

Come Follow Me Class Insights – 39 – Doctrine and Covenants 106-108

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 106 through 108.

So as we begin today, we want to start actually by looking at some details at a really, really high level. If you go back to the chronological order of contents - it's back before section 1 in the Doctrine and Covenants - you'll see the location and the date where each of the sections was given in their chronological order. You'll see that 1831 and 1832 have this huge number of sections in the Doctrine and Covenants. So take a look at the year 1834. It shows that in that one year we only received sections 102, 103, 104, then we were at the Fishing River in June with that Zion's Camp experience, section 105, and then back in Kirtland for section 106 is where we begin today.

So here we are in November. There's been a lot that has happened since the - those people who went west on that Zion's Camp march have now returned to Kirtland. A lot has happened, and yet, in our Doctrine and Covenants, we don't have most of those meetings or blessings or minutes that are recorded here until we get this revelation given for Warren Cowdery who is Oliver Cowdery's brother, and we'll pick that story up in just a moment.

Now jump down to 1835. In that entire year 1835, there are only three canonized revelations, section 107 then clear around in August section 134 which is going to come later in our study and then section 108 in December. In fact, it's at the very end of December. It's December 26th, the day after Christmas when we get that revelation; we'll talk about that as well.

Here's the point. You look at this and you would say that the first reaction would be wow, Joseph Smith is getting all these revelations early on and then as he gets closer to the end of his life, the number of revelations drops off significantly. If all you had were the Book of Mormon and this chronological order of contents, that's the conclusion that you would - you would almost be forced to make. Let me - let me just show you a resource if you - if you go to josephsmithpapers.org, click on documents. So notice what happens as you scroll down through this list of documents by year. You'll notice that we start with 34 in 1828 and '29 and in 1830 we go to 38 and then 65, 36, 77, 66 and now in 1835 which is where we're going to be in our sections today mostly,

you have 155. Then next year, 1836, the following year, you have 475. And then 82, 137, 291, 583, 288, 411, 518, 409. My point being that the canonized revelations, part of our canon, we get a lot of them early on and fewer of them towards the end. But the number of revelations, the number of blessings given, the number of meetings held with official minutes, it just explodes – it goes through the roof as you - as you watch the work progressing.

So if you compare that to today, there are those who would say well where are the revelations today? We're not getting what we used to be getting from Joseph Smith back in the early days of the Church. The irony of that question is, if you look at Joseph Smith's own prophetic ministry, you're seeing the same pattern of a decrease in the canonized scriptures, but an absolute explosion in the heavenly interactions in the revelations that come, they just don't end up in the Doctrine and Covenants.

In some ways we could compare this – I hope this is an appropriate comparison – if you turn to John 21, I love how John concludes his gospel. He's shared his stories about who Jesus is and his salvific work and then John, his last verse says, John 21:25: "and there are also many other things which Jesus did the which if they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." And so we should take this pun here and say that, sure, maybe the canonized revelations are decreasing, but the number of revelations and prophetic engagement is just expanding exponentially and it's still happening today and perhaps we need to put a chart here at the beginning that just shows a logarithmic graph of how much revelation is being spread upon the world and not just with the official Church leaders, but for the growing body of the saints where God is individually inspiring people. Even you are part of this graph as God inspires you to do things that bring forth his kingdom on the earth today.

It's beautiful and, by the way, while you're looking at that josephsmithpapers.org webpage, something that would be fun for some of you is to go in and – and just start looking at some of those other documents besides the revelations that showed up in our canonized Doctrine and Covenants. For instance, you'll notice that in the spring or late winter, February, of 1835 you have a whole flurry of activity in – in the prophetic office of Joseph Smith where he is giving dozens and dozens of blessings,

where he's setting apart members of the Quorum of the Twelve to be Apostles and he's setting apart seventies and you can read many of them right there and it's just fascinating to click through and read some of the meeting minutes and read some of the blessings, especially to see the promises and the language that Joseph uses when he's giving say forty-plus blessings in one sitting in one day – he'll be giving forty blessings setting apart these seventy on March 1st and it's just fascinating to see some of the language and the promises and the warnings that are given to them back then and to sense how applicable some of those things are to today as well.

Now one thing you will notice if you do that exercise, is there happens to be this – this urgency, a sense of urgency in what we would call end times prophecies, and some of those will come through in those blessings where they're going to be told to be prepared for when Jesus is coming again which is not unique to members of the Church in that day.

Yeah, there was a lot of discussion among Christians, and actually, other Abrahamic religions such as Judaism and Islam have this perspective that a Messiah, not in the Christian world but Jesus will come and there's been often these expectations and fervor like it's going to happen soon, let's go get ready, and sometimes people have distracted themselves with certain forms of preparation that probably are not what God wanted. The preparation he wants us to do is be humble, faithful, to repent, to declare the truth to others, but not sit around waiting for the doors of heaven to open, but to actually be anxiously engaged in a good cause. We've said this before and we'll say it again, there – the end will come. Either Jesus will come in his rapturous glory, right when we're all doing whatever we're doing, or we will die and meet Jesus. It will happen. And likely, for most of us, the coming, the Second Coming of Jesus will happen when we die. That's when we'll see him, just like it happened for all these individuals. It's interesting culturally what's going on.

