



By Elder Quentin L. Cook
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

HOW THE RESTORATION OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD BLESSES YOU

As a young man or young woman in the Lord's restored Church today, it is an exciting time for you to be alive! You have an important role to play in a significant era in the Church and in the history of the world.

We recently commemorated the 200th anniversary of Joseph Smith's glorious First Vision. I hope you took the opportunity to reflect on the significance of that event for you personally, as well as the blessings that have flowed to you, your family, and the world as a result of the Restoration of the gospel.

Among the blessings of the Restoration are those associated with one of its other noteworthy events—the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood. You may not realize it, but you and I are blessed by it every day.





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A VISIT FROM AN ANGEL

In the spring of 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were in Harmony, Pennsylvania, USA, working on the translation of the Book of Mormon. When they reached the account of Jesus Christ's visit to the people of Nephi, they read that the Savior gave certain men authority to baptize (see 3 Nephi 11:18–27). This caused Joseph and Oliver to wonder whether that authority had been lost from the earth. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:71, note.)

On May 15, 1829, they sought seclusion in some nearby woods so that they could take their question to the Lord in prayer. Joseph said that while they prayed, "a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness" (Joseph Smith—History 1:68–69).

The angel was John the Baptist, who had the authority to baptize the Savior in his mortal life and was now a resurrected being sent to restore priesthood authority.



**YOUR SPECIAL BLESSING AND OPPORTUNITY
AS ONE WHO HOLDS THE KEYS OF THE AARONIC
PRIESTHOOD IS TO BE OF SERVICE.”**



KEYS

John the Baptist mentioned keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, meaning its special authority to unlock power and blessings. Let's look more closely at one of the keys he mentioned and how they apply to you.

THE GOSPEL OF REPENTANCE

“The gospel of repentance” is sometimes also called “the preparatory gospel” (Doctrine and Covenants 84:26). It is what John the Baptist preached when he was in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2).

Preaching the first principles of the gospel—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance—leads people to the first ordinances of the gospel—baptism for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost (see Articles of Faith 1:4). In this way, people are led to “the gate by which ye should enter [which] is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 31:17). It is also the preaching of repentance that brings people to the sacrament and its cleansing power.

Aaronic Priesthood holders have taken upon themselves the duty to “warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:59). And it is also the duty of “every . . . member” to raise a “warning voice . . . in mildness and in meekness” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:40–41).

The invitation to come unto Christ extends to all of God's children—both to the living and to those who have passed



away. And President Russell M. Nelson has made a special invitation to you—the youth of the Church—to be part of that work, referred to as the gathering of Israel. You do this by helping someone “take a step toward making covenants with God and receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances” (“Hope of Israel” [worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018], 15, HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

I pray that as you plan and participate in activities and service projects, you will invite friends and associates to participate. As appropriate, you can share the gospel with them.

YOU ARE PART OF THIS WORK

Essential parts of the Lord’s work are accomplished today through the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood restored by John the Baptist. You see these keys exercised when you are baptized or partake of the sacrament and when young men administer the sacrament or baptize.

Because the Aaronic Priesthood and its keys were restored, people—you and I and others—can come unto Jesus Christ, make covenants, receive cleansing ordinances, and qualify to receive the Holy Ghost as a constant companion and as the means of ministering in a powerful way.

For you young men, your special blessing and opportunity as holders of the Aaronic Priesthood is to be of service. “The bishopric is the presidency of [the Aaronic Priesthood], and holds the keys or authority of the same” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:15). Under their direction, you will have the marvelous opportunity of serving in many capacities. Let me mention two memories of my service that were particularly touching for me.

First, I remember visiting an elderly widow whose health

confined her to her home. With warmth, graciousness and love, she received me and appreciated that as an Aaronic Priesthood holder I was giving her a donation envelope so she could joyfully pay her fast offerings. She respected the Aaronic Priesthood I held and treated me with love and dignity. Second, the bishopric also treated me with love and dignity. They made me want to be a better person. They made me feel I needed to be worthy to participate in sacred ordinances. To this day I remember the feelings of appreciation and responsibility I felt every time I participated in blessing or passing the sacrament.

As you reflect on the blessings available to you because of the Aaronic Priesthood, I pray that you will feel the Lord’s Spirit prompting you to take advantage of these blessings for yourself and to share them with others. **NE**



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