

President N. Eldon Tanner:

The Men of the Tabernacle Choir will now favor us with "Ah, Then My Heart So Free Knows Its Infinity," with Brother Condie conducting.

Singing: "Ah, Then My Heart So Free Knows Its Infinity."

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Brother Condie will now lead the congregation and chorus in singing "Redeemer of Israel," after which President Joseph Fielding Smith, counselor in the First Presidency, and President of the Quorum of the Twelve, will speak to us.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

Of the First Presidency and President of the Council of the Twelve

This is a wonderful sight to me, as I look to the other end of this building, and in the gallery, and back of me, and see all of you brethren who hold divine authority. I have thought that the best thing I could do would be to prepare something that had to do with this divine authority with which the Lord has blessed us, and with your help, for I need your faith, I want to read what I have written.

Authority, an eternal, universal principle

Authority is an eternal principle operative throughout the universe. To the "utmost bounds" of space, all things are governed by law emanating from the Lord our God. On Kolob and other giant governing stars, and in the tiny electron, infinitely small and of which all things are composed, divine authority is manifest in the form of immutable law. All space is filled with matter, and that matter is controlled and directed by an all-wise and omniscient Creator.

Priesthood, divine authority

Priesthood is divine authority that is conferred upon men, that they may officiate in the ordinances of the gospel. In other words, priesthood is a part of God's own power that he bestows upon his chosen servants, that they may act in his name in proclaiming the gospel and officiating in all the ordinances thereof. All such official acts performed by these duly authorized servants are recognized by the author of our salvation.

Derived from Him

Man cannot act legally in the name of the Lord unless he is vested with the priesthood, which is divine authority. No man has the power or the right to take this honor to himself. Unless he is called of God, as was Aaron, he has no authority to officiate in any of the ordinances of the gospel; should he do so, his act is not valid or recognized in the heavens. The Lord has said that his house is a house of order, and he has given the commandment that no man shall come unto the Father but by his divine law, which is established in the heavens.

Assumed authority, invalid

All men who assume authority but who have not been properly called will have to answer for their acts in the day of judgment. Nothing that they perform in the name of the Lord is valid, for it lacks the stamp of divine authority. To deceive and lead others to believe that unauthorized acts are valid when performed in the name of the Lord is a grievous sin in the sight of God.

Divine authority vital to salvation

The question of priesthood, or divine authority, is a vital one, since it concerns the salvation of each of us. It is impossible for a man to enter the kingdom of God without complying with the laws of that kingdom. Only authorized officers may properly officiate in rites and ceremonies of his kingdom. No man has the right to

Saturday, October 1

Second Day

assume the authority and officiate without being ordained to the ministry. To do so is an unauthorized and illegal act.

With regard to the holding of the priesthood in the preexistence, I will say that there was an organization there just as well as an organization here, and men there held authority. Men chosen to positions of trust in the spirit world held the priesthood.

Adam received the holy priesthood and was commanded by the Lord to teach his children the principles of the gospel. Moreover, Adam was baptized for the remission of his sins, for the same principles by which men are saved now were the principles by which men were saved in the beginning. In that day all those who repented and were baptized received the gifts of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Adam made all these things known to his sons and daughters.

A false notion prevails today that men may assume the authority to speak and officiate in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ when they have not been divinely called. The commission given by our Lord to his disciples nearly two thousand years ago does not authorize any man today to officiate in the ordinances of the gospel or to preach and expound the scriptures by divine authority. The Bible does not and cannot give to any man this right to exercise the functions of the priesthood. This can only come, as in days of old, by authority from the Son of God or his properly constituted representatives. There is a perfect order in the kingdom of God, and he recognizes the authority of his servants.

Priesthood never more important

It is our duty to save the world. That is our mission, insofar as they will listen unto us and receive our testimony. All those who reject the testimony of the elders of Israel will be held responsible and will have to give an accounting for their stewardship, just as we will have to give an accounting of our stewardship as elders and teachers of the people.

Never before in the history of the Church has the responsibility that

has been given to the priesthood been more necessary of fulfillment than today. Never before have we been under greater obligation to serve the Lord, and keep his commandments, and magnify the callings that have been assigned to us.

The world today is torn asunder. Evil is rampant upon the face of the earth. The members of the Church need to be humble and prayerful and diligent. We who have been called to these positions in the priesthood have the responsibility upon our shoulders to teach and direct the members of the Church in righteousness.

Priesthood accountable for honoring or neglecting responsibility

If we do not serve the Lord with all our heart, might, mind, and strength, if we are not loyal to this calling that we have received, we are not going to be blameless when we stand before the judgment seat. It is a very serious thing to hold the priesthood.

Brethren of the priesthood, these are your responsibilities. The Council of the Twelve did not place them upon you; the Presidency of the Church did not place them upon you. It is true that they, or their representatives, called you and ordained you to the ministry, but the responsibility to perform this labor came to you from the Son of God. You are his servants. You will be held accountable to him for your stewardship, and unless you magnify your callings and prove yourselves worthy and faithful in all things, you will not stand blameless before him at the last day.

May the Lord bless you good brethren, holders of the priesthood, and may you magnify your callings in the Church, and may the Lord bless you in all that you do is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Brother Robert R. McKay, son of President David O. McKay, will now read his message to the priesthood.