

## D&C#08 Restoration of the Priesthood

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### I. Introduction

As we proceed with this lesson it is important that we understand the meaning of the terms, Priesthood and Priesthood keys.

We may own a house or car, but we cannot gain access to either, unless we have the correct keys. Ownership alone is not sufficient to gain access. When we, as a young couple, purchased our home, we were not able to gain entrance into it until we have received the specific keys that allowed us access. This relationship is similar to holding of the priesthood and the Keys of the priesthood.

The Guide to the Scriptures states,

**"Priesthood.** The authority and power that God gives to men to act in all things for the salvation of man (D&C 50:26-27). Male members of the Church who hold the priesthood are organized into quorums and are authorized to perform ordinances and certain administrative functions in the Church.

**"Keys of the Priesthood.** Keys are the rights of presidency, or the power given to man by God to direct, control, and govern God's priesthood on earth. Priesthood holders called to positions of presidency receive keys from those in authority over them. Priesthood holders are able to use their priesthood only within the limits outlined by those who hold the keys. The President of the Church holds all priesthood keys (D&C 107:65-67, 91-92; 132:7)." (*The Guide to the Scriptures*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001).

In order for an individual to receive the priesthood, it must be conveyed upon them by one who holds the prerequisite authority. This ordination can only be performed when it is done under the direction of the presiding leader. In order for an individual to exercise his newly received priesthood power, he can do so only within the limits of their authority and through the direction of the one who holds the necessary keys. The priesthood leader holding the priesthood keys has also been given the authority to delegate the power of the priesthood and its use to others.

Joseph F. Smith states,

"The power of directing the Priesthood constitutes the keys of the Priesthood. In their fullness, these keys are held by only one person at a time, the prophet and president of the Church. He may delegate any portion of this power to another, in which case that person holds the keys of that particular labor. Thus, the president of a temple, the president of a stake, the bishop of a ward, the president of a mission, or the president of a quorum, each hold the keys of the labors performed in that particular body or locality." (*Improvement Era*, Vol.4, January 1901, 230).

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"Presiding priesthood leaders receive these keys when they are set apart. All offices in the priesthood and organization in the Church function under the direction of these presiding officers." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 41).

Robert D. Hales clarifies the keys of the Prophet,

"At the Copenhagen Denmark Area Conference held August 3-5, 1976, President [Spencer W.] Kimball wanted to see Thorvaldsen's beautiful sculpture[s]. ...After a few spiritual moments admiring The Christus, President Kimball bore his testimony to the caretaker who stood nearby. As he turned to the statue of Peter and pointed to the large set of keys in Peter's right hand, he proclaimed: 'The keys of priesthood authority which Peter held as President of the Church, I now hold as President of the Church in this

dispensation.' Then he stated to the caretaker, 'You work every day with Apostles in stone, but today you are in the presence of living Apostles.' He then introduced President N. Eldon Tanner, Elder Thomas A. Monson, and Elder Boyd K. Packer. He presented the caretaker with a Book of Mormon in Danish, and bore his testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The caretaker was moved to tears in acknowledgement of the Spirit he felt in the presence of a Prophet and Apostles. He acknowledged to me as we left the church, 'Today I have been in the presence of servants of God.' ("Examples of the Life of a Prophet," in *Ensign*, November 1981, 20).

With this introduction regarding the priesthood and priesthood keys, let us now proceed to explore the priesthood and its importance.

## **II. Definition and Purpose of the Priesthood**

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"The priesthood is one of the main themes of the Doctrine and Covenants. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord gave many revelations that add greatly to our understanding of the keys, offices, organization, ordinances, duties, and blessings of the priesthood. These revelations provide guidance in using the priesthood to move forward God's work on the earth." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 42).

\*What is the priesthood?

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"The priesthood is the eternal power and authority of God. It is the power by which He created and governs the heavens and the earth. It is also the power by which He redeems and exalts His children. He gives a portion of His priesthood power and authority to worthy male members of the Church so they can preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of salvation, and govern His kingdom on earth." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 42).

\*Why is it important to have the priesthood on the earth?

