

Authority, Keys and Kingdom

Talking Notes
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There are three ideas I will address: authority, keys, and the kingdom of God:

On Authority: The scriptures draw a contrast between two kinds of authority:

One form of authority involves: Preaching, teaching or statements holding self-evident or compelling truth that convicts or convinces hearers.

Examples:

Matt. 3:49: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings with his disciples, the people were astonished at his teachings, for he taught them as one having authority from God and not as having authority from the scribes."

Matt. 10:10: "And when he had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority do you these things? And who gave you this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where was it? From Heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From Heaven, he will say unto us, Why did you not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men, we fear the people, for all people hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

They may have just as well have asked, "how do you preach with such persuasive conviction?"

THIS IS THE PROPHETIC FORM OF AUTHORITY

Another form of authority involves the right to exercise control or demand obedience that is obeyed because of fear of the one holding that authority.

Examples:

Matt. 10:3: "But Jesus called them and said, You know that the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them." The Apostle Paul held this second authority before his conversion:

Acts 12:40: "And many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them."

THIS IS THE PRIESTLY FORM OF AUTHORITY

Priests deal with rites, ordinances, commandments and procedures. This durable approach to preserving a belief system allows a dispensation of the Gospel to continue long after a prophetic founder has died.

Moses, for example, established a system of rites and observances that then became the religious fare of priests who perpetuated the system from the time of Moses until the coming of Christ.

Prophets deal with God and angels. They receive new insight, promises and covenants. Their conduct can even appear to violate the traditions of the religion they follow, but that is only because they are not bound to the tradition as practiced by the priests. Instead they have penetrated into the underlying meaning, the original power, the purpose of the rites. They express the original view from heaven that motivated the founding prophet.

The prophetic form is rarely present, even among the people of God. It comes to restore and refresh, to call to repentance, and to move God's work along. The priestly operates for centuries trying to perpetuate the founding prophet's restoration. But once the religion falls exclusively into the hands of the priests, traditions always creep in that stray from the original and keep forms intact without maintaining the spiritual substance.

It has been the history of God's people that those who are raised at a time of only the priestly form will always assume they are guided by God's messengers holding God's authority, and therefore the prophetic is alien to their thinking.

This is the condition Nephi foretold would happen after the Book of Mormon came forth:

2 Ne. 12:1: "they shall teach with their learning, and deny the holy ghost which giveth utterance. And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel. And they say unto the people, Hearken unto us and hear ye our precept, for behold, there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men. Behold, hearken ye unto my precept."

Nephi teaches believers in our day will eventually choose the priestly over the prophetic.

But Nephi counsels us to instead always choose the prophetic over the priestly. People accept priestly authority over the prophetic word of God because of false traditions.

Those who arrive late at the scene, in the generation after God's voice has become quiet, then start traditions to explain away that silence. Generations that follow them do not even notice "there is no God today" because "he hath given his power unto men." In the present circumstances of the restoration, when the priestly authorities speak, all the traditions from the LDS to the FLDS, claim that IS the voice of God.

The tradition of Priestly authority in Christ's day justified the guard in striking Christ:

John 10:4:

"The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world. I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple where the Jews always assemble, and in secret have I said nothing. Why do you ask me? Ask them who heard me what I have said unto them. Behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Do you answer the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why do you smite me?"

-The officer was so subject to the priestly tradition that he was only able to conceive of the high priest as God's representative. -It made him blind to the Son of God because he could not imagine something greater than the established and trusted priestly tradition.

It was that same Priestly tradition that made Ananias think he had the right to have the Apostle Paul struck on the mouth for testifying of Christ. Ananias no doubt thought of himself as the authorized and empowered priest who spoke for God.

Culturally and according to their traditions, Ananias was correct:

Acts 12:20:

"On the next day, because he desired to have known with certainty why he was accused of the Jews, he commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them. And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite you, you whitewashed wall, for do you sit to judge me after the law, and command that I be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Do you revile God's high priest?" Ananias was defending his role and office.

He was the anointed high priest and therefore believed he deserved, even required respect.

He believed that if you disrespect the high priest of God then you likewise disrespect God.

The officers who received this command likewise thought everything was as it should be. Paul had no right to disrupt the priestly tradition.

But the priestly tradition must always give way to the prophetic. The priestly tradition has no right to judge the prophetic, but the prophetic has every right and invariably the duty to judge the priestly.

