

**Pearl of Great Price
Various Questions
Sept 2015**

Atonement

To get us started, someone submitted an observation that since the 1980's there has been over a 1600% increase in the number of times the word "Atonement" has been spoken in general conference talks. The apparent reason, I believe, for this up swing is because the Book of Mormon began to be emphasized during President Benson's administration. For the first 150 years the Book of Mormon was considered by the general church membership a history or story of the native Americans. President Benson pushed and talked and emphasized the Book of Mormon to make us aware of its importance in our lives. The word "atonement" is used in the Book of Mormon more than anywhere else in our scriptures. It is used only once in the New Testament, and it shows up in the Old Testament off and on with the day of atonement and the sacrifices associated with it. In the New Testament the other times the concept is used is with the word, "reconciled" which is the Latin word, *re-con-cilio*, or "to again be seated with", which is the same as to become one with God. The Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (**D&C 20: 9; 42:12**), and it teaches us how to come unto Christ. The rise in the word, Atonement, has been observed because the Book of Mormon has emphasized it so much. Now we just have to realize what "Atonement" really means and how it takes place. That's for another time.

**Patriarchal Priesthood and
The Levirate Law of Marriage**

Another question submitted concerns Priesthood and how it descends through Abel, when, although married, he had no children. This is a good question because Abel did not have any posterity, but we know from **D&C 107: 42-52**, that this 'Patriarchal Priesthood' descends from Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methusalah, Lamech, Noah, Shem and right on through to additional patriarchs. However, in **D&C 84: 16**, we see this Priesthood line being traced back through Abel.

Abel was chosen to be the patriarch after Adam. Cain, being the elder, thought he should have been chosen to become the patriarch. This pattern between Cain and Abel sets up a continuing pattern of conflict throughout Biblical history, which is that the elder son is not always worthy or righteous enough to become the patriarch. There are two concepts to keep in mind: the 'first born' son and the 'birthright' son. The first-born son *should be* the birthright son. The first-born son is responsible for the temporal welfare of his mother and his sisters in the event of his father's death. That's why he gets a double portion of the inheritance so that he can take care of his father's widow and any of his unmarried sisters. The 'birthright' son has the responsibility of providing the ordinances of salvation and exaltation for all of his father's children who need them or for whom the deceased patriarch cannot administer. It *should be* that the birthright son and the first-

born son are the same, but that is not always the case; take Jacob and Esau, for instance. Esau was the first born, but Jacob became the birthright son. Another example is Reuben and Joseph. Reuben was the first-born son of Jacob's first wife, but the birthright went to Joseph, who was technically the eleventh (11th) son but more importantly, the first-born son of the 2nd wife. That's how it works: birthright goes to the first-born son of the first wife; and if he's not worthy, then to the first-born son of the 2nd wife. If neither of these is worthy, then it moves to the 2nd born son of the first wife, and then to the 2nd born son of the 2nd wife. The concubinal children can only be chosen if neither of the sons of the wives is worthy. Reuben was the first born of Leah, and Joseph was the first born of Rachel. When Reuben (the firstborn) lost the opportunity to receive the birthright, Joseph, the first born of the 2nd wife (Rachel) was given the birthright responsibilities. This is a pattern that shows up repeatedly in our scriptures.

Even though Cain was the first-born son *after both Adam and Eve receive the Gospel*, Cain's priesthood activity demonstrated that he was not worthy to receive the 'birthright' responsibilities, and thus Abel was chosen instead of Cain. We see this in **Moses 5: 18-21**.

And Cain loved Satan more than God. And Satan commanded him, saying: Make an offering unto the Lord. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. *And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect.* Now Satan knew this, and it pleased him. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

This conflict has existed from the time of the pre-existence. After the physical body of Adam was formed of the dust of the earth, God bid all of the spirits at that grand council to come and give homage (honor) to this first physical being into whom God had placed Adam's spirit. All came except Satan and those who followed him. He was upset that he was not chosen to become the first man or patriarch for the newly created earth. His reasoning was that Adam should be paying respect to *him* because he had been prepared much earlier than Adam. Thus this conflict between the younger and the older has been going on since the pre-existence.