The priesthood authorizes men to act for God in blessing His children and helping them prepare for exaltation.

\*What are some ways in which priesthood holders act on behalf of God to bless His children?

These may include: (1) Weekly administration of the sacrament (D&C 20:40); (2) Baptize, confirm members of the Church and bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost (D&C 20:41-42); (3) Visit to the homes of the members of the Church to teach and encourage them to pray frequently and attend to family duties (D&C 20:47); (4) To see that there is no iniquity in the church (D&C 20:45), and, (5) To see that churches meet together often and all members do their duty (D&C 20:55).

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading of Section 107 states, "Revelation on the priesthood, given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, about April 1835...This section was associated with the organization of the Quorum of the Twelve in February and March 1835. The Prophet likely delivered it in the presence of those who were preparing to depart May 3, 1835, on their first quorum mission." (Heading: Section 107. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 215).

In the verses noted, the Lord clarifies the authority of the Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood [First Presidency], the President of the High Priesthood [President of the Church], The Twelve Apostles, and High Priests.

Through the power and authority of the priesthood, the [Presidency of the] Melchizedek Priesthood [First Presidency] is charged with the "right of presidency and hold the power and authority to administer "over all offices in the church in all ages of the world, in spiritual matters" (D&C 107:8). The Presidency of the High Priesthood [President of the Church] has the right to officiate in all the offices of the Church (D&C 107:9). High Priests after the order of the Melchizedek Priesthood have a "right to officiate,...under the direction of the presidency, in administering spiritual things (D&C 107:10).

In addition to the members of the First Presidency, twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world (D&C 107:23). The Twelve Apostles, by authority of their calling preside at all meetings they attend and act under the direction of the Prophet or President of the Church. All other offices, when a member of the First Presidency is absent, are subject to their direction. They also, hold the keys, "to open the door...[for] the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and first unto the Gentiles and then unto the Jews" (D&C 107:35).

\*How have you been blessed through the service of priesthood holders?

\*What influence has the priesthood had on you?

\*How have you seen the power of the priesthood manifested in your life?

\*How has the priesthood blessed and strengthened your family?

\*How can you make the influence and power of the priesthood more effective in your life and for your family?

### **III. Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims that the source of priesthood authority by which the Church operates, came by divine messengers sent by the Lord as part of the restoration of His Church upon the earth. It did not continue through the ages in a continuous line by those whom Jesus Christ had ordained in the meridian of time. It also cannot be obtained by a correct interpretation and application of the teachings of the Bible, notwithstanding the sincerity of the individual. Joseph Smith himself could only receive the authority to act in God's name from divine messengers.

Orson F. Whitney states,

"Many years ago a learned man, a member of the Roman Catholic Church, came to Utah and spoke from the stand of the Salt Lake Tabernacle. I became well-acquainted with him, and we conversed freely and frankly. A great scholar, with perhaps a dozen languages at his tongue's end, he

seemed to know all about theology, law, literature, science and philosophy. One day he said to me: 'You Mormons are all ignoramuses. You don't even know the strength of your own position. It is so strong that there is only one other tenable in the whole Christian world, and that is the Catholic Church. The issue is between Catholicism and Mormonism. If we are right, you are wrong; if you are right, we are wrong; and that's all there is to it. The Protestants haven't a leg to stand on. For, if we are wrong, they are wrong with us, since they were a part of us and went out from us; while if we are right, they are apostates whom we cut off long ago. If we have the apostolic succession from St. Peter, as we claim, there is no need of Joseph Smith and Mormonism; but if we have not that succession, thus such a man as Joseph Smith was necessary, and Mormonism's attitude is the only consistent one. It is either the perpetuation of the gospel from ancient times, or the restoration of the gospel in latter days.'" (Pamphlet: *The Strength of the Mormon Position*, quoted in LeGrand Richards. *A Marvelous Work and A Wonder*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1958, [Revised Edition, 1967], 3-4).

A fundamental criteria when trying to determine which Church is true?' lies in the source of its authority. Without the authority to act in God's name, the ordinances of salvation that are performed therein, will not grant the individual entrance into the kingdom of God.

