

## Angels and the Aaronic Priesthood

Podcast 01 Mike Stroud

A campfire talk given at a regional Aaronic Priesthood Camporee on Oct. 12, 2018

Well, my friends, I am happy to be here tonight. What a beautiful place this is! Usually when I've been asked to come to Boy Scout Jamborees or Mountain Man Rendezvous (I know some of the adult leaders here from Rendezvous) I'm usually up here dressed in buckskins and beaded moccasins, and I'd have a flintlock rifle and a mustache and a beard, but tonight I don't have any of that. I'm here tonight to chat with you as men. I know I'm talking to eleven to thirteen-year-olds, but I don't see you that way. I see you as men. I see you as who you are going to be in just a few short years, and I also can see some interesting and exciting things that are going to come your way. When I knelt down and talked to my Heavenly Father five days ago about coming here tonight, He gave me an express message to give to you, His sons. It was so clear and so distinct that I'm obligated to do it exactly the way He said to do it. So, before we begin tonight, I want to ask something special. I'm going to ask our Father in Heaven to send an angel to come and accompany every one of you here tonight, to be right next to you. They are very real. For the next thirty minutes, I want you to give close heed to what I'm going to tell you because it will be a great blessing to you. We're going to be able to do something tonight that I think it will help you more than anything that I could do or say. So, I ask our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, to send angels to attend every young man and every adult leader, to be next to you, to enlighten your mind, quicken your intellect, and broaden your understanding. Even though you are eleven to thirteen, inside you is a magnificent man, a man of God. And your body is growing up to the stature of that man. That man has forgotten who he really is. Part of why you're here tonight, my friends, is to have the Lord open up to you who you really are. When you look in the mirror, you say, "Oh, I'm too short. I'm too fat. I'm too tall. I'm not beautiful. I don't measure up to what the world says. I need to look right, sound right, and act right in order to be successful." I want to throw all of that aside.

Right now, tonight, it's my testimony to you that because we've asked Heavenly Father, there are angels here amongst us right now. Every one of you has at least one of those that have now been assigned and is standing near you. You cannot see them, but perhaps some of you will. Some of you may have the gift to be able to see these heavenly beings that are around you. Why have I asked that? It has to do with something that took place on May 15, 1829. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were working on the translation of the *Book of Mormon*. They were well into it and were at a place that you will know if you have read the *Book of Mormon*. President Nelson has given you an invitation to read it again by December, hasn't he? So, the place that Joseph and Oliver were translating was 3rd Nephi chapter 11. The Lord Jesus Christ had just appeared to the ancient inhabitants of America, and one of the first things that He did during the three days that He was there was to instruct those men and women about baptism. And he gave the men authority to baptize in His name. Now, Joseph and Oliver were reading that and translating that off the plates, and they looked at each other and had a question about baptism and authority. They didn't know about authority to baptize. So, Joseph said, "Let's go ask the Lord." This was in Harmony, Pennsylvania, not far from the Susquehanna River. Perhaps some of you have been there.

They went off to pray, and as they prayed, the heavens were opened. A magnificent being descended in light, and came down and introduced himself as John, the same that is known as John the Baptist in the *New Testament*. This heavenly being put his hands on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and said this:

*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, 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. (Doctrine and Covenants 13:1)*

That angel brought priesthood authority back to the earth to do something. Now my young friends, at age twelve, somebody lays their hands upon your head and confers upon you the Aaronic Priesthood. I want you to notice that the first key that was mentioned in that verse holds the keys to the ministering of angels. Brethren, you have the authority to call down angels from the presence of the Lord, to bless your life and to help you in every circumstance that you come in contact with.

I want to read to you a couple of statements here. Wilford Woodruff was president of the church. Listen carefully to what he said:

*Never in my life, as an Apostle, as a Seventy, or as an Elder...*

Now, remember, those are **Melchizedek** Priesthood offices. This is what he said:

*Never in my life, as an Apostle, as a Seventy, or as an Elder, have I ever had more of the protection of the Lord than while holding the office of a Priest. The Lord revealed to me visions, by revelations, and by the Holy Spirit many things that lay before me.*

Before he was ever ordained in an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood, he had magnificent miracles that took place. I'm going to share one of them with you right here. He said:

