with her younger brother Moses and enlists Aaron against him. This fault-finding is just a pretext for what Miriam is really after, so she reasons that God has spoken to them too, so they ought to be sharing in the power, or perhaps taking it from Moses since he is faulty.

The Lord steps in very quickly and indicates that while other prophets in Israel will see visions or dreams, it is only Moses whom the Lord will speak to face to face. He then asks them why they did not recognize this difference, the implication being the Lord never spoke to them in such a manner so where do they get off vaunting themselves.

2 Samuel 6:6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth [his hand] to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook [it]. 7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for [his] error; and there he died by the ark of God.

Uzzah was the son of Abinadab, in whose house the ark was placed when it was brought back from the Philistines, cf. 1 Sam. 7:1. When the ark was transported back the oxen stumbled and Uzzah touched it despite the command that he should not, cf. Num. 4:15. The Lord struck him dead according to the warning in Num. 4:15. There is no indication the ark was in imminent danger of damage, so Uzzah's actions were entirely too casual. There must have certainly been Levites and sons of Aaron present as the ark was successfully moved from the house to the cart with no incident. Why then Uzzah took it upon himself to steady the ark when there

were others who were permitted to do it is unclear. Perhaps since the ark was at his house for some 20 years he was feeling entitled to handle it, or was loath to give it up, or resented the Levites taking it away so he wanted to make some kind of show of piety that backfired.

2 Chronicles 26:16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to [his] destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, [that were] valiant men: 18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, [It appertaineth] not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither [shall it be] for thine honour from the LORD God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and [had] a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he [was] leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. 21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, [being] a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son [was] over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

Uzziah became a great and powerful king, but he became prideful. He took it upon himself to usurp the priest's duty and went into the Temple to burn incense.

Acts 8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: ... 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.... 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, **Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.** 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and [in] the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

Simon, formerly a sorcerer, is converted to the gospel but his motives are entirely wrong. Peter rejects giving him the priesthood because his heart is not right. Simon, still not understanding, asks Peter to pray for him so that he will be forgiven. What Simon should have done is take Peter's warning seriously, repent, and humble himself and then pray to the Lord for forgiveness. Instead, he tries to get Peter to obtain forgiveness for him. We never hear of him again.

1 Corinthians 11:1 BE ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ.  
2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered [them] to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God.  
4 Every man praying or prophesying, having [his] head covered, dishonoureth his head. 5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with [her] head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. ... 16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God....

1 Corinthians 14:31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.... 33 For God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

34 Let your **women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to [rule]**; but [they are commanded] to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a **shame for women to [rule] in the church.**

The fledgling Church in Corinth had strayed from what Paul had taught them while he was there. In his absence the Church had assumed the ability to pray and prophesy gave the individual the right to "rule" in the Church, regardless of gender. As such, women were impinging on the role of the Priesthood. To combat this, Paul tells the members of the Church in Corinth to have the women keep their heads covered as a symbol of deference to the Priesthood. The women may continue to pray and prophesy within the Church, but they are to acknowledge that they do not have the Priesthood and are therefore not to "rule" the Church.

Even aside from the IV/JST on 1 Cor. 14:34-25, it is plain from the context that Paul is not requiring absolute silence on the part of women, as he says they may pray and prophesy in the Church.

## **Hypocrisy in the Priesthood**

As the purpose of the Priesthood is to sanctify Israel, those who use the Priesthood for personal gain or to promote themselves are themselves corrupting what should be sanctifying. Hence the scathing attacks against hypocrisy in the Priesthood.

Isaiah 28:7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble [in] judgment. 8 For all tables are full of vomit [and] filthiness, [so that there is] no place [clean].

Malachi 1:6 A son honoureth [his] father, and a servant his master: if then I [be] a father, where [is] mine honour? and if I [be] a master, where [is] my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD [is] contemptible.

8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, [is it] not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, [is it] not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:1 AND now, O ye priests, this commandment [is] for you. 2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay [it] to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay [it] to heart. 3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, [even] the dung of your solemn feasts; and [one] shall take you away with it. 4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. 5 My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him [for] the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. 6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. 7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he [is] the messenger of the LORD of hosts. 8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. 9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

Matthew 15:1 THEN came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to [his] father or [his] mother, [It is] a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, [he shall be free]. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 [Ye] hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men.

Matthew 16:1 THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, [It will be] fair weather: for the sky is red. 3 And in the morning, [It will be] foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O [ye] hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not [discern] the signs of the times? 4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

Matthew 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in [yourselves], neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. 14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. 16 Woe unto you, [ye] blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by

the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! 17 [Ye] fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? 18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 [Ye] fools and blind: for whether [is] greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon. 23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 [Ye] blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. 25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26 [Thou] blind Pharisee, cleanse first that [which is] within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead [men's] bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

D&C 121:34 Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? 35 Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson-- 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. 37 That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. 38 Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. 39 We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. 40 Hence many are called, but few are chosen.