The higher priesthood or the authority given to man to act in His name, is referred to as the Melchizedek Priesthood. The lesser priesthood is known as the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood. Originally the Melchizedek Priesthood, was referred to as the "Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God and encompasses the Aaronic priesthood. (see D&C 107:14.) 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 the priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek priesthood." (D&C 107:3-4). While there is only one priesthood, the Melchizedek, accordingly, "there are two divisions or grand heads--one is the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the other is the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood." (D&C 107:6).

We will first address the restoration of the Aaronic priesthood, and then the restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood.

PGP, Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72

68 We still continued the work of the translation [Book of Mormon], when in the ensuing month (May, 1829), we on a certain day went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:

69 *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.*

70 He said this Aaronic Priesthood had not the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter [the Melchizedek Priesthood]; and he commanded us to go and be baptized, and gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and that afterwards he should baptize me.

71 Accordingly we went and were baptized. I baptized him first, and afterwards he baptized me--after which I laid my hands upon his head and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood, and afterwards he laid his hands on me and ordained me to the same Priesthood--for so were we commanded.

72 The messenger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which priesthood, he said, would in due time be conferred on us, and that I should be called the first Elder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second. It was on the fifteenth day of May, 1829, that we were ordained under the hand of this messenger, and baptized.

The italicized words [PGP-Joseph Smith-History 1:69] were later published as Section 13 in the Doctrine and Covenants. It contains the exact words spoken to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on May 15, 1829, by the resurrected John the Baptist. It was the same John, who had baptized Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan near Bethabara, as recorded in the New Testament and Book of Mormon. (see Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22, John 1:32-34, and 1 Nephi 10:7-10 and 2 Nephi 31:4-21.) The restoration of the Aaronic priesthood by John the Baptist was the first bestowal of divine authority in this dispensation.

\*How did you as priesthood holders feel when you received the Aaronic Priesthood?

Joseph Smith recorded the feelings he and Oliver felt upon being ordained and their baptism.

PGP, Joseph Smith--History 1:73

**73 Immediately on our coming up out of the water after we had been baptized, we experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation.**

Even though neither Joseph or Oliver received the gift of the Holy Ghost, as John the Baptist did not hold these keys, they were told to await the appearance of Peter, James, and John for this bestowal, they were blessed with an increase in spiritual understanding.

PGP, Joseph Smith--History 1:74

**74 Our minds being now enlightened [after their baptism], we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain previously, nor ever before had thought of. In the meantime we were**



**forced to keep secret the circumstances of having received the Priesthood and our having been baptized, owing to a spirit of persecution which had already manifested itself in the neighborhood.**

As a result of the increased persecution Joseph and Oliver were experiencing as a result of their teachings, Oliver contacted his friend, David Whitmer in Fayette, New York. He will be asked to come to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and move Joseph and Emma, and Oliver to the Whitmer home, so that the remainder of the translation of the Book of Mormon can continue without interruption.

James E. Talmage shares his feelings regarding receiving the priesthood as a young boy, and being ordained to the office of deacon,

"As soon as I had been ordained, a feeling came to me such as I have never been able to fully describe. It seemed scarcely possible, that I, a little boy, could be so honored of God as to be called to the priesthood...I felt strong in the thought that I belonged to the Lord, and that he would assist me in whatever was required of me.

"The effect of my ordination...entered into all the affairs of my boyish life... When at play on the school grounds, and perhaps tempted to take unfair advantage in the game, when in the midst of dispute with a playmate, I would remember, and the thought would be as effective as though spoken aloud--'I am a deacon; and it is not right that a deacon should act in this way.' On examination days, when it seemed easy for me to copy some other boy's work...I would say in my mind, 'It would be more wicked for me to do that than it is for them, because I am a deacon.'" (*Incidents from the Lives of Our Church Leaders* [Deacons Instruction Manual, 1914], 135-136).

\*How can boys and young men prepare to receive the Aaronic Priesthood?

\*How can parents, grandparents, and others help boys and young men prepare to receive the priesthood?

\*How can others help instill within boys and young men a deep appreciation for the priesthood?