*I was once moved upon to go and warn old Father Hakeman, living on Petty-John Creek, Arkansas. He had been in Jackson County during the persecution period. His wife died there. His family consisted of five sons, all over six feet tall. Most of them had been whipped with hickory gads by mobs, and he went south into Arkansas, taking his sons with him. We went a good deal out of our way for the purpose of visiting Father Hakeman. I had a vision the night previous, in which was manifested to me the trouble that lay before us, but that the Lord would deliver us. We arrived at his house on Sunday morning. He was taking breakfast. We had had breakfast at the place where we stayed overnight. I saw a Book of Mormon on his shelf. He did not seem to pay any attention to us or to take any interest in us. I took up the Book of Mormon, and said, "You have a very good book here."*

*"Yes," said he, "but it is a book that came from the devil." That opened my eyes. He had been an Elder; he had been in Zion; he had been persecuted there and driven out, but I found that he had apostatized, and he was our enemy. I saw he would do anything he could against us.... I was strongly impressed three times to go up and warn Father Hakeman.... The third time I met with him, his house seemed to be full of*

*evil spirits, and I was troubled in spirit at the manifestation. When I finished my warning, I left him. He followed me from his house with the intention of killing me. I have no doubt about his intention, for it was shown to me in vision.*

Now, I want you to remember this, Brethren. This is a man of the Aaronic Priesthood. Look at the visions and the warnings that are going on here as an Aaronic Priesthood bearer:

*When he came to where I was, he fell dead at my feet, as if he had been struck with a thunderbolt from heaven. I was then a Priest, but God defended me and preserved my life.... I had the administration of angels while holding the office of a Priest. (**The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, p.297**)*

Brethren, that's the authority that you have. That's the priesthood that you receive when the Aaronic Priesthood is conferred upon you. I had the experience of learning that a lot of the things that Father in Heaven wants to give us, tremendous gifts—visions, inspiration, angelic ministrations, the heavens opened, miracles—all of these things we **don't see because we don't ask for them**. Here's the secret I want to share with you tonight. Everything that Father in Heaven has for you, His sons, warriors, is yours **if you'll ask for it**. *The Book of Mormon* says in **2 Nephi 32**:

*4] Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, **if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.***

My young brethren, I want you to think about beginning to exercise the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood. President Nelson is speaking all over the world, and I find it really interesting that outside of General Conference, the majority of the people he is speaking to are young men and young women from twelve on up to eighteen. He's pulling worldwide conferences and bringing the youth in, and some of them have forty thousand or fifty thousand people. He had one with fifty thousand people he was talking to the other day. And he's talking to you. He's talking to your age. You know what he calls you? **The Youth Brigade of Zion!** The Youth Brigade—think about it. Now there's a scripture in the **Doctrine and Covenants** section **10**, that says this:

*5] **Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work.**(D&C 10:5)*

I want you to think about that word, conqueror. The place that's usually used is in battlefields. My young friends, there is warfare going on. There's a reason why you have the *Book of Mormon*. There's a reason why you have the story of the Two Thousand Stripling Warriors. There's a reason for all of those stories about warfare in Alma that you will be reading about between now and December. I remember when I read the *Book of Mormon* and I thought, "What is all of this warfare going on? What's this all about?" It's teaching you something. That's for you in your day. The warfare is spiritual. There are angels, men and women, they are sent to protect you, to guide you, to whisper to you, to help you, to lift you up, to warn. And if they're not active in your life, it's because of two reasons. One, you're not asking for it. The second thing, Brethren, is that you hold a key. The key unlocks a door. The first key mentioned by John the Baptist is that **the Aaronic Priesthood holds the key of the ministering of angels**. You have that authority, now what you need to do is turn the key and open the door. How do you do that? You ask

Father to send these heavenly messengers, these beings, to come and help and they will! They are here tonight because we asked for them. I promise you they are here tonight. They are watching over you, and they want you to hear this message.

Now, in this world, we have signs that we see. For example, when you pledge allegiance to the flag, you don't just stand with your hands at your side. You do this: you put your hand over your heart. Why do we do that? Why, when we pledge allegiance, do we put our hand over our heart? If you are in the military, in uniform, then you salute. Well, these are signs. These signs represent something. They are teaching something. They are showing respect. If you go into a court of law later on in your life, if you ever have to go, they will swear you in. They don't do this as much anymore, but in some cases, they will bring out a *Bible*. If you saw the Supreme Court Justice that was just nominated, his wife was holding a *Bible*. He put his left hand on the *Bible*, and he brought his right arm up to the square. And then they swore him in. If you ever have to go before a judge, they will have you raise your arm and will say, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?" And you will say, "Yes, I do." Why this (raising arm to the square)? Why do they have you do that? And why do they sometimes have you place your hand on a *Bible*? I'd like to see us get back to that. We've kind of left that. Not many *Bibles* are in courthouses anymore, but that's the way they used to do it. I remember doing it. This is a sign of being square. This is called a square. OK? This is a sign that you are right with God. This is a sign that you are in His favor. So, when you are talking about these kinds of things, this is the sign that you would use for that.

