

PRIESTHOOD

To the Mormon, the matter of priesthood authority is very important. It is believed that without the priesthood authority, certain acts (such as baptism) are meaningless. The claim is that the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods were restored and exist only within the Mormon Church; the same organization that existed in the primitive church prevails now in the L.D.S. church.

The first apparent problem with this line of thought is that that the Mormon Church is not patterned after the early church, as we see in the New Testament. Add to this that according to the Bible, the Aaronic priesthood, after the order of Aaron (properly referred to as the Levitical priesthood), became obsolete. This was due to the complete fulfillment of the priesthood by Jesus Christ dying on the cross and becoming our only mediator with God the Father.

Furthermore, the Melchizedek priesthood is only stated to be present now in Jesus Christ. Jesus is said to hold this office forever. We have no need for the office of this priesthood to be passed to a successor, since Jesus lives forever.

The following are some references from the Mormons showing their view of the priesthood.

Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol. 3

"PRIESTHOOD

The word 'priesthood' has several meanings for Latter-day Saints:

Priesthood is power, the power of God, a vital source of eternal strength and energy delegated to men to act in all things for the well-being of mankind, both in the world and out of it (DS 3:80; Romney, p. 43).

Priesthood is authority, the exclusive right to act in the name of God as his authorized agents and to perform ordinances for the purpose of opening certain spiritual blessings to all individuals.

Priesthood is the right and responsibility to preside within the organizational structure of the Church, but only in a manner consistent with the agency of others.

Sometimes the word priesthood is used to refer to the men of the Church in general (as in 'the priesthood will meet in the chapel')."

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pg.494

"Priesthood is only in the restored Church. There is no priesthood anywhere else today than in this restored Church. There is priestcraft, but no priesthood."

Mormon Doctrine, by Bruce McConkie, pg.140 (PDF pg.53)

"the same organization that existed in the primitive Church prevails now. (Sixth Article of Faith)."

Mormonism Shadow or Reality? Page 197

Mormon missionary handbook, A Uniform System for Teaching Investigators, pg.15

"Elder: Why is the Priesthood so important?

"Brown: Because a man must have it to do those things.

"Elder: He certainly must. Suppose a priest or minister baptizes without the priesthood, what does that mean in the sight of the Lord?

"Brown: It doesn't mean anything. "Elder: Why is that?

"Brown: Because he would lack the necessary authority.

"Elder: Right. So even though a minister might be sincere, unless he has the priesthood, will the Lord recognize a baptism performed by him?

"Brown: No."

In the Bible, Jesus once rebuked John for having a belief like this.

Luke 9:49-50

"And John answered and said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to hinder him because he does not follow along with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.'"

As previously stated, the Mormon Church is not patterned after the early church in the New Testament. For example, the L.D.S church is led by First Presidency; The Bible says nothing about a First Presidency. Even if we accept that there should today be twelve apostles, this still presents the problem that the L.D.S church has three additional men serving in the First Presidency, in addition to the "Council of the 12". How is this patterned after the primitive church?

In the L.D.S church, 12-year-old boys are ordained Deacons. But in the Bible, we see that deacons are not 12-year old boys.

1Timothy 3:12

"Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households."

Even the Mormons' own scripture would suggest that Deacons should be older than 12 years of age:

D&C 84:111 (LDS Scripture pg. 727)

"And behold, the high priests should travel, and also the elders, and also the lesser priests; but the deacons and teachers should be appointed to watch over the church, to be standing ministers unto the church."

L.D.S. scripture claims that "Elder" is an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood, although the Melchizedek priesthood is never associated with the office of an elder in the Bible.

D&C 107:7 (LDS Scripture pg. 782)

"The office of an Elder comes under the priesthood of Melchizedek

It is interesting that although Mormons claim that the priesthood is absolutely necessary, none of the leaders in Mormon Church had it in the beginning. The following is a statement by Joseph Smith concerning a conference held in June, 1831.

History of the Church, Vol.1, Ch.15, pg.175 (PDF pg. 17)

"...the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood was manifested and conferred for the first time upon several of the Elders."