\*What authority and blessings were restored with the

Aaronic Priesthood?

***The keys of the ministering of angels***

In the 2013 Edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading of Section 13 states, "An extract from Joseph Smith's history recounting the ordination of the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery to the Aaronic Priesthood near Harmony, Pennsylvania, May 15, 1829. The ordination was done by the hands of an angel who announced himself as John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament. The angel explained that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the ancient Apostles, who hold the keys of the higher priesthood, which was called the Priesthood of Melchizedek. The promise was given to Joseph and Oliver that in due time this higher priesthood would be conferred upon them. (See section 27:7-8, 12.)." (Heading: Section 13. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 24).

Doctrine and Covenants 13:1

**1 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.**

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"[The meaning of the ministering of angels] means as I interpret it, that if you live worthy of the priesthood, you have the right to receive and enjoy the very power of heavenly beings to guide you, to protect you, to bless you." ("The Priesthood of Aaron," in *Ensign*, 1982, 45).

Dallin H. Oaks added,

"[The ministering of angels can occur through personal appearance and] also be unseen. Angelic messages can be delivered by a voice or merely by thoughts or feelings communicated to the mind...Most angelic communications are felt or heard rather than seen." ("The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament," in *Ensign*, November 1998, 39).

26 And the lesser priesthood continued, which  
priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of  
angels and the preparatory gospel;  
27 Which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of  
baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of  
carnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath  
caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the  
children of Israel until John, whom God raised up,  
being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's  
womb.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

"The Melchizedek Priesthood is empowered to bring us into the presence of God. The Aaronic Priesthood possess the authority by which we may receive the ministering of angels. Thus, it is the right of those holding this priesthood to be instructed and blessed by angels. It is also their right to perform those ordinances that entitle those who do not hold the priesthood to also enjoy the ministering of angels." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 594).

Wilford Woodruff states,

"I went out as a priest, and my companion was an elder, and we traveled thousands of miles, and had many things manifested to us. I desire to impress upon you the fact that it does not make any difference whether a man is a priest or an apostle, if he magnifies his calling. A priest holds the key of the ministering of angels. Never in my life, as an apostle, as a seventy, or as an elder, have I ever had more the protection of the Lord than while holding the office as a priest. The Lord revealed to me by visions, by revelations, and by the Holy Spirit, many things that lay before me." (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*. Edited by G. Homer Durham. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946. [Second Collector's Edition Printing, 1995], 300).

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"Through the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, the ministering of angels is available to all Church members [with faith], not just to priesthood holders." (*Doctrine*

*and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 43).

Moroni 7:35-37

35 And now, my beloved brethren, if this be the case that these things are true which I have spoken unto you, and God will show unto you, with power and great glory at the last day, that they are true, and if they are true has the day of miracles ceased?

36 Or have angels ceased to appear unto the children of men? Or has he withheld the power of the Holy Ghost from them? Or will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved?

37 Behold I say unto you, Nay; for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.

Moroni, a prophet of the Book of Mormon and its concluding contributor, reminds us as individuals, men or women, exercise faith, they too may have the experience of having angels minister to them. However, when faith is absent, then this ministration, as well as miracles, are also not manifest.

Dallin H. Oaks notes the relationship between partaking of the sacrament and receiving the ministering of angels,

"Through the Aaronic Priesthood ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, we are cleansed of our sins and promised that if we keep our covenants we will always have His Spirit to be with us. I believe that promise not only refers to the Holy Ghost but also to the ministering of angels, for 'angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ' (2 Nephi 32:3). So it is that those who hold the Aaronic Priesthood open the door for all Church members who worthily partake of the sacrament to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit of the Lord and the ministering of angels." ("The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament," in *Ensign*, November 1998, 39).

**20 The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels; and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

*"To administer in outward ordinances.* Baptism of water is described here as an 'outward ordinance,' or 'the letter of the gospel.' By contrast, the baptism of fire, meaning the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, could be referred to as an 'inward' or spiritual ordinance. The first can be performed by those holding the Aaronic Priesthood, the second only by those holding the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood. A primary charge given to the Aaronic Priesthood is to tend to the temporal things, while the primary charge given to the higher priesthood is to tend to spiritual things."  
(*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 790).