Then there is the concept of “keys”--

Keys:

The best way to conceive of a “key” is as knowledge or understanding. It means something that unlocks the hidden truths you did not previously comprehend. A new, true concept that acts like a catalyst to solidify an idea that eluded you is a “key.” When the term “eternal punishment” was defined as God’s punishment, because God is eternal and punishment from Him is Eternal punishment, we had a new key given to us.

Prophets hold “keys” because they unlock understanding.

T&C 82:12: “And this greater Priesthood administers the gospel and holds the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.”

T&C 151:12: “This, therefore, is the sealing and binding power, and in one sense of the word the keys of the Kingdom, which consists in the key of knowledge.”

Proverbs 4:1 “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings to search out a matter.”

Joseph Smith taught: “Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it.” (August 8, 1839). “Where there is a prophet, a priest, or a righteous man unto whom God gives His oracles, there is the Kingdom of God; and where the oracles of God are not, there the Kingdom of God is not.” (January 22, 1843).

Joseph Smith could ask and get an answer from God. Because of this he held the “keys of the kingdom” because God presided.

When we cannot have an answer from God, there is no kingdom of God because the king’s voice is silent.

A “key” concept is one that helps solve the riddle, answer the question, or clear up the controversy. A “key” removes ignorance. When God explains something to improve man’s understanding He provides us “keys” or knowledge.

The Book of Mormon is filled with “Keys” including giving us answers to:

- who the “other sheep” were Christ mentioned in Jerusalem
- what Christ did following His ascension into heaven
- what happened to other Israelites led away from Jerusalem
- what it means to be redeemed from the fall
- how pre-Babylonian Judaism really was practiced
- that many Israelites were divided from the land of Jerusalem and continued as organized bodies in scattered parts of the world
- that many prophets wrote scriptures we know nothing about
- that a great body of scripture exists which God intends to gather into one

And many other keys or insights that have been kept from our knowledge.

“Keys” and the “kingdom of God” are necessarily linked together:

Because Samuel could obtain the voice of God, Samuel held the keys of the kingdom of God. When the people demanded a mortal king, God explained to Samuel what their request really meant:

1 Sam. 4:2: “But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Listen unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done, since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in which they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto you. Now therefore listen unto their voice. Nevertheless, yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.”

Samuel explained to them what it meant to reject God as king and to put a man in charge of the religion:

1 Sam. 4:3: “This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands and captains over fifties, and will set them to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be compounders, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to his officers and to his servants. And he will take your menservants and your maidservants, and your best young men, and

your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep, and you shall be his servants. And you shall cry out in that day because of your king whom you shall have chosen you, and the Lord will not hear you in that day.”

This is how the kingdom of God is evicted from earth. Prophets fall silent and priests overtake the kingdom to make it theirs. Then, possessing the kingdom, they take a tenth of all the people earn and divert it to their captains, and their appointed authorities, and they require the young men and daughters to serve as servants in the kingdom of the supplanters.

Emma Smith, Sidney Rigdon and William Marks all said that without Joseph Smith there was no longer a kingdom of God on earth.¹

Dispensations are founded by prophets who establish practices and forms of worship to be administered by priests. In the moment a dispensation is founded, both the prophet and the priest are present.

- Moses was a prophet, and established priestly rites.
- Christ was a prophet and more, and He also established priestly rites.
- Similarly, Joseph Smith was an authentic dispensation head who was both a prophet and established priestly rites.

WE expect to have added to the prophetic voice heard among us an additional priestly set of rites in a temple founded by God. We await commands to identify the location and to begin construction. We have been told to expect that command will come.

The reason an apostasy can be concealed from the view of religious believers is because the presence of continuing priestly tradition conceals the absence of the prophetic tradition. Concealing the fact that the prophetic is gone happens so easily because priests focus on authority and move the idea of authority into the central, even controlling issue for salvation.

Catholics held a monopoly for a thousand years using the idea of “keys from St. Peter” as the foundation upon which the religion was built. It was not until the eastern Orthodox faith departed there was any choice to be made between “keys.” Only then could people choose between claims of “keys” in Rome and “keys” in Constantinople. It took Martin Luther to finally peel away the fraud of “keys” held by wicked men independent from righteousness. His expositions on the “priesthood of faith” allowed a divorce between claims of priestly “keys” and faith in God.

It took Martin Luther’s revolution in thinking to spread for several hundred years to create a religious landscape where Joseph Smith and a new Dispensation of the Gospel could be introduced. These things move slowly because mankind is generally

¹*The Nauvoo Diaries of William Clayton, 1842-1846, Abridged*, p. 64, August 27, 1844.

imprisoned by their traditions and are incapable of seeing the difference between the priestly and the prophetic. This blindness becomes the tool through which the priestly tradition controls mankind.