Many early Americans saw the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and other conflicts and challenges that were going on in their society, more than 200 years back in our time, they saw this as clear signs that Jesus was imminent, about to return. There was a group called the Millerites that were kind of in the same region where the early saints were, and they believed, they had a specific date that they thought Jesus was going to return – October 22, 1844. You can go look this up. It's called the great disappointment. People sold

farms and gave up their livelihoods and sometimes even disrupted their families and they all gathered to one spot, it's going to happen at 12:00 noon, as if somehow Jesus knows what central time is, and they all sat around waiting for it to happen. Many of them thought, oh, maybe we got the date wrong by a year. So they repredicted and nothing happened and actually, we have lots of history – over more than 2000 years of groups trying to put a specific date of prediction and then stopping their lives, not living anymore, just waiting for Jesus to return and I just think God wants us to be prepared. He tells us I'm coming, be prepared. I've never heard him in any of the revelations say, I want you to spend your time trying to make predictions based on your mathematical abilities to interpret the scriptures.

It's an interesting – interesting conundrum because the scriptures use phrases that cause people in every generation, going clear back to the 1st century with Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians, the first letter. It – you read 1st Thessalonians and every one of those chapters have elements in it that make it feel like, well Jesus is going to maybe come maybe next week and so let's just sit around and wait, right? And what does Paul do? He writes (overtalk) a second letter. And he's like let me just clarify, Jesus is coming, but a bunch of things need to happen and this is where we get the famous phrase about there will be an apostasy – along the way – first.

Yah. So there's a fascinating thing that happens with human nature, and I don't know why this is, but it is this way. So at the university, when I'm teaching a class, and I'm sure you've experienced this case here, we'll say that there's a Saturday night deadline at, we'll put it at 11:59 p.m. and we tell the students okay, this particular assignment is due Saturday night at 11:59 p.m. Well as a teacher, I can go in on the back end and I can see exactly how many people have submitted their assignment and what time they submit it. It never ceases to amaze me when this could be at the very end of the semester and that assignment or that paper or that research project, whatever it may be, could have been available for weeks and weeks of the semester leading up to it, and you'll get your one or two who do it five weeks in advance, and you kind of wonder, hey, I've never seen a student this proactive. I wonder what's going on in their life? You wonder how they're doing. And then you just watch, so nobody does it – a few people do it and then you get up to Saturday morning and you might have a couple dozen who have turned in the paper or the assignment and then this amazing thing happens through that day of the

deadline where you're getting close to the evening and now the numbers start spiking and at about 11:00 p.m. they just – that's where the majority – from 10:00 to 11:59, that's where this flood, this flurry comes in. Wait a minute. We're driven by deadlines as humans? We're driven by a hard line of oh, I need to cram for that test. If I've got a mid-term, I'm not going to – I'm not going to study for that mid-term in the weeks leading up to it; I'm just going to cram for the test meaning I'm going to review the stuff the couple of hours before the test and then stand in the line and hope that the line goes quickly because that knowledge that I just barely learned is I can feel it dripping out of me and I've got to get in there to take this test before I forget it. We call it spray and pray. You spray the information on a paper and you pray there's something true in there that will get you (overtalk) that will give you a few points.

Here's the grand irony when it comes to Second Coming elements that we see in this time period as well as today, God wants every generation to feel a sense of urgency – not panic, not fear in the world's term of shaking in our boots kind of a fear – but a sense of urgency. That's the beautiful thing about scripture is they – in fact, that's what makes it living water for us, is the fact that we don't have any section of the scriptures that we can read any of those chapters and say, you know what? There is no application to my life – I can't liken that scripture to me and it can't be for my profit and it can't be for my learning. Scripture is beautiful because now I can find those connections to me and I do get t his sense of urgency but God counters that sense of – of a Miller prediction and dozens and dozens if not hundreds of predictions before and after him as far as trying to nail down a date and create more of a sense of steady discipleship and steady preparation for the coming of the Lord whether I be alive in the flesh as a mortal or whether I come out of the grave and meet him in the morning of the first resurrection at his Second Coming. I've still got to prepare for his coming and God doesn't want us putting our repentance off until we get some terminal disease and the doctor tells us you've got three days to live. Okay, now – now I need to do my research and turn in my work.

I'm going to go serve a bunch of people. I'm going to do in three days, three years worth of loving kindness and service and repentance and forgiveness. So this is a great metaphor Tyler that we don't need to cram for the Second Coming or for the end of our lives. It's just every day carefully taking the time to do the things that God's asked us: love our neighbor, love God, drip by drip,

so we see here in section 106 there's this – the reason we're even talking about this is this revelation to Warren Cowdery, right in the middle of the revelation God says to Warren Cowdery through Joseph Smith that he comes quickly even as a thief in the night and this great promise that those who are prepared, they won't be caught unawares.

Yah the actual wording is beautiful here. If you look at verse 4 and 5: "And again, verily I say unto you, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," so if you thought it was close back in the 1st century, well, it's drawing nigh, as Brent Top said, he calls that it's nigher than it was yesterday, "and it overtakeh the world as a thief in the night." (sneeze) Oh I knew it was coming. That sneeze overtook me like a thief in the night; I could kind of tell it was coming but I didn't know exactly when it would come, but it would come.