In this regard, the ordinances of the Aaronic Priesthood, include along with the ministering of angels, the ordinances of baptism and sacrament. These would be classified among the 'outward ordinances.' The Melchizedek Priesthood administers the 'inward ordinances' including confirmation and bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost, the healing of the sick, temple ordinances, and the administration of the priesthood.

### ***The keys of repentance and baptism***

According to Doctrine and Covenants 84:26, "the preparatory gospel" includes repentance and baptism. These are functions within the Aaronic Priesthood and are designed to prepare us to receive the greater blessings of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Matthew 3:1-6

**1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,  
2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias [Isaiah], saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan.

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

\*How can Aaronic Priesthood holders in our day preach repentance?

Through Home teaching, missionary work, testimony bearing, and fellowshipping.

\*How can Aaronic Priesthood holders participate in the ordinance of baptism?

Under the direction of the Bishop, those who hold the office of priest, may perform baptisms and serve as witnesses at baptisms.

Aaronic Priesthood holders also weekly officiate in the ordinances of the sacrament.

\*How is the sacrament related to repentance and baptism?

Jeffrey R. Holland states in reference to the sacrament,

"We ask you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood to prepare and bless these emblems of the Savior's sacrifice worthily and reverently. What a stunning privilege and sacred trust given at such a remarkably young age! We do love you. Live your best and look your best when you participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." ("This Do in Remembrance of Me," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 68).

#### **IV. Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood**

The Melchizedek Priesthood is the greater priesthood. Associated with it are all the authority, knowledge, and covenants that are necessary for the exaltation of God's children.

While we know precisely the date that John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood, neither Joseph Smith nor Oliver Cowdery recorded either the date or the details of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood. A number of historians have advanced a variety of explanations regarding when and where without agreement. We know that it was restored before April 6, 1830, for without the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Church of Jesus Christ could not have been organized. We know that it was restored by Peter, James, and John, for Joseph and Oliver were told this by John the Baptist when he restored to Joseph and Oliver the Aaronic Priesthood.

In the 2013 edition, the heading of Section 13 states, "The angel explained that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the ancient Apostles, who held the keys of the higher priesthood, which was called the Priesthood of Melchizedek. The promise was given to Joseph and Oliver that in due time this higher priesthood would be conferred upon them." (Heading: Section 13. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 24).

Doctrine and Covenants 27:8, 12

**8 Which John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto the first priesthood which you have received, that you might be called and ordained as Aaron;**

**12 And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles, and especial witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry and of the same things which I revealed unto them;**

We have yet further scriptural clarification.

Doctrine and Covenants 128:20

**20 ...The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Sesquehanna county and Colesville, Broome county, on the Sesquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of times.**

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were together in Harmony, Pennsylvania, when John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood on May 15, 1829. On June 1, 1829, David Whitmer came by buggy to move Joseph, Emma and Oliver to Fayette, New York, due to the increased persecution Joseph was experiencing. We can now narrow to date to between May 15 and June 1, 1829.

According to information provided by Michael Hubbard Mackay, between this date, Joseph and Oliver did not have sufficient paper to complete the translation of the Book of Mormon so they took a trip to Colesville, New York, the home of Joseph Knight, Sr. He had previously been generous in supporting Joseph by providing food and paper to him. When they arrived at his home, he was out on business, so they returned back to Harmony. (See reference below).

Michael Hubbard Mackay states,

"[T]his trip has been one that has not been identified when it actually occurred, but it is the specific time and place in May 1829, when they could have seen Peter, James, and John. There is no other time when they were between Colesville and Harmony alone, together, and when Peter, James, and John came in 1829, just one time, and it was between the 17<sup>th</sup> of May and the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1829...We realize that we can narrow the time period when Peter, James, and John came. Unfortunately, we don't have an absolute sure answer of when they came, though, this is a possible answer." ("Restoration of the Priesthoods," in *Joseph Smith and the Foundations of the Restoration with Glen Rawson, Documentary Series 1*. DVD, Disc 5. Transcription of Michael Hubbard Mackay).