Priestly tradition is stable, authoritarian, controlling, focused on outward conduct, amasses wealth, power and prestige. Priestly tradition can continue in the absence of spirit, revelation or even godliness. Priestly tradition can become the friend of government, business and empires, and can work hand-in-hand with the powers of this world.

Prophetic tradition is unruly, unpredictable, and challenges the god of this world. It cannot work with the powers of this world, but strikes at its authority. It cannot exist without the direct involvement of God and angels and it cannot be divorced from continuing revelation.

You can have both without an apostasy.

You can have the prophetic without an apostasy. You can have a priestly tradition without an apostasy, but that is much less likely.

In any complete apostasy, the presence of the priestly tradition is essential to be able to accomplish the “trick” of an unacknowledged apostasy.

The trick to successfully substituting apostasy for the kingdom of God is to distract people into thinking there hasn't been any change. The “believers” need to think everything remains intact. Apostate priests always claim there has been a perfect continuity and preservation of the “keys.”

So the idea of “apostasy” changes in the hands of the apostates. Instead of focusing on the silence of God and absence of the prophetic, “apostasy” is redefined to require individual conformity to the group. Only “individuals” become apostate, not the group. This allows claims of apostasy to be discussed under the watchful eye of the priests without anyone ever searching into the overall condition of a fallen people.

The Jews mocked efforts to tell them they were apostate. They thought it was humorous when Lehi preached the idea. Because they were so very religious, so devout, so unassailably active in following God, the idea was absolutely laughable that they were apostate.

The Apostle Paul said the problem would begin at the top with the shepherds, who would teach them falsehoods as truth. (“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”)

These new leaders would have only a form of godliness, without any real power to save.

2 Tim. 1:8: "This know also: that in the last days, perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, without self-control, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof."

The Christian world adopted another, false replacement of the original church. It became so universal it was hailed as the Universal, or Catholic Church. It ruled from the rivers to the ends of the earth as the only official form of the faith established by Christ.

To accomplish this, Satan was concerned with the "macro" institutional failure, not just individuals falling away. That is always his objective. If the religion becomes corrupt, then devotion for even the best of people is meaningless. They cannot achieve salvation, because the kingdom of God has departed. Satan is involved in strategic defeat of mankind. The small tactical battles between people is the concern of lesser fallen spirits.

It is the small, minor spirits who follow Lucifer who tempt individuals to commit sin. Success for the Adversary is not accomplished in petty enterprises. He wants failure for the whole, so none can be saved. For that, apostasy must be universal.

He has never succeeded by admitting there has been a failure. The trick is always to have the apostasy come unnoticed, unacknowledged and from within.

Christ quoted the Father as He foretold what would happen:

3 Ne. 7:5: "At that day when the gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations, and if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, Behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them."

Apostasy must first be noticed, acknowledged and exposed, before it is possible to repent and return. Until then, it progresses apace, discarding and rejecting what might have been given. All the while being happily ignored by "believers" whose devotion will not save.

The enemy succeeds when he manages to get us NOT to reject ordinances, but to change them. As soon as they are changed, they are broken.

Isa. 7:1 “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.”

T&C 54:3: “And the day comes that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people, for they have strayed from my ordinances and have broken my everlasting covenant. They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walks in his own way and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol which waxes old and shall perish.”

That has been an important step. Because then even people who believe there was a restoration through Joseph Smith can continue to claim they follow a true religion, while practicing one that has been broken. These practitioners become like the ancient Jews, who mocked Lehi because they knew they were still righteous. They knew Lehi was foolish, even fraudulent. They still had the truth, the ordinances, the temple, and the priesthood. Lehi was thought to be merely a mistaken crank.

The kingdom of God is with us. And for the present we are still left among people who have not awakened to their awful situation. We should warn them and seek to recover as many as will listen.

If you are awakened, warn your neighbor. We have a work to do among others before the Lord will has us depart from people He still loves and hopes to save.

I’ve seen and read of prayers and fasting by those among us who want a temple. Why do you think the Lord hesitates in giving the command? When He answers and says for us to remain and labor among other people He hopes to save, do you think we can neglect that obligation and still hasten His command to build a temple?

I leave it for you to answer those questions.

2 Ne. 7:2: “king against me” is not what Joseph Smith was attempting. He was raising up a “king unto God” to be subordinate to the Lord.

T&C 146:20: “standard of truth” is the Book of Mormon. Will go forward “independent” of denominations.