And I wasn't prepared – and you were not prepared - I couldn't tell what you were doing, I'm like I've never seen him just (overtalk) like that –

Yes, you were blown away. Okay. Verse 5: "Therefore," what's the outcome? Well what is the result of God telling us he's going to come like a thief in the night? "Gird up your loins, that you may be the children of light and that day shall not overtake you as a thief." Brothers and sisters, whatever God has placed into your circle of influence in your life today – for some of you it's caring for little children with none of the world watching and giving you praise. For some of you it's waking up and going and working like crazy to provide for a family. For some of you it's dealing with medical struggles and pains and aches, you might be feeling like you can't do what you needed to do when in reality, what you've been given by God to do, that is this work in the vineyard and sometimes it's going to feel like hard work digging and pruning and nourishing by the sweat of your brow – by the sweat of your brow whether it's taking care of a child or a loved one with special needs or any of these areas or serving in your callings, it's a time that's going to feel like work but if we're on the errand of the Lord then I think hymn number 147 has it right, sweet is the work. That's – that's the word to describe it. It feels sweet to us because we're not cramming for the Second Coming, we're not cramming for our final exam, we're preparing steadily every day. Not with a sense of fear, not running faster than we have strength, but with a sense of urgency. We're not sitting back slothful saying all is well in Zion, yea Zion prospereth, I'm good and if I – if I am guilty God will beat me with a few stripes but I'll be saved in the end.

No, it's what can I do to continually move forward and strive to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to do all these things in this little, teeny, tiny part of the vineyard in which he has placed me? I want the tasks that he's given me to be able to flourish and grow and so it's a beautiful principle as we all continually move forward in time getting closer and closer to that Second Coming and tuning our ears and our hearts to the prophets rather than people's predictions.

So that transitions us to the end of this revelation to Warren Cowdery and listen to the beautiful words that he is given from the Lord Jesus Christ. "Therefore, blessed is my servant Warren," and again the great beauty of the Doctrine and Covenants is that we can insert our own names and imagine God speaking to us, so whatever your name is, listen to this and put your name in where Warren's name is. "Therefore, blessed is my servant" (insert your name) "for I will have mercy on him; and, notwithstanding the vanity of his heart, I will lift him up inasmuch as he will humble himself before me. And I will give him grace and assurance wherewith he may stand; and if he continue to be a faithful witness and a light unto the church I have prepared a crown for him in the mansions of my Father, Even so. Amen."

So this story of Warren Cowdery, he was called – again, he's Oliver Cowdery's brother and he's in Freedom, New York and he's called to be a presiding high priest over that region, the closest thing I think we would call that today even though they did have a stake in Kirtland and a stake in Independence, today the presiding high priest over that region would probably be like a stake president or possibly a bishop, depending on the number or the size of that congregation. So you'll watch as Warren's growth and progression – to use that analogy of preparing for the final exam or working in the vineyard – he's working. Now here's the point. At what point can you stop working in a vineyard and say I've done enough work, I've done enough digging and weeding and nourishing and pruning and grafting, now I can sit back and just relax, or not do any work in the vineyard? And obviously the answer is, you can't. You can't ever say okay I've arrived as far as working on my preparations for the Lord's coming.

Unfortunately, with Warren Cowdery, he's going to fall away from the Church and not fulfill all of the promises here. In 1837 he's going to be excommunicated. We don't know his end story in the eternities and it's not my

place to judge but we can learn from these experiences that even if you get great revelations and great promises and you work really hard, there's this principle of the gospel that often gets overlooked because we focus on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost, and there's – even though it's not in the article of faith there's – there's that endure to the end element that is really important in this preparation for the eternities or preparation for the Second Coming or preparation for the final exam, whatever it may be.

Now as we turn to section 107, we see a fairly major and significant foundational shift in how things are – are running and going to run in the Church. Notice what we start with, in the very beginning is one prophet, Joseph Smith. Then we call a Second Elder, Oliver Cowdery to be the assistant so we have the two presiding elders when the Church is first set up. You have six people, six people total. One third of the members are actually in Church leadership; it's a pretty good thing. It's a pretty good number, and then you – you watch as he calls additional people. You get the Three Witnesses who way back when they had their experience, part of their calling, part of their responsibility, the agreement, they get all of these amazing things that they get to see and be a witness for, but one of their responsibilities is to seek out the Twelve and find the Twelve Apostles. Well, it's taken them a while and Oliver Cowdery is going to tell us that it has constantly been on their mind, they've been looking, who is it Lord that you have chosen, following that pattern from Acts chapter 1 where Peter and the Apostles were trying to decide between two people and say Lord, who did you pick? Who do you want? So they'd been working on this effort for a long time. Then, Joseph Smith goes with this group in Zion's Camp that we talked about in last episode, and Joseph gets the cholera, a terrible case of the cholera and nearly dies. Now we don't know the full extent of this because he doesn't tell us, but it seems that there's this thought of, wait a minute, if I did die, what would happen to the work that God is setting up here, and you'll notice that was – that was the summer of 1834. Now in section 107, we're now in the late winter so February of 1835 where Joseph calls the Twelve Apostles on February 14th.

And what's amazing about this section is that you have a diffusion of God's power and authority now being spread throughout the Church. Now of course God's power is everywhere, and God's power is priesthood power and anytime you're doing any action in the power of God, that technically is priesthood

power. There are offices that have specific responsibilities that this is what we see, this glorious revelation where God is now providing new structure, guidance and official offices where it's now not just dependent on the life of one person that it's the life in the body of the saints that will be able to endure no matter what happens to any of these individuals, there is a way for God's authority and work to persist and to preserve. (overtalk)

It's amazing because he sets up this beautiful hierarchy of equality – of equality, equal power, so you have the First Presidency with a president and two counselors. Then you have the Quorum of the Twelve, traveling high priests; we call them now the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who we sustain as prophets, seers and revelators. And then you have the Seventy set up with seven presidents and the last of those presidents is called to preside over that quorum and they have equal authority. And then you have the local stake presidencies and high council and the stake presidency presides over the high council's spread throughout the world and that's going to come up here. And then we have these offices in the Aaronic Priesthood and other offices we'll talk about in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Section 107, it's a big deal as far as the hierarchy of the Church is concerned.