\*What authority and blessings were restored with the Melchizedek Priesthood?

***Authority to administer the gospel of Jesus Christ***

\*What does it mean that the Melchizedek Priesthood includes the authority to administer the gospel of Jesus Christ?

The Melchizedek Priesthood includes the authority to govern the Church, preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances of salvation.



Doctrine and Covenants 84:19

**19 And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the knowledge, even the key of the knowledge of God.**

Joseph Fielding Smith and Craig J. Ostler state,

"All that is done in the Church and kingdom of God is and must be done under the direction of the priesthood. The priesthood can exist without the Church, but the Church cannot exist without the priesthood...A legal and binding baptism requires proper priesthood authority. Teaching the doctrine of baptism requires that same authority. Men have no more right to go forth preaching the gospel without having been properly commissioned than they have the right to represent the government of men without such a commission...In the context of theology, 'mysteries' are those singular truths that can be known only by revelation, or those doctrines revealed only to the initiated. They are, in a way, knowledge obtained through participation in sacred rites. Thus we are told that the priesthood holds the 'keys of the mysteries,' meaning the authority to unlock to our understanding truths that cannot be known in any other way." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 591).

***The keys of the spiritual blessings of the Church***

Doctrine and Covenants 107:18-19

**18 The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church--**

**19 To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.**

Spencer W. Kimball states regarding "spiritual blessings,"

"Without the priesthood power, men are lost. [Only when these keys have been restored is man enabled] to enter [into] the new and everlasting covenant of marriage and to have his wife and children bound to him in an everlasting

tie, enabling him to become a patriarch to his posterity forever, and enabling him to receive a fullness of the blessings of the Lord." (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*. Edited by Edward L. Kimball. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982, 494).

The greatest blessing is for man to enter into the presence of the Father and the Son and abide with them for all eternity. (see D&C 101:38.)

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"[These blessing include:]

- "a. Knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom and knowledge of God (D&C 84:19; 107:19; this knowledge comes through the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- "b. The power of godliness, is manifested through the ordinances of the gospel (D&C 84:20-21). As we partake of the sacrament, bless the sick, attend the temple or participate in any of the ordinances of the gospel, we receive a confirming witness by the Spirit which bears witness anew of the kindness and love of God in our lives.
- "c. The opportunity to see, commune with, and enjoy the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (D&C 84:22; 107:19)." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 45).

### ***The right of presidency***

Doctrine and Covenants 107:8-9

**8 The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices of the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things.**

**9 The Presidency of the High Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, have a right to officiate in all the offices in the church.**

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"The right of presidency is the right to preside in the Church. The President of the Church is the only person on earth who may use (or authorize another person to use) the keys of the priesthood for governing the entire Church. He authorizes the following priesthood leaders to hold the keys that are necessary for presiding in their callings: temple presidents, mission presidents, stake presidents, bishops, district presidents, branch presidents, and quorum presidents." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 45).

***The keys of the gathering of Israel, the gospel of the dispensation of Abraham, and the sealing power***

Doctrine and Covenants 110:11-16

11 After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.

12 After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.

13 After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:

14 Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi--testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come--

15 To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse--

16 Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 110 states, "Visions manifested to

Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery in the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, April 3, 1836. The occasion was that of a Sabbath day meeting. Joseph Smith's history states: 'In the afternoon I assisted the other Presidents in distributing the Lord's Supper to the Church, receiving it from the Twelve, whose privilege it was to officiate at the sacred desk this day. After having performed this service to my brethren, I retired to the pulpit, the veils were dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer. After rising from prayer, the following vision was opened to both of us.' (Heading: Section 110. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 228).

On March 27, 1836, the Kirtland Temple had been dedicated. The reason for the move of the Saints to Ohio, was they had been commanded to do so by the Lord that, "there you shall be endowed with power from on high" (D&C 38:32). In order for this to occur it was necessary that the Saints, despite their poverty, build a temple unto the Lord where He could make His appearance.

