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Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood/ "Ordained"

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Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood

Sometime between the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood in mid-May and the end of June, Joseph and Oliver received the Melchizedek Priesthood, as promised, from the ancient Apostles, Peter, James and John.

While in mortality, these three had been the only Apostles present when the Savior raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. They alone witnessed the events which transpired on the Mount of Transfiguration. While the others were told to tarry, these three were taken to a place in the Garden of Gethsemane where they beheld the agony of the Savior as He took upon himself the sins of the world. Following the crucifixion, they served as the presidency of the ancient Church. Because they held the necessary keys, they had the authority to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood in the new dispensation.

Although Joseph Smith did not publish specific information regarding the circumstances surrounding the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood, in an address given in Logan on 6 May 1882, Erastus Snow, a friend of the prophet, reported that this event took place

at a period when they were being pursued by their enemies and they had to travel all night, and in the dawn of the coming day when they were weary and worn who should appear to them but Peter, James and John, for the purpose of conferring upon them the Apostleship.¹⁷

Another secondhand account was related by Addison Everett in a letter written in 1881. Everett said that a few days before the martyrdom he overheard Joseph tell Hyrum about the appearance of Peter, James, and John. Everett recounted some of the details he overheard.

It was night and they traveled through brush and water and mud, fell over logs, etc., until Oliver was exhausted; then Joseph helped him along through brush and water, almost carrying him. They traveled all night, and just at the break of day Oliver gave out entirely and exclaimed, "O Lord! Brother Joseph, how long have we got to endure this thing?" They sat down on a log to rest and Joseph said that at that very time Peter, James, and John came to them and ordained them to the Apostleship. They had 16 or 17 miles to go to get back to Mr. Hales, his father-in-law's, but Oliver did not complain any more of fatigue.¹⁸

Ordained

I

Beginning in the mind of God
thoughts frame words of power.
The Author of Salvation
appoints the Son.
In holy order He creates worlds,
directs and delegates His work.
Angels, authorized,
reveal truths to faithful men,
righteous as the king of Salem.

II

In the meridian of time
the Chosen One calls fishermen
to leave their nets in Galilee.
Ordained, Peter, James, and John
receive authority, see
Jairus' daughter restored to life,
witness transfiguration
and Gethsemane.
Speaking precious words,
they proclaim the gospel
of the living Christ,
postpone apostasy's long night.

III

Heavenly voices break dark silence.
These three, Apostolic messengers,
commit rights and keys,

oaths and covenants, mysteries.
Greater than many waters,
eternal as light, mightier than death,
the priesthood called Melchizedek
flows again through vibrant hands
to heads of those now authorized
to represent our Lord!

And again, what do we hear? ... The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times (D&C 128:20)!