Now, at the outset, we need to make this really clear, that you have – you have the Church and its structure and then you have – let's just do it this way – then you have the home and its structure. Listen to this statement by President Boyd K. Packer in April 1998 General Conference: There is a difference in the way the priesthood functions in the home as compared to the way it functions in the Church. In the Church there is a distinct line of authority. We serve, we're called by those who preside over us. Then he goes on to say in the home it is a partnership with husband and wife equally yoked together. Listen to these words from President Dallin H. Oaks given in the October 2005 General Conference: A most important difference in the functioning of priesthood authority in the family and in the Church results from the fact that government of the family is patriarchal whereas the government of the Church is hierarchical. The concept of partnership functions differently in a family than in the Church. The Family Proclamation gives us beautiful explanation of the relationship between a husband and a wife. While they have separate responsibilities, in these sacred responsibilities fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners that

we may become one. That's the goal here whether it's a home or whether it's a church.

You'll notice that in councils of the Church it's going to function differently in the hierarchical structure or setup of that authority, that power of God given to people on the earth to act in his name for the salvation and the welfare of all of God's children compared to how a husband and wife counsel together in love and righteousness. There is no first counselor in the home. There's no vice president in the home. It's an equal partnership moving the work of God forward in that home family setting, that familial setting of – of the priesthood.

Now, let's talk about priest-hood for a moment. It was Elder and Sister Renlund, we've talked about this before, but Elder and Sister Renlund in their book about the Melchizedek Priesthood, Elder and Sister Renlund use this beautiful analogy of the earth, and then they use the analogy, if you go out and you pick up a little handful of dirt and you hold it, what do you say? Here's a little bit of earth, I'm holding the earth. But you don't imply that you're holding all of the earth in your hand, whereas God who is sovereign and the God of the universe, he even uses that analogy when he says worlds without number have I made and mine hand can hold them and mine eye can pierce them, I know – I hold them all in my hand. But what does he give us? He gives a portion of that bigger earth. Well, if you translate that into a different area and say God's power is defined as the priesthood, the expanse of all-encompassing power of God to do all of God's work with all of the keys and the rights and the privileges and the authority, that would be called the priesthood of God, but what does he do? He gives us portions, he gives us access to his power and we can then function in that power.

Now, in the hierarchical Church as outlined in section 107, what we see is that he defines some priesthood offices to which men can be ordained, some keys of the priesthood which can be conferred on people and then you get men or women – men or women have this ability to function in the power of the priesthood and we've had some beautiful talks given in General Conference from President Ballard, President Oaks, President Nelson and others talking about if you're functioning in a Church calling, you are using the power of the priesthood because there is no other power from God to do God's work and his work and his glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of

man. Any ministering, any nurturing, any speaking, any teaching, anything we do is done with that power of God given to us on the earth.

Now stop and translate that for just a moment into a home setting. I'm not going to give any specifics but there have been countless occasions when one child or another in our home has been struggling with something whether it be emotionally or physically or mentally or spiritually, with temptation and other struggles, and I have watched as my dear wife has taken those children who are struggling under her wing and brought them into her – into her power where she'll listen to them and she'll counsel with them and she'll pray with them and she'll read scriptures with them and sometimes she'll just let them talk and then express confidence in them. The best way to describe it is I have watched the power of our heavenly parents manifest over and over and over again as my wife has interacted with our children in moments of need. What power is that? It's not – it's not some ethereal, no-name power that's somewhere out there in the universe. It's priesthood power given to – to us to bless lives. Her very presence, just the fact that she's there, her spirit, her soul, with this child, she becomes this shield of faith as she's helping that child manufacture their own shield of faith. It's as if her very presence is pushing back the forces of darkness and the forces of evil to help build up that child.

Now that's in a home setting. Think about every calling in the ward or in the stake or in the Church for that matter, somebody is called to do something. Well what are they called to do? It's ultimately to push back the forces of darkness and to chase darkness from among people and to bring light and to be that refuge and to – to fortify their faith. What does it mean then when we get into this section 107 when we're going to talk about priesthood callings where somebody then presides? What is a bishop presiding – what does that mean? Next time you walk into a sacrament meeting look up at the stand at your bishop or your branch president and as he's sitting up there on the stand drumming his fingers together greedily looking at the crowd thinking ha ha, look at all these people, what can I get from them? Brothers and sisters, to preside in the Church, in the hierarchical Church, doesn't mean that you're going to go in greedily trying to get anything from those whom you are called to preside over because keep in mind, if this were a kingdom of the world, that's how it would work. But we're not in a kingdom of the world where the king or the queen is the top – top dog. We're in the Church in an inverted kingdom where the presiding authority stands at the head in the hierarchical

organization whether it be the Relief Society or the Primary or the ward or the stake or the Church in general, what it means to preside is it means to serve, to nurture, to bless, to teach, to persuade, to encourage. It's a lot of work. Sweet is the work. So when you walk into a sacrament meeting, look up at the stand and look at that branch president or that bishop, they're probably not looking with a covetous eye; they're probably looking with a prayerful eye, looking over that congregation saying in their mind and in their heart, dear Lord, who needs help? Who's hurting? Who's struggling? Who needs – who needs some protection? Or you go into Relief Society meeting and that Relief Society president isn't sitting up there thinking, think of all the meals I can get from this. It's quite the opposite. It's who needs me? Who can I help? Who can I bless?