On April 3, 1836, the Lord appeared in His Temple and "accepted this house, and my name shall be here;" (D&C 110:7). Following the Lord's appearance on that day, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared. Each of these servants gave unto Joseph Smith sacred keys that included the keys of gathering, the gospel of the dispensation of Abraham, and the power of sealing that had last been held by the Prophet Elijah. The purpose for the restoration of these keys and their importance in the work in the latter days will be addressed in further detail in a future lesson [D&C#18].

## **V. Blessings of the priesthood for all people**

While the receipt of the priesthood is only bestowed on young men, twelve years and older, the blessings of the priesthood extend to all individuals, regardless of their age or gender.

\*How are women and children blessed by the priesthood?

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"While we sometimes refer to priesthood holders as 'the priesthood,' we must never forget that the priesthood is not owned by or embodied in those who hold it. It is held

in a sacred trust to be used for the benefit of men, women, and children alike." ("The Relief Society and the Church," in *Ensign*, May 1992, 36).

John A. Widtsoe states,

"Men have no greater claim than women upon the blessings that issue from the Priesthood and accompany its possession." (*Priesthood and Church Government*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, 83).

Elaine L. Jack states,

"I have a firm testimony of the power of the priesthood in the lives of all Church members...

"It is significant to me that the women were organized under the authority of the priesthood. We sustain the priesthood and are sustained by its power. The sisters of the Church...treasure our opportunity to be full partakers of the spiritual blessings of the priesthood.

"Each of us can be directed and blessed in our eternal progression by receiving these blessings. The ordinances, covenants, sealings, and the gift of the Holy Ghost are essential for exaltation. There are a host of individual priesthood blessings as well. Priesthood blessings give us direction; they lift our sights; they encourage and inspire us; they prompt our commitments. We can all be partakers of these spiritual blessings." ("Partakers of the Glories," in *Ensign*, November 1996, 76-77).

There may be some women in the church who feel they are missing something in that they do not hold the priesthood in the same manner as the men of the church.

Sheri L. Dew states,

"Sisters, some will try to persuade you that because you are not ordained to the priesthood, you have been shortchanged. They are simply wrong, and they do not understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. The blessings of the priesthood are available to every righteous man and woman. We may all receive the Holy Ghost, obtain personal revelation, and be endowed in the temple, from which we emerge 'armed' with power. The power of the priesthood heals, protects, and inoculates all the righteous against

the power of darkness. Most significantly, the fullness of the priesthood contained in the highest ordinances of the house of the Lord can be received only by a man and woman together." ("It Is Not Good for Man or Woman to Be Alone," in *Ensign*, November 2001, 13).

\*How can those who do not have faithful priesthood holders in their homes receive the blessings of the priesthood?

Each sister in the church is assigned a home teacher and visiting teacher. The brothers and sisters, along with their companions, visit the home of the members in the church each month. In this manner, the blessings of the priesthood are made available to each member.

Every member of the Church is assigned to a Bishop, who serves the members in a geographic area. He is the local administrator, and is assisted by two counselors. The Bishop holds the keys of the priesthood, both temporal and spiritual, for his ward, and administers them according to the needs of the members. He is also assisted by a sister and her two counselors, who make up the Relief Society Presidency. They also assist the Bishop in his care of the sisters in his ward.

Many single-parent sisters or single sisters also have the support of extended family members. They are often the first line of support for the members of their family who know and love them best. They are also responsible for the care of their family members, regardless of their age or living circumstances.

\*How can we show our appreciation for the blessings of the priesthood?

## **VI. The Offices of the Priesthood**

As part of the restoration of His Church, the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith important instructions about the offices of the priesthood, the duties of each office, and the quorums [or groups] to which priesthood holders are organized.