Now, my young friends, I want you to think about something. Tonight, my purpose is to open your minds up to exercising your Aaronic Priesthood power and bring these angels down to help you. When your fathers give a blessing, they will put hands on somebody's head, and they'll say something like this: "By the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood..." That's what they will do, "By the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood," and they will perform that ordinance and then end it in the name of Jesus Christ. Now Brethren, you can do that and say, "By the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood," and pronounce a blessing, and ask for help, and bring down angels to perform miracles in your life, and then you end it in the name of Jesus Christ. You have the authority to do that!

Imagine what would happen in your lives if you who have this authority, exercised it. And you received it by the laying on of hands from somebody who has authority. It goes all of the way back to where John the Baptist came and gave that to Joseph and Oliver Cowdery. You have that! Imagine what you could do in your home. What if your brother or sister was having a hard time? What if you had a brother who had an addiction? What if you had a sister who was struggling? What if you had a dad who was having trouble? You have the authority to go to a quiet place and say, "By the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood, I ask for angels to come and bless my mom and dad, to help my brother, to help my sister..." And they will do it! That's the key! Why give you authority (which is what happens when those hands are laid upon your head) if it's not to be used? What's the purpose?

There is more to this than just preparing the Sacrament, blessing the Sacrament, and passing the Sacrament. That's a part of the authority, but you have power to do more! Imagine what a blessing that would be in your quorums, young friends! In your Deacons quorum. If you have somebody that's not

active, somebody that's not coming to church, you can use your priesthood authority and say, "By the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood, I ask that angels come down from heaven and bless this brother, stand by him, touch his heart, change his heart, bring him to Christ, and bring him to our quorum." Now Brethren, you can do that! You Deacons can pray for the Teachers. You know the Teachers and the Priests. You all know each other. If you see them struggling and they're having trouble, use your priesthood authority to pronounce a blessing upon these older Aaronic Priesthood bearers. And then as new young men come up, you can use that same authority to bless the Teachers and the Deacons underneath you. **It's all about ministering to each other.** You have the key. You have the authority. Why not use it as you can? This is the message Father wanted me to share. I know that it's true. You can begin right now because you have that power.

My young friends, you have some challenges ahead of you. I've taught some of your adult leaders when they were in seminary and not a whole lot older than you are right now. The day that they grew up in and *your day* is a whole different day. Things have shifted. You have a president of the Church who is calling on the young men and young women to "rise up" in the majesty of their priesthood authority, and the young women, in the majesty of their faith in Jesus Christ and create miracles! Do things that have never been done before because you're going to need to! You're going to need to go head-on. None of us, adults or youth, can continue to do the same thing we've always done and make it through the days that are on us. Can't do it. We've got to stand up, step up, and do something different.

This is the beginning for you tonight, my young men. I don't look at you as boys. I look at you as young men, warriors for Christ. You've been given the authority to act in His name and bring down angels to bless you, your family, and other young men in your priesthood quorums. I ask our Heavenly Father, for all of us, in the name of Jesus Christ, to bless us that we can all use our priesthood power, Melchizedek or Aaronic, so we can stand up and see miracles performed. **I testify to you that the greatest miracles ever performed in the scriptures will be nothing to what you, my brethren, adults and young men, are going to participate in and witness in a coming day.** I testify to that. I love our Father in Heaven. I love our Savior. These angels are real. I have seen them. I've heard them. I've talked with them. They have touched me, and I have touched them. They are our sacred helpers. Some of them are your ancestors—grandmas and grandpas, and for some of you, your mom and dad. Brethren, some of these angels are men and women that are going to call you father in a future day. They have been assigned to come into your family. They are very, very interested in you. They know how important your life and what you're learning and starting to do right now is going to be for those who are coming who will be your sons and daughters. They are watching you. They want to help you. Ask them to come and help you, and they will come. I testify to you of these things. I love you, my young friends. We're all brethren in the great battlefield of life. Christ is the victor. It all comes out right in the end, but you have a great work to do. Life has never been, in the history of the world, upon you young men and young women like it is right now *at this time*. God bless us all. I love you so much. I love our Father. I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart. I testify to you that he wanted you to hear this message tonight. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.