This is confirmed by John Whitmer. He was a Church Historian.

Book of John Whitmer, typescript, BYU-A, pgs.8-9

"June 3, 1831, a general conference was called, and a blessing promised, if the elders were faithful, and humble before him. Therefore, the elders assembled from the East and the West, from the North and the South. And also many members. Conference was opened by prayer and exhortation by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Revelator. After the business of the Church was attended to according to the covenants. The Lord made manifest to Joseph that it was necessary that such of the elders as were considered worthy, should be ordained to the High Priesthood. The spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph in an unusual manner. And prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the ten tribes of Israel who had been led away by Salmanasar King of Israel [should be Assyria], to prepare them for their return, from their long dispersion, to again possess the land of their fathers. He prophesied many more things that I have not written. After he had prophesied he laid his hands upon Lyman Wight [and ordained him] to the High Priesthood after the Holy Order of God. And the spirit fell upon Lyman, and he prophesied, concerning the coming of Christ, he said that there were some in the congregation that should live until the Savior should descend from heaven, with a shout, with all the holy angels with him."

If the Melchizedek priesthood is really necessary, it is certainly odd that the Elders were able to function from the organization of the church until June 1831 without it. The historian B.H Roberts made the following admission concerning the restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood.

The Seventy's Course in Theology, Second Year, pg.218 (PDF pg. 218)

"The Line of the Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood: The promise to confer upon Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood was fulfilled; but as there is no definite account of the event in the history of the Prophet Joseph, or, for matter of that, in any of our annuals, the evidences of the fact of their ordination to the higher or Melchizedek priesthood promised them by John the Baptist, are presented now, together with a consideration of the place where, and the time when, the great event occurred."

One should keep in mind that the Melchizedek Priesthood could only be passed on by someone who had it. Only Jesus and Melchizedek are ever said to have had it in the Bible. Neither Jesus, nor Melchizedek, are said to have been the ones to restore it to the L.D.S church.

Journal of Discourses, Vol.10, by Heber C. Kimball, November 29, 1864, pgs.370-372
"Joseph was a kind-hearted, obedient, good boy. He was fourteen years of age the third day of last April, and was an excellent scholar; ... Joseph was never cross, he was always pleasant to all persons. Eight years ago he came near dying; I was impressed to ordain him a High Priest. I ordained him, and I do know that had a saving effect upon the boy."E9 (PDF 377-379)

Notice that we are told that Smith was fourteen years old; eight years before this, he was ordained a High Priest. That means this boy Joseph was ordained a High Priest at age six. This is not patterned after the primitive church, as claimed in McConkie's book Mormon Doctrine and the 6th Article of Faith.

A Biblical look at the priesthood

The fact that the structure is not patterned after the primitive church is only the beginning of the problems. Let's look at what the Bible says in Hebrews, chapters 7-10. It says the Levitical priesthood, which is after the order of Aaron, ended. Our High Priest, after the order Melchizedek, is Jesus Christ; nobody else has this priesthood. The only other priesthood mentioned in the Bible after the priesthood ended is called a "holy" or "royal" priesthood. This is found in 1 Peter 1:23-2:9, in the context it is born-again believers have this priesthood.

First, I will start with Hebrews and Genesis. What ended in the book of Hebrews is the Levitical Priesthood, after the order of Aaron. There is nothing called the "Aaronic priesthood" in the Bible. In fact, the word "Aaronic" is not in the Bible. The word "Melchizedek" or "Melchisedec", as in the KJV, is only found in Genesis 14:18, Psalm 110:4, and the book of Hebrews 5:6 and 10; 6:20; and 7:1, 10,11,15,17. The reference in Psalm is prophetically speaking, concerning Jesus. Genesis refers to an actual person called Melchizedek.

Nothing is said about Melchizedek's origin in Genesis. We have no mention of his Mom or Dad. This is strange, because Genesis is a book of families. When we see a man mentioned who is important in the genealogical line (as this man Melchizedek seems to be) his Mother and Father are mentioned: "he is the son of ...", or, "these are the generations of ...". But we do not have the generations of Melchizedek. The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that the reason there is no record of Melchizedek's family line is because the priesthood of Jesus Christ in its inception is after the order of Melchizedek.