### **Chart 1. Aaronic Priesthood**

Office	Duties	Quorum
<b>Deacon</b>	<b>D&amp;C 20:57-59; 84:111</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:95</b>
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>D&amp;C 20:53-59; 84:111</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:86</b>

<b>Priest</b>	<b>D&amp;C 20:46-52</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:87-88</b>
<b>Bishop</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:13-17, 68, 71-72, 87-88,</b>	

## Chart 2. Melchizedek Priesthood

Office	Duties	Quorum
<b>Elder</b>	<b>D&amp;C 20:38-45; 42:43-44 43:15-16; 107:11-12</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:89; 124:137</b>
<b>High Priest</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:10, 12, 17</b>	<b>D&amp;C 124:133, 136</b>
<b>Patriarch</b>	<b>D&amp;C 124:91-93, 124</b>	
<b>Seventy</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:25, 34, 38, 97</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:25-26, 93-96; 124:138-39</b>
<b>Apostle</b>	<b>D&amp;C 27:12-13; 107:23, 33, 35, 39, 58; D&amp;C 112:30-32; 124:128</b>	<b>D&amp;C 107:23-24</b>

Reference: *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 46-47).

### Interesting Fact:

"The spires on the east end of the Salt Lake Temple are higher than those on the west end. There are also five sets of windows on the east spires and four sets of windows on the west spires. This design was intended to represent the priesthood, with the Melchizedek Priesthood and its five offices represented by the east spires and the Aaronic Priesthood and its four offices represented by the west spires." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 47).

## VIII. Conclusions

As we have addressed the importance of the restoration of the priesthood, our knowledge and understanding has been increased.

We began with an understanding of the priesthood and the importance of priesthood keys. Without the keys of the priesthood, we would be unable to access the power of the priesthood. These keys are held only by the Prophet and President of the Church. In turn, he delegates to others a

portion of the power of the priesthood in order for them to fulfill various responsibilities.

Joseph F. Smith states,

"The power of directing the Priesthood constitutes the keys of the Priesthood. In their fullness, these keys are held by only one person at a time, the prophet and president of the Church. He may delegate any portion of this power to another, in which case the person holds the keys of that particular labor. Thus, the president of a temple, the president of a stake, the bishop of a ward, the president of a mission, or the president of a quorum, each hold the keys of the labors performed in that particular body or locality." (*Improvement Era*, Vol. 4., January 1901, 230).

While there is only one priesthood, "there are two divisions or grand heads--one is the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the other is the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood" (D&C 107:6).

The Aaronic Priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on May 15, 1829, by John the Baptist. This priesthood contains: (1) The keys of the ministering of angels, and, (2) The keys of repentance and baptism. The primary charge of the Aaronic Priesthood is to administer the 'outward' or temporal ordinances, including the administration of the sacrament.

The offices within the Aaronic Priesthood are: (1) Deacon; (2) Teacher; (3) Priest; and, (4) Bishop.

We know Peter, James, and John, ancient Apostles of Jesus Christ restored the Melchizedek Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, however, we do not know the exact date it was restored. According to Joseph Smith, it occurred between Harmony, Pennsylvania, and Colesville, New York (see D&C 128:20.) The time period is probably between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, 1829, on the Sesquehanna river. (see research: Michael Hubbard Mackay.)

The Melchizedek Priesthood is considered the higher priesthood, and addresses the 'inward' or spiritual ordinances. It is: (1) The authority to administer the gospel of Jesus Christ; (2) The keys of the spiritual blessings of the Church; (3) The right of Presidency; and, (4) The keys of the gathering of Israel, the gospel of the



dispensation of Abraham and the sealing power. It includes the authority to govern the Church, preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances of salvation.

The offices within the Melchizedek Priesthood are:  
(1) Elder; (2) High Priest; (3) Patriarch; (4) Seventy;  
and, (5) Apostle.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

"Few events in earth's history match in importance the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companion, Oliver Cowdery. Simply stated, without the priesthood there is no salvation. All the faith and goodness in the world cannot substitute for the necessary power and authority to perform the ordinances necessary to return to the presence of God. Without it sins cannot be remitted, the gospel taught, or the kingdom of the adversary held in check. 'The Melchizedek Priesthood,' Joseph Smith said, 'is the channel by which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation and every important matter is revealed from heaven' (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 166-67)." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 331).

Our next lesson [D&C#09], will address the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, its' importance and the duties of the members.