So as we jump into 107 we want to make this very clear that the power that is being given, the offices that are being held, the keys that are being given, remember keys do two things; they both lock and they unlock. You can unlock the powers of heaven in the lives of these people and you can at times lock the gates of hell against those temptations and the powers of darkness and discouragement that are – that are beating on either your children or people you're called to serve. Keep in mind that all of this, let's not lose the point here of section 107 and get so excited about the offices and the duties and the presidings and the authorities and the equality of the different quorums, the whole point of priesthood is God giving us Godly power to do Godly things. It's all an invitation to become more like Jesus, that's it. He's saying I need you to be like me and it's this invitation to come unto Christ and one of the ways he does that in a hierarchical setting is through offices and keys and he does it in the home and he does it in communities, he does it in government, any time anybody's doing anything on the Lord's errand, they are using power of the priesthood even though they may not be a priesthood holder in the office and key sort of realm that we're going to be talking about, but that's an important reminder for all of us, that we don't get so excited about the – the administration elements of the Church, that we overlook the fact that all of this is given as an invitation to become more like Jesus. Amen.

All right, look at verse 1. "There are, in the church," now I don't want to over-emphasize this, but it's important, in the church, so maybe circle church because we're not talking about the familial or patriarchal order of the priesthood here, this is the hierarchical order of the priesthood that governs

the Church and, by the way, isn't it fascinating that in those first five years of the Church's existence they're trying to figure some things out and then in this one revelation, after calling the Quorum of the Twelve and they're ready to go out on their very first mission as a quorum, they come to Joseph and say do you have revelation for us? Do you have some direction for us? They pray, and this is the revelation that comes, well, specifically, verse 1 through 58 comes this day and then Joseph adds verse 59 through 100 from a revelation that had come back in 1831 that he's now tagging onto the end because this is the perfect place for it. So in your scriptures, in section 107 you may want to make a little dividing line between verse 58 and 59 because the fresh revelation is 1 through 58 and then the older stuff that is still applicable but now it has a place, it fits. Hmm, I wonder if there's a lesson there. I wonder if there will be times in your life where God will give you revelation that lacks full context or full setting to where you know what to do with it and you have to kind of set it aside for a while and have faith that the day will come, if God gave you the revelation he's going to give you the application of it, but sometimes he doesn't do it right away. So I wonder if there are times when you and I would benefit from instead of getting frustrated or filled with anxiety because we've been given this revelation and we don't know what to do with it, sometimes it's a piece of the puzzle and you just once in place, now set it aside, we'll come back to it; this is exactly what happens here. Where it gives you a key but he hasn't presented the door that has to be opened with that key. You don't know which car this thing is going to start or which house this is going to let you in but you know you've got a key, beautiful principle there.

Now back to verse 1. "There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood." Just really quickly, remember the twelve tribes of Israel, one of the tribes was Levi. He was the third son of Jacob (name changed to Israel) so Levi then 400 years down the road has a descendant named Aaron, brother of Moses, who is Moses' – Moses' and Miriam's brother and Aaron then becomes the father of all of these priests in the Old Testament so the priesthood line comes through that tribe, the Levitical Priesthood, Levi, or Aaronic Priesthood, Aaron his descendant. We call it today the Aaronic, just so you understand the wording here.

And then the other one, the higher priesthood is called the Melchizedek. Why? He's this great high priest. By the way, his name is fascinating in Hebrew – Melchizedek.

Yeah, so in Hebrew, the word Melech means change, a very interesting word and the word Zedek or Zadok, actually even in the Arabic today if you say Zedek it actually means it's a very close friend that actually means righteous, even loyal. And this little i in here actually kind of combines these two Hebrew words together that one of the potential meanings of Melchizedek is king of righteousness. We actually might add this in here because in the ancient world sometimes words were meant for both men or women so king or queen of righteousness and if you think about the temple and really overall, the work of God, he wants us to become kings and queens of righteousness. So embedded in the meaning of Melchizedek is the whole purpose of what God's priesthood is all about. It's to help us to become like our heavenly parents, kings and queens of righteousness. So if at any point you ever hear the word Melchizedek just remind yourself, oh yah, it's a prompt for me to remember this is my goal that I am striving for to be like my heavenly parents.

It's beautiful – beautiful. Verse 3, "Before his day," so keep in mind Melchizedek lived in Abraham's time period. Abraham was actually going to pay tithing to Melchizedek. Verse 3, "Before his day it was called the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God." That's a long name. "But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood." So now you understand the - why we call it that rather than its original name which is fascinating because the original name has this beautiful concept, it's the Holy Priest-hood, and, by the way, the word hood – so priest hood, so if you look up in the Oxford-English dictionary in the etymology of the suffix hood, where it comes from, it's a condition or a quality. It's this state of being – state of being. Um hum. So fascinating priest hood, it's a state – you are taking something upon you, it's the state of becoming a priest or to have priestly power and perform priestly functions.