Getting back to Abel, we see in the Book of Genesis the implementation of the Levirate Law of Marriage. (This provides insight to the question.) If the firstborn (and the birthright) son dies before he and his wife can have children, as in the case of Abel, the brother of Abel is supposed to marry his brother's widow. The first-born son of that union is then 'sealed' to the widow and her first husband, and the patriarchal priesthood line of authority will descend through that son. The 'double portion' of the inheritance would pass to her first born son of this second marriage rather than to the second born son of that second marriage. We see this in the risqué story of Judah and Tamar. People have wondered why this story is even found in **Genesis 38**, but it describes the Levirate Law of Marriage found in **Deuteronomy 25: 5-6**. (It is also the basis for the story of Ruth and Boaz in **Ruth 4: 10-12**)

Judah has three sons: Er, Onan and Selah. Er is the oldest and Tamar is his wife. Since Er is the first-born son, and one who would become the birthright son, he should receive a double portion of Judah's inheritance. However, Er dies and he and Tamar have no children. Onan, under the Levirate Law of Marriage, marries Tamar, but knows that if they have a son, the double portion of Judah's inheritance would pass to that son and not to him. Onan decides to make sure that Tamar does not become pregnant, and practices birth control. The record says that the Lord was displeased with Onan's actions, and Onan dies. Tamar still has no children, and now Judah's third son, Selah, is obligated to marry Tamar. Selah is still too young to marry anyone, and Judah suggests to Tamar that she should return to her father's house until Selah comes of age. Time passes, and Selah grows up, but he knows there's this old lady, Tamar, in the next town that he has to marry. He does not want to have anything to do with Tamar or the inheritance, so he picks up his high school girlfriend and they head to Canada, never to be seen again. (*Much laughter*)

Since Judah did not keep his word for Selah to marry her, Tamar decides on a plan of her own. She learns that Judah needs to have his sheep sheared at a certain place at a certain time of the year. She goes and sets up a tent of ill repute along the way and dresses up as a harlot. (The harlot always wears multiple veils: the more veils she wears the more money she can collect for every piece of clothing she removes.) Anyway, Judah comes by the way, sees the red light and decides to stop in. Things go according to Tamar's plan, but before Judah leaves, Tamar's price is somewhat higher than Judah had thought. He said he would bring back her money when he came back in town. She agreed only if he would leave her his signet ring, his staff, and his cloak as a pledge. These items were all symbols of the family name and authority that Tamar should have received by her marriage to Judah's first-born and birthright son.

When Judah comes back to retrieve his pawn from Tamar, the tent is gone, Tamar is gone, and no one in the town can even remember there ever having been a harlot in the area! He never even knew it was Tamar who was playing the harlot. About three months go by, and Judah learns that Tamar is now with "child by whoredom". Judah thinks that he can now rid the family of Tamar because of her actions. He invites her to a family council and tells her that because she is with child, she no longer can be part of the family. He tells her she has been doing things she ought not to have, and before she goes, he asks, "Oh, by the way, who is the father?" Tamar says, "Just a minute, I'll be right back". She goes to retrieve the things Judah had given her that night. She comes back in with the staff, the signet ring, and the cloak. So the truth comes out, and Judah acknowledges that Tamar "hath been more righteous than I". She finally is able to bear a son (Pharez) and receives that birthright blessing that the Levirate Law of Marriage ensures. The Lord established this law for this very reason, to ensure that blessings of priesthood, posterity and inheritance remain within the family of the birthright son. (See **Matt 1: 3**)

Question: So the widow of Abel marries Adam's next son, Seth, and their son, Enos is now the next birthright son of Abel? Am I understanding this correctly?

Yes. That is how this Levirate Law of Marriage works. In **Moses 6: 2** we see that Seth is born "instead of Abel, whom Cain slew". Seth means substitute. He becomes the replacement son of Abel. This is another reason priesthood authority is traced from Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methusalah...etc. (**D&C 107: 53**), but in **D&C 84:16**, we see that **priesthood line** extends back "from Enoch to Abel, ... who received the priesthood by the commandments of God, by the hand of his father Adam, who was the first man." So the Patriarchal Priesthood Line, the direct line of Abel, is: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim. And in our day, it picks up with Joseph Smith Sr, then Hyrum Smith, Joseph F. Smith, John Smith, and finally to Eldred G. Smith.