The priesthood of Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek in the practical sense, as Jesus is our mediator (Hebrews 9:15). Just as the priest in the Old Testament acted as a mediator by entering the holy of holies to offer sacrifice for the people's sins, Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins and is the mediator between Christians and the Father. Christ in His priesthood does perpetually what was done in the Levitical priesthood after the order of Aaron. In His person, Jesus had no beginning or ending of days (John 1:1, Micah 5:2, Revelation 1:7-8, 1:17-18, 21:6, 22:13-16). Jesus has always existed.

In the person Melchizedek, we have a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus had no beginning or ending of days, and neither did Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:1-3

"1) For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,
2) to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils was first of all, by the translation of his name king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.
3) Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually."

We are told here that Melchizedek is a priest perpetually. The same is true of Jesus (Hebrews 7:17): "For it is witnessed of Him 'Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.'" Another contrast is Melchizedek as "king of peace" (Hebrews 7:2). Jesus is called "prince of peace". Melchizedek was called a "great man" (Hebrews 7:4); Jesus certainly fits this description also. These two Melchizedek, who seem to be a picture of Christ and Jesus, are the only ones in the Bible to hold the Melchizedek priesthood.

Why do you suppose Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine in Genesis 14:18?

Genesis 14:18-20

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tenth of all."

I believe it is because as it says in 1 Corinthians 11:26: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." The Sacrament is taken today in symbolism of the Lord's death. It stands to reason that it was taken then as a symbolic gesture of what was to come (Christ's death for all sins). The Lord Jesus is the great High Priest for the world today. The Lord Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek, not after the order of Aaron. The Levitical priesthood after the order of Aaron was for Israel, and the sacrifices were done away with. There is no more need for sacrifice because the blood of Jesus covers all sin (1 John 1:7).

There are some verses I want to comment on. I feel that they are important. You should read Hebrews Chapters 7-10 several times, to become familiar with the context. It tells us Jesus Christ is our High Priest and the Levitical Priesthood, or the Aaronic Priesthood, as the L.D.S. would call it, has ended. There is no more need for it because Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice, and He takes its place as our mediator. The writer of Hebrews makes a comparison and contrast of the priesthood of Melchizedek and the priesthood after the order of Aaron.

The text is from the New American Standard Version of the Holy Bible, and my commentary concerning the text follows separated by the dotted line.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 7

- 1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,
- 2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils was first of all, by the translation of his name king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.
- 3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually.
- 4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.
- 5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.

Verse 4 Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. He recognized that Melchizedek was above him and that he was the priest of the most high God.

Verse 5 The sons of Levi, who were descended from Abraham, collected tithes from their brethren. But Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. This shows us that positional Melchizedek was superior to Aaron and his family.

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- 6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises.
 - 7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.
 - 8 And in this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.
 - 9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes,
 - 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.
 - 11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?
 - 12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.
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Verse 8 "in this case" refers to the Levitical priest; "in that case" refers to Melchizedek and his priesthood ("Here" and "there" in KJV).

Verse 11 indicates to us that the Levitical, or Aaronic, priesthood was incomplete. It never brought perfection, complete communion with God. It never gave redemption and acceptance before God to the people. Therefore, we need Christ.

Verse 12 The change in law. We are not under Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law and the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood go together. They offered blood sacrifices that we do not as Christ is our Passover. 1 Corinthians 5:7—His sacrifice is what Christians claim for atonement of sins.

13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek,

16 who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.

17 For it is witnessed of Him "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness

19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

20 And inasmuch as it was not without an oath

21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, 'Thou art a priest forever'");

22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Verses 13-14 Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, therefore He could never have been a priest here on earth. Only certain Levites could hold the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood in the Old Testament. The priesthood, however, was changed, and Christ is after the order of Melchizedek.

Verse 15 This priest to rise in the order of Melchizedek is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 110:4

Verses 16-17 Christ became a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Since He rose from the dead He has endless life.