What's also interesting Tyler here is the use of the word order, but what's the opposite of order? It's disorder and if you think about creation, Genesis 1, what does God do? He actually brings order to where there was chaos or

disorder. Everything has a place and a purpose so we have this word order and there's another word that we often use in the Church and it's ordinances. Ordinances are how we provide order. We have the ordinance or the order of baptism which is provided through the power of the priesthood. We have the order or the ordinance of marriage or temple covenants and one that we see every week is the order or the ordinance of remembering the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we call that the sacrament. So the priesthood is a way to provide order and direction and guidance in our lives and whenever you see the rituals of the Church or the ordinances, it's an invitation to remind all of us that God is a God of order and when we participate in that order, we also can have a fullness of his love and his power.

Beautiful. Now he gets into some of the specifics so you'll notice you have verse 9, "The Presidency of the High Priesthood . . . have a right to officiate in all the offices of the church." Keep in mind it's a hierarchy, it's ordered. There's a reason for this order in a – in an organization that eventually is going to fill the whole world, according to Joseph's prophecies. So then you go from the Presidency of the High Priesthood, that's the First Presidency, verse 10, high priests have the right to officiate in their own standing under the direction of the presidency. Look at verse 11, an elder has the right to officiate. So then we get down to the Priesthood of Aaron in verse 13, and why is it called the lesser priesthood? He answers that question in verse 14, because it's an appendage to the greater, or the Melchizedek Priesthood, and has power in administering outward ordinances like baptism. That's why you get John the Baptist who – who is this priest who's ordained when he's very young and he's given the authority to baptize. It's fascinating that he's the one that the Lord assigned to restore that power in the latter days to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery is John the Baptist, that power to baptize, that Aaronic Priesthood that he held.

Then you get verse 18, "The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church." So we unlock doors, we let people into – into temples and into covenants and connections with God in this hierarchical order of the Church, how it's set up, through those keys of the higher priesthood. Verse 20, the power and authority of the lesser, or the Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, including baptism and some of these other things we've been talking about.

Now very quickly, it might be helpful to just very succinctly see these various offices. So what you have in the Aaronic Priesthood side is you have four offices, the bishop who presides over the Aaronic Priesthood and the bishopric is the Presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood of the ward and then you have priests, you have teachers and you have deacons. Now we were introduced to these offices back in section 20 but here you get more clarification and more description.

And it's interesting that up until about 1908 these offices were given to adult men and under the presidency of Joseph F. Smith beginning around 1908 and continuing on through 1922, there were some adjustments to who was invited into these priesthood offices and now many of us are familiar with deacons beginning around 12 or in their 12th year, teachers in their 14th year, priests in their 16th year. So these changes only happened in the last hundred years and the point here is that there's ongoing revelation. God never originally said in here like what specific – specific age, but to Joseph F. Smith back in 1908 and further on, God gave some further clarification about inviting the young men who are growing up in priesthood offices these different opportunities.

So the bishop being the presiding high priest over that Aaronic Priesthood set of quorums, some people are perplexed by the fact that for the first set of decades, these are mostly grown men and then like you said Joseph F. Smith changing it and then for many of us, it was very simple, at age 12, age 14 and age 16 occurred or the ordination occurred, then more recently the handbook of instructions tells us that in January of the year that a young man is going to turn 12, so many – most of the time it's 11 year-olds and 13 year-olds and 15 year-olds. And some would say why the change? I wonder, I wonder if there's incredible power in something like section 107 where it lays out these principles, these offices without being highly prescriptive to this level which then means that God can continue to guide a living, breathing, adapting, growing Church to meet the needs of the world in which we live and that the rising generations how to best bless them. So rather than seeing this as a frustration, this, to me, I love the fact that God lays out section 107 in 1835 and these offices in both the Aaronic and the Melchizedek Priesthood side, the offices have not changed in all these years since 1835 but we've adapted the use of those offices and they're applied so that we can meet the needs of a growing, global church.

So we have the offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood which are Apostle, you have Seventy, you have Patriarch, you have high priest and elder. Now notice how beautifully this is set up and then later on you get where he describes in verse 64 through 66 the Presiding Apostle, the President of the High Priesthood becomes the leader, he is the President of the Church and we sustain all of the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve as prophets, seers and revelators, but there is one who holds all the keys for the work at one time.

Now check this out. We have the Seventy who are called here in section 107 and for years after this initial group is called – they're called to be special witnesses, kind of like the Apostles but their call is specifically to go out to the Gentiles and preach the gospel as special witnesses of Christ in section 107 and then we come into this period of the Church for decades and decades where collectively as a Church we don't really know what to do with the Seventy and so up until President Spencer W. Kimball as the prophet, we have seventies who are called and ordained to the office of a seventy at the stake level and they're basically functioning as stake missionaries, that's what they do. So you have elder's quorum, seventies quorum and high priest quorum or the high priest group in a ward because the high priest's quorum belongs to the stake and the groups belong to the wards or the branches.

But we didn't know what to do with the Seventy until President Kimball's ministry as the prophet, as the President of the Church where the Lord revealed, oh, this is actually how the Seventy are intended to be used now moving forward. That's not to say that all previous prophets had it wrong. That's the beautiful thing. We don't have to – we don't have to pit current prophets against past prophets and say only one of them can be right. The way these principles are laid out in section 107 is it was perfectly fine for them to use the Seventy in a stake missionary assignment for all those years, all those decades, but then when the need arose with a growing global church, God gave the revelation no, this is going to be a General Authority position now because previous to this you have the First Presidency and you have the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and then you had assistants to the Twelve – we didn't have a Seventy until we now create that particular manifestation of the principles in section 107 to say we're going to call these seventies to be General Authorities under the direction of the Twelve Apostles to help carry the work further into the world.