In relation to priesthood being given to all worthy males in 1978, this was a direct fulfillment of a prophecy spoken by Joseph Smith. In Joseph Fielding Smith's book, *The Way to Perfection*, we learn that "at a meeting of the general authorities of the Church, held Aug 22, 1895, the question of the status of the Negro in relation to the Priesthood was asked, and the minutes of that meeting say:

President George Q. Cannon remarked that the Prophet taught this doctrine: that the seed of Cain could not receive the Priesthood nor act in any of the offices of the Priesthood until the seed of Abel should come forward and take precedence over Cain's offspring." (Way to Perfection, p 110-111)

Joseph said the Priesthood would not be given to **the descendants (seed) of Cain** – he didn't say "the Blacks"...there's a difference. The 'doctrine' is that the descendants of Cain couldn't hold the Priesthood, *not* that all Blacks could not hold the Priesthood. All we know is that a blackness came upon the people of Canaan because there was much heat there, (**Moses 7: 8**) We do not know if blackness was the 'mark' the Lord placed on Cain, all we know is that the 'mark' was placed upon Cain to protect him so people would not kill him. The Policy [not doctrine] of the Church became that Blacks could not hold the Priesthood because it was not certain just who the descendants of Cain were. If Cain had been red-headed and freckled-faced, then the policy would not allow red-headed and freckled-faced men to hold the Priesthood.

The assumption has been that Abel had had no children, but as we have seen, the Levirate Law of Marriage produced a son (Enos) via the union of Seth (Abel's brother) and Abel's widow, thus perpetuating the birthright line of the Patriarchal Priesthood's responsibilities. The Prophet Joseph's prophecy was fulfilled in 1978 when Abel's descendants had all come forward to fulfill their responsibilities as patriarchs. In the April conference of 1979, Eldred G. Smith, the Patriarch to the Church, was released and given emeritus status because the Church had grown too big for one Patriarch to go around the Church to ordain all of the Stake Patriarchs.

In Moses 5 we see that Cain murdered Abel, (his priesthood leader) and by so doing, he felt that not only would he now take possession of all of Abel's flocks, but he and his posterity would now become the prophet, priest and king over all of Adam's posterity for the rest of time, for "I am free", said Cain (**v 33**).

The record declares: “And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying: I am free; surely the flocks of my brother shall fall into my hands” (**Moses 5: 33**). Cain had expected that, by killing his Priesthood leader, he and his posterity would become the head of that Patriarchal Priesthood line, but the Levirate Law was already in place and he lost the right to it. The line is traced back to Abel as seen in **D&C 84: 16**.

The Prophet Joseph taught that “every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was”.(**TPJS p 365**) So when the Lord questions Cain: “Where is Abel, thy brother?” and he said: I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?” (**Moses 5:34**), that is *the wrong answer*, the wrong thing to say if Cain has any intentions of becoming the next Priesthood leader! Cain had become *totally inactive* in his priesthood responsibilities. He held priesthood, but he was not actively fulfilling his responsibilities. Part of priesthood responsibility is to watch out for your brother, but his answer provided another indication why he was not chosen to become the birthright son, even though he was the elder.

In ancient writings called Targums, whose origins are older than what is found in the Old Testament, an episode is recorded wherein the Lord tells Cain, “thy brother's bloods cry from the ground.” “Thy brother's bloods” is a term meaning Abel's descendants. Those descendants are crying from the ground because they had been set apart in the council of heaven to come here through that birthright line. The Levirate Law had to be introduced so that those who had been set apart to minister in Abel's line could now come through Seth (Abel's substitute). This connects with Joseph's statement that the descendants of Cain would not be able to receive the responsibilities of Priesthood until the descendants of Abel had the opportunity to come forth and fulfill all of their responsibilities. Abel's descendants, through the Levirate Law, fulfilled their responsibilities down through time and into our dispensation, until Eldred G. Smith was released from his Patriarchal responsibility in April, 1979. The revelation allowing all worthy males to receive the Priesthood was not given because of any outside pressure or influence, but according to Joseph Smith's prophecy.

Keep in mind that just because Cain and his descendants could not *administer* the Gospel, does not mean that were prevented from *participating* in the Gospel. Priesthood is an organization that administers the Gospel. Cain and his descendants lost the right of administration, but not the right to participate in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Question: Why do you suppose in members of the same family, one child could be of the tribe of Ephraim and the other from the tribe of Manasseh?

There are two separate considerations when it comes to the tribe you belong to: blood lineage and responsibility. Every tribe has a responsibility. You will remember that Ephraim became the Patriarch for all of the tribes of Israel. He became responsible for the temporal and spiritual welfare for all of the other tribes of Israel. Manasseh can assist Ephraim in his responsibilities. The tribe that you are in has more to do with the *responsibilities* of that tribe than a blood line.