Verse 18 The Levitical system was faulty. It never gave mankind what he needed. Its weakness was man himself, as we will see in verse 28.

23 And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing,

24 but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

25 Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

Verse 23 In other words, the men in Levitical or Aaronic priesthood would die.

Verse 24 Jesus is our High Priest now, and He will never die; His priesthood lasts forever.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 8

1 Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

2 a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer.

4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;

Verses 1-3 The main point in what has been said is that a priest must have something to offer. Jesus sacrificed Himself once, for all time. In verse 2 we see that man made a tabernacle, built by hands of man. This tabernacle in heaven was not made by man.

5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

9 Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord.

10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Verse 6 Christ mediates in a much better covenant (Christ's blood is at the base of this new covenant).

Verse 7 If the first covenant (the Levitical system, or Aaronic Priesthood) had been faultless, there would be no need for the new covenant.

Verse 8 God found fault with this system and declared there would come a time He would establish a new and better covenant.

Verse 10 The new covenant is not the Mosaic law, but the law is found in the hearts and minds of His people.

11 "And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them.

12 "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

When He said, "A new covenant" He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Verses 11-12 He will remember their sins no more. Why? This is because Christ paid for them on the cross. Verse 11 says, "Know the Lord". To even come to the Lord, the people had to go through the priest to God. Man now goes straight through Jesus, our High Priest, Who made a sacrifice on our behalf that lasts forever. Of course, you must accept this sacrifice (John 3:16-17).

Verse 13 Notice the word **obsolete**. What is obsolete? The context in Chapters 7-8 was the Aaronic priesthood; this is obsolete. The Levitical system that required us to go through the priest or priesthood to come to God is obsolete. The KJV of this verse reads, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."The Aaronic priesthood decayed, waxed old and vanished away. It is now obsolete.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 9

1 Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.

3 And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,

4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant.

5 And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship,

7 but into the second only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.
8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing,
9 which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,
10 since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.
11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;
12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,
14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Verses 1-10 explain the earthly priesthood.

Verses 11-14 explain Christ's priesthood. Notice verse 12: "...once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Verse 15 Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant.

16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.
17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.
18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.
19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,
20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you."
21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.
22 And according to the Law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.
24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;
25 nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own.
26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,
28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 10

1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.
2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?
3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.
4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared for me;
6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure.
7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God.'
8 After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them (which are offered according to the Law),
9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.
10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;
12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,
13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.
14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.
15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,
16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them," He then says
17 "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.
19 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood
of Jesus,
20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His
flesh,
21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts
sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised
is faithful;
24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,
25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging
one another and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.
26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no
longer remains a sacrifice for sins,
27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will
consume the adversaries.
28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of
two or three witnesses.

Verses 16-18 The New Covenant is not under the law of the Old Testament. This is different.

29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled
underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which
he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?
30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord
will judge His people."
31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great
conflict of sufferings,
33 partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and
partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.
34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your
property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.
35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.
36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you
may receive what was promised.
37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.
38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no
pleasure in him.
39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith
to the preserving of the soul.
END OF CHAPTER

Here is what we have: the Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic Law ended. They were replaced because they were not complete. Man had to go through a priest to God, and the priest had to continually offer sacrifices, which were not complete or sufficient. Christ offered Himself once for all time and His priesthood is after the order of the Melchizedek, which is everlasting. Jesus is our High Priest forever. The Levitical or Aaronic priesthood passed away. Jesus Christ, who still is our High Priest, took its place when He offered His sacrifice on our behalf, once and for all time.

What need is there to restore then what God done away with?

The Priesthood's purpose was to provide a way in which man could come to God. For this there had to be a blood offering (Hebrews 9:22). Christ's substitutional sacrifice on the cross fulfilled this requirement for all time. And remember, only the Levites could hold the priesthood (all Mormons are not Levites).

Paul mentions the New Covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:6:"...who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." "

The letter" means the entire Mosaic law; it kills because in and of itself, it could not give life. The new covenant is the message of the grace in Christ.

Matthew 26:28

"...for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."