Well, since that time President Hinckley then in his prophetic ministry has it revealed that wait a minute, section 107 verse 96 tells us also other seventy can be called until seven times seventy, so we can have multiple quorums of seventy, it doesn't just need to be the quorum of the seventy. We can have 2 quorums, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and the number has continually grown. Why? Because the work of the Lord has continued to grow in all the world and so we have some of those quorums that are General Authority Seventies and then we have others of those Quorums of Seventy that are Area Authority Seventies so their – their right to administer the directions given to them from the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve and the seven Presidents of the Seventy and area presidencies are now given to the area authorities to help work with those local stake presidents and local leadership within a geographic area and when that area authority leaves that particular area, he no longer has any authority. It's a house of order. And a neighboring bishop doesn't come to your ward and tell you what revelation the Lord has given him for your ward, just like a neighboring Area Authority doesn't go to a different part of the world and have any authority to administer the ordinances or proclaim the gospel because there are Area Authorities there whereas there are General Authority Seventies who have general authority over the whole world and so that helps us keep it a house of order.

Are you noticing the beauty of this organizational structure, this setup, all of these things that you're going to read in section 107, the various priesthood offices and who presides over the different groups and what that role is, how it's this foundational organization in a hierarchical Church that is both solid and steadfast and immovable but at the same time, extremely adaptable to the needs of the world around us. That's why we can call it a living, breathing, growing church is because it's not stuck in 1835. We're not held hostage by the setting and the cultural surroundings of the church members in 1835. It's ingenious and only a God sets things up this way. This is not – the principles in section 107 whether they be for the hierarchical Church or for the home manifestations of priesthood power, this is not something that men and women come up with. This is given to us as heaven sharing a little bit of their power with us to be able to do things that help us grow to become more like them and the more we are faithful in that the more power they give us and the more opportunities we have to bless lives and to chase darkness from among us and to shine light in dark corners of people's lives and move forward.

This is a great outline. Let me talk about different quorums that we have in the Melchizedek Priesthood. One of the quorums I'll add here is the First Presidency and then the next quorum is the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and then we've talked about Quorums of the Seventy. It's significant that in Doctrine and Covenants section 107, God identifies that these quorums are actually all equal in power and authority. Now there is a hierarchy, but when the Prophet and President of the Church dies, the First Presidency of the quorum is temporarily dissolved, so it turns out that then the Quorum of the Twelve which is equal in power and authority of the First Presidency is who is in charge of operating the Church until a new prophet with councilors is established, a new quorum.

Now incidentally, I think these words are interesting. The word quorum - this word quorum actually means sufficient or sufficiency or enough to make valid decisions. So when we've talked about the quorum we're really talking about the sufficient amount of people necessary to make a valid decision. Let me also throw out another word that shows up in this text which is very significant. It's the word unanimity. What we learn in D. and C. 107 is God demands these quorums to work in unanimity, to be unanimous in their decisions. Now this is a very significant word. This actually means one and then this word here means spirit or mind. So literally what we are talking about is to act with one spirit and one mind and if you look at how the Church operates and how these quorums operate, they spend quite a bit of time deliberating, in council, talking and discussing and they don't make decisions until they become of one spirit and one mind because God himself is of one spirit and one mind, the Godhead is ultimately uni - unified in its purpose and God asks and expects the quorums of the Church to do the same as the members should do as well.

This is a really powerful concept because some people have wondered why does it - why does it sometimes take the Church so long to make certain adjustments? I think the reality is until God has made it clear to every member of that First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, those - those earth shattering or major changes aren't going to occur which sometimes might require a longer period of time in order to get to that unanimous decision as a collective quorum of prophets, seers and revelators, and there's great safety in that so we're not - that we're not tossed about by every wind of doctrine that blows and that they don't just stick their wet finger in the air to

see which direction the cultural winds are blowing and say, okay, let's go that way. There's – there's safety in being a little more methodical and a little more careful before we throw out previous practices or previous ideas and just jump on a bandwagon.

Well the problem would also be if you basically had political parties in the Church and different Apostles were vying for power and like here's my doctrine and another Apostle says here's my doctrine, they're building their own kingdoms and God is saying this is my kingdom and I want you to be unified with me and it can take a while. You can see this in friendships and in wards and in families it can take a while through discussion and learning experiences to become unified around certain things. God expects that and frankly, without that process, we do not learn how to become God. If all it was is if God just reveals all the truth and everybody is forced to all see the same thing at the same time, that actually wrecks the whole plan and purpose of the whole plan of salvation, the whole purpose of why we fought a war in heaven to maintain our agency, and God is extremely willing to be patient to wait for unanimity.

So look at verse 30. I love this in – in that concept right there, I love it when it comes to any Church calling, whether you're having a discussion with your ministering partner, with your families that you're called to minister to whether it be a couple of nursery leaders working together or a Young Men's advisor, counseling with the bishop – bishopric or a Primary presidency, look at these – look at these principles in verse 30. "The decisions of these quorums," now in this case they're referring to these priesthood quorums that we've been talking about, but the principles apply across all the Church as well as at home.

Imagine if we actually applied this to society and said the Church is actually in the world, imagine if this is what we did across nations and societies as we talk about the future of our civilizations and our societies.