For example, Judah's line is supposed to be the temporal leadership for Israel. The Levites were the priesthood holders for a particular time. You can find the responsibilities of the tribes in Genesis 49 and in Deuteronomy 33. A blood line and a responsibility within a given tribe are not always the same. The time will come when twelve thousand from each tribe will be chosen and a great responsibility will be given to those who are chosen.

If you were to ask most Jewish congregations, they would say that Abraham was 'Jewish', or that Moses was 'Jewish', but that is not the case at all. Judah was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Abraham is considered to be the father of Judaism, but technically speaking, he was not Jewish at all. He was Semitic. Moses was from the tribe of Levi.

In the upper Mesopotamia regions there was a people known as the Aribu. This is the area where Heran was location and the city of Ur. This is the region in which Abraham lived. The word, Aribu, is thought to be the genesis of the word 'Hebrew'. Abraham was told that everyone who accepts the Gospel become the seed of Abraham.

About ninety nine percent of those being gathered out now are from Ephraim or Manasseh. The Patriarch needs to be gathered first. It is his responsibility to gather the rest of the tribes of Israel. Ephraim and Manasseh need to become strong first, but the gathering of the rest of the ten tribes, scripturally speaking, will not happen until after the Millennium begins. We are in the 'Day of the Gentile', and we are to gather both Ephraim and Manasseh in preparation for the gathering of the ten tribes. When do the masses of Jews convert? When Jesus stands on the Mount of Olives after the great earthquake, the Jews come to Him then and ask, "what are those wounds in thy hands and in thy feet?" Jesus answers, "These are the wounds by which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Then the full gathering of Israel begins. That begins the day of the Jew, but today we are still in the day of the Gentile.

How many of you in here today are from Ephraim? (most hands are raised) Just so you know, Ephraim was the worst of all of them! He was the one that caused the rift between the Northern and Southern kingdoms of Israel. When his tribe was taken to the north countries, he scattered his seed all over the place! His was the wildest and rottenest tribe out there. His father, Joseph, married the daughter of the High Priest of Heliopolis (or On) in Egypt. You're all Egyptians! (*much laughter*) Like it or not, you're all Egyptians. Ephraim's descendants are all over the world because he sowed his oats all over. But...he is the patriarch, and he has to be gathered out first.

Being designated to a specific tribe does not necessarily mean that is one's actual blood line, rather it has more to do with one's responsibilities of that particular tribe. Joseph Smith taught:

There are two Comforters spoken of. One is the Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all Saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. This first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure

intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge, of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham, than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while **the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. [this is an adoption]** That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence. (TPJS p 150-151)

We are Gentiles. When we accept the Gospel, we become the seed of Abraham. We are adopted into the House of Israel, and become the seed of Abraham. The twelve tribes, as we know, represent the twelve sons of Jacob, and Ephraim and Manasseh descend from Joseph, who became that birthright son. Our responsibilities as a member of the tribe of Ephraim or Manasseh is to assist in the continuing gathering of the "House of Israel", *ie.*, Jacob.

Question: Regarding the placement of the Book of Abraham in our Pearl of Great Price; why isn't it placed first rather than after Moses? Wasn't Abraham chronologically before Moses?

The Book of Moses was translated and published to the Church within the first six months of the organization of the Church. Joseph had been instructed to get to work on the inspired version of the Bible. He begins with Genesis, and obviously, Genesis is the first Book of Moses. When initially prepared for publication, the first 8 chapters of Genesis were identified as the Book of Moses and the Book of Enoch. We talked about the divisions of the different dispensations last month. After the Book of Mormon was published and the Church organized, the Books of Moses and Enoch was published to the Church within the first 6 months, signifying the heavens being opened again and further light and knowledge now being dispensed.

The Book of Abraham was not prepared for publication until 1835, after the Church had moved to Kirtland. When the Pearl of Great Price was compiled in 1855, it was first prepared as a tract for the Saints in England to read and study. There were about 55,000 Saints living in England at that time, whereas there were only 30,000 Saints living in the United States. The English Saints had nothing to read other than the Book of Mormon since the death of Joseph. In 1908, the Church voted by common consent to add the Pearl of Great Price to our Standard Works as presently laid out.

Question: In earlier editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, we see the use of so called "code names" describing some of the leaders at that time. Do you think that was inspiration from Heaven Father for them to use such names?

Since things were being published in the Times and Seasons at that time, they did not want the anti-Mormons to know who the actual names of the individuals were that were being mentioned in those publications. They were used more to protect the identity of the individuals than anything else. The names were not made up because Joseph told the saints whose names those "code names" represented.