

## Priestcrafts

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### Only Jews would crucify Christ

- 2 Nephi 10:3-4
  - "there is none other nation on earth that would crucify their God.  
For should the mighty miracles be wrought among other nations they would repent, and know that he be their God"
- Why?
  - 2 Nephi 10:5
    - "But because of *priestcrafts* and iniquities, they at Jerusalem will stiffen their necks against him"
  - Priestcrafts
  - Iniquity

### What is Priestcrafts?

- 2 Nephi 26:29
  - "priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion"
  - Men preach to:
    - Be a light
    - Get gain
    - Praise of the world
      - D&C 121:34-35
    - Seek not welfare of Zion

- Preach for sake of riches and honor

### Example of Priestcraft in the Scriptures

- Alma 1:2-15
  - Nehor
- Alma 1:16
 

"for there were many who loved the vain things of the world, and they went forth preaching false doctrines; and this they did for the sake of riches and honor"

### Do some in the church today set themselves up as a light "that they might get gain"?

- Yes
  - We usually don't recognize as we don't want to be judgmental
  - Steven D Dalton

"The scripture says "...gain AND praise of the world..." Then it says, "...they seek not the welfare of Zion." This, I think, is the bright dividing line. *If our purpose in teaching, blessing, preaching, serving, is ANYTHING OTHER than the welfare of others, then we are at least edging towards priestcraft, if not all the way there.*" (personal correspondence regarding "Priestcraft" 12/28/2008)
- Yes
  - Some use talents to be highly thought of
  - Some want to be respected for their wisdom and knowledge
  - Some want to somehow turn it into monetary gain

### Is there such a thing as "praise of the world" within the church?

- Yes
  - Steven D Dalton

"If not, no missionary, no Elder, no one in the church would be seeking or hoping for leadership callings. But that is not the case. Unfortunately, there tends to be an undercurrent of thought that those who are called to preside are somehow more highly favored of the Lord. Which you and I know to be nonsense" (personal correspondence regarding "Priestcraft" 12/28/2008))
  - Dallin H Oaks

"part of the "doing" for a gospel teacher is to focus his or her teaching on the glory of the Master and the needs of the sheep. Otherwise, with a

skillful manner of presenting his or her teachings and testimony, a teacher can become especially popular and find students gathering around him or her. If that is done to “get gain and praise of the world” it is priestcraft. A faithful gospel teacher will never obscure students’ view of the Master by standing in the way or by casting a shadow of self-promotion or self-interest. ” (Life’s Lessons learned, Personal reflections. Chapter “Testimony of Jesus Christ”, pg 158-159)

## **How do we respond to praise so that we don't start down the path of Priestcraft?**

### ***"Adulation is poison"***

- Gorden B Hinckley  
“It is so very important that you do not let praise and adulation go to your head. Adulation is poison. You better never lose sight of the fact that the Lord put you where you are according to His design, which you don’t understand. Acknowledge the Lord for whatever good you can accomplish and give Him the credit and the glory and [do] not worry about that coming to yourself. If you can do that, you’ll get along all right and will go forward with a love for the people and a great respect for them and [will] try to accomplish what your office demands of you.” (“Words of the Living Prophet,” Liahona, Feb 2001, pg 28)

### ***Seek Humility***

- Mike Baird  
“It is clear that priestcraft is anathema to the Spirit. We would not feel comfortable or settled if we started down a path of priestcraft and so would know that isn't the path or thing we should do.  
This part of why we are so uncomfortable in receiving praise for a "good talk" or for our role in someone's turning to Christ.

I find that when someone expresses gratitude for something I did for them in my calling or gratitude for something taught in a lesson it is easy to accept that as I know that I myself didn't do for them or it wasn't my clever teaching of doctrine that made an impression on them but rather the Spirit and it wasn't me that made them turn to Christ. I'm uncomfortable with the praise from someone I have stewardship over because it feels too much like accepting credit yet if someone is grateful and expresses such, I

don't feel uncomfortable because I know I don't have claim on credit. "  
(personal correspondence regarding "Priestcraft" 12/28/2008)

- Steven D Dalton

"In my understanding, humility is nothing more than acknowledging the source" (personal correspondence regarding "Priestcraft" 12/28/2008)

### ***Acknowledge the source***

- John 15:5

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: *for without me ye can do nothing*"

- Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"

- Steven D Dalton

"I can do nothing without Christ, but with Him I can do ALL things. These are both very humble statements. That is why I think our best response to congratulatory statements is to learn how to graciously thank, but then even more graciously learn how to give God all the credit." (personal correspondence regarding "Priestcraft" 12/28/2008)

### **Modern day Example of Priestcraft**

- Mike Baird

"I remember well an experience the first night of my mission in the mission home in SLC. There was a big room with the bunk beds in it were we slept. Several bunks away from me there was a group of Elders gathered around a particular Elder. I wandered over to see and listened for a while. He was flipping through his scriptures expounding on something. At first I was interested, because of my pre-mission experiences I figure I knew the scriptures probably better than most missionaries at that time and here was someone that really knew them. I don't even remember what he was expounding on but I do remember how uncomfortable I became with what he was saying. I didn't say anything but just left. Turned out he was going to a Scandinavian mission and so he was at the LTM at Ricks College with the rest of us. This elder gained the nickname of "Joe Scripture" at the LTM as he would get other elders together and "preach" doctrines and "prove" them with the scriptures. I did not have anything to do with him because his "teaching" did not leave a good feeling. One teaching caused quite the uproar as he was

teaching that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. To the point that the President of the LTM got us all together and denounced speculations of such nature (I can still picture him saying "who cares if Jesus was married or not?") and told us all to focus on the discussions and our languages. Joe Scripture was in a different country so I don't know anything more about him or even his name. Priestcraft? I think what he was doing had the earmarks of it. He set himself up as a light of scriptural knowledge and understanding. He wasn't seeking the welfare of the rest of us but rather to be known for his scriptural prowess. From how I felt I don't feel he had the Spirit about him. Interesting to note that with I also have the impression that his teaching he was "off the mark"." (personal correspondence regarding "Priestcraft" 12/28/2008)