Wow, verse 30, "The decisions of these quorums, or either of them, are to be made in," now notice the qualifying words here, "all righteousness," that's 75 percent right now, it's not partway there, no, it's fully faithful, fully loyal, fully righteous, "in holiness and lowliness of heart, meekness, long suffering, and in faith, virtue and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity."

Wow. That is a long list. If you sit down with your family in a family council, or with a spouse or with a presidency or with any group that you're supposed to work with and you consider the breadth and the depth of that list that God just gave you, this would change the world. It would change the way we interact with everyone and we would stop being so easily offended ourselves and stop being so quick to offend others and be more prone to at times suffer long as we have to work through hard process of discovering truth and discovering what we're supposed to do with this organization or this family or whatever the quorum activity may be. Beautiful principles.

So verse 39 is where you get the office of the Patriarch. Here it's called evangelical ministers, but Joseph gave us prophetic clarification, it is referring to the office of Patriarch so every stake in Zion is supposed to have a Patriarch set apart and ordained to that office of the Melchizedek Priesthood and what an amazing office that is and what an amazing part of the Church that is, what those Patriarchs do.

And then you get this long section verse 42 through 54 where he's describing the patriarchal order of the priesthood among the ancients. Then in verse 68 through 76 you get this description of the office of the bishop and what that bishop is supposed to do and those – those bishops, they are shepherds and they are called to preside over that flock and to minister to the needs of those flocks. Rather than getting into the specifics of the duties of a bishop you can read those here and how they're described. I just want to say from my own personal experience, not speaking from my head, but speaking for a moment from my heart, how incredibly blessed I feel to have been ministered to by so many bishops in my life and each one at a different phase in my life. I remember them all. I love them all and I felt of God's love for me through their individual ministry and their ministries are very different the way they ran things, very different, but in every single case I – I sensed of God's care and concern for me through their ministering efforts and I – I pray for God's blessings to be on all of the bishops and their wives and their families throughout the world and moving forward in time because that is such a beautiful, ministerial calling that is given to them to represent the Lord in such a direct way in their wards.

Then you get verses 85 through 91 where he's describing the various presidents who preside over various quorums and what that means, and

remember in the inverted kingdom of the Lord, if you're a deacon's quorum president or a teacher's quorum president or elder's quorum president, that just means you got an assignment to serve and minister to and pray for and meet the needs of all those people in that quorum to which you've been given keys to preside.

And then let's finish with verse 99. "Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence." Did you notice that? Act in the office in which he is appointed implies that I don't need to worry about filling your calling Taylor. I don't need to receive revelation for you, I can ask, I can listen, I can give you some recommendations and counsel but at the end of the day, I don't want to get between you and heaven. I don't want to tell you how to do your calling. Now that's in the hierarchical setting. I also don't want to tell my wife how to be a good mother or how to be a good wife. That's between her and the Lord. I'm going to learn my duty and go to God and find out what the Lord would have me do to be a more effective husband and father or a more effective – fill in the blank for whatever your Church calling is. The more we can get people connecting with heaven and with scriptures to learn with our mind and our heart and through revelation and through experience, how to better officiate in whatever – whatever callings or offices or responsibilities we have, I think the more the heavens will open the windows and give us the revelation. I think part of the problem is, is we turn horizontally to seek direction of what should I do in this setting and we turn horizontal rather than vertical and the Lord's saying, I would tell you and I would guide you but you have to ask, and so that would be our indication there.

So to conclude today's lesson, let's look at the short section, section 108 that was given to a newly called member of the Quorum of the Seventy or high priest, Lyman Sherman and I want to point out two really compelling verses that were given to him but I think can apply to all of us. Verse 2, "Therefore, let your soul be at rest concerning your spiritual standing, and resist no more my voice." If you carefully review the sections and the revelations God has given, very, very often he tells people, your sins are forgiven. Be at peace. Do not fear. Here he says be at rest concerning your spiritual standing. We sometimes spend so much time worried about our spiritual standing before the Lord that we actually fail to take action to build the kingdom of God. What he's saying is stop being so focused on your standing before me. My Son –

my Son Jesus Christ who died for you has you covered if you continue to make progress in being faithful, repenting and spreading that message to others.

And then verse 7. How do we do that? If we are at rest with our spiritual standing, what are we asked to do? "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversations, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings."

So now as we conclude this lesson, our invitation to all – to everyone including ourselves is to take correct principles that have been revealed through the scriptures and the words of the living prophets and don't be afraid to go to heaven repeatedly asking how those principles should be applied, whether it's in your Church settings or in your home settings or in your personal settings, how do I live those principles or how do I put them into practice? And please don't hold yourself hostage to past practices and past contexts historically, or, we've always done it this way and we have to just keep doing it this way. You'll notice God's prophets today aren't afraid of adjusting the how. There can be adjustments made from time to time to make those principles a little more meaningful for you today right here, right now, so may the Lord bless all of us as we turn more heavenward than ever before and seek more than ever before to hear him as he gives us answers to these questions of how to carry forth his kingdom on the earth and build up that vineyard, not in a sense of panic, but with a high degree of a sense of urgency that we're preparing for that final exam today - not tomorrow, not next year, not next decade. We start preparing for that final exam by doing the things that God has given us to the best of our ability based on true principles and doctrine today.

Just know that God has shared his power with us. Men, women and children have access to that priesthood power and the more we recognize it and the more we apply it, the more of it we're going to have access to down the road and the more fit for the kingdom we will be and the more powerful instruments in his hands we will be. We leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Know that you're loved.