Acts 13:39

"...and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."

The law was to define sin and make man conscious of it. This made man legally guilty.

Galatians 3:21-25

"Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore, the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

Timothy 1:9

“...realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers...”

The spirit by contrast gives life to believers. Man cannot live the law, no matter how hard he tries. This is why we need to rely on the blood of Christ and His grace.

The veil that tore in the temple at the time of Christ's death (Matthew 27:51) was ripped from top to bottom. This signified that a new and living way was now open for man to come to God (Hebrews 10:20 and Ephesians 2:11-12).

I am complete in Christ

Jesus said:

I am the vine (John 15:1-5)

I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6) I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)

I am the good shepherd (John 10:11-14) I am the bread of life (John 6:35-48)

I am the light of the world (John 8:12) I am the door (John 10:7-9)

Consider John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” Jesus is the way to eternal life with God — not a church, a priesthood, baptism, or anything else

Colossians 2:8-10

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority...”

Since I am complete in Christ, why do I need anything else?

There are two more errors I must mention.

(1) It is maintained that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic priesthood from John the Baptist on May 15, 1829. The most obvious problem with this claim is that Scripture does not claim that John the Baptist ever had the priesthood. I have not been able to locate any Biblical reference in which John the Baptist did any temple duties, or any of the duties of a priest.

Also I want to point out, in Hebrews 7:24, the word "permanently" (NAS; “unchangeable” in KJV).

Hebrews 7:24

“...but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.”

Looking at this word in the original Greek, you can see that it carries a note of finality. Strong's says the following: “531 aparabatos (ap-ar-ab'-at-os); from 1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of 3845; not passing away, i.e. untransferable (perpetual): KJV unchangeable”;

Thayer's describes the word this way: “531 aparabatos-1) unviolated, not to be violated, inviolable; 2) unchangeable and therefore not liable to pass to a successor”.

If this Melchizedek priesthood is non-transferable and not liable to pass to a successor, how could the L.D.S. church have it?

Let's not forget that the only places you will find the word "priesthood" in the New Testament are in Hebrews 7:5,11,12,14,24 and 1 Peter 2:5,9. Whenever you see the word "ordained" in the New Testament, it does not indicate that anybody was ordained to the priesthood — they were ordained to preach, or witness. Hebrews 8:3 mentions priesthood, but the verse is referring to the High Priest of the Old Testament. While Acts 14:23 says there were ordained “Elders”, the position of Elder is a position of leadership in the church, not a position of priesthood. Nowhere in the New Testament do you see Elders, Bishops, or Deacons receiving the priesthood by the laying on of hands. This is a Mormon concept that does not come from the Bible.

In 1 Peter 2:5 and 9 we find a “holy” or “royal” priesthood, not an Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthood.

1 Peter 2:5

"...you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood,

1 Peter 1:23

"...for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God."

The people being addressed in this verse are those who are born again, and are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood. You will recall that after Peter's confession Matt 16:16 "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus said to him "you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church" The name Peter means Rock. Jesus was saying to him in effect, you are going to be a little stone a pebble, but on this foundation stone (Christ 1Cor.3:11& 10:4) I am going to build my church. Jesus Christ is the Corner stone of the foundation 1 Peter 2:6. I believe Peter understood Jesus in this way because he (Peter) said "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house"

When you are born again you become a child of God and you become part of this spiritual house. Born again believers are the church and are called the body of Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3 The people that Peter was talking to in 1 Peter where the holy and royal priesthood are mentioned are born again. The only sense in which anyone will have a holy or royal priesthood is to be born again. All believers both male and female are born again. In the context we offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Everlasting Priesthood in Old Testament Did Indeed End

There are two verses in the Old Testament that may still confuse some.

Numbers 25:11-13 (KJV)

"Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Exodus 40:15 (KJV)

"And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

Phinehas was Aaron's grandson, and because the Lord was pleased with him, the Levitical priesthood was channeled through him. As we have already discussed, the Levitical priesthood ends in the book of Hebrews. How can there be "an everlasting priesthood", if in fact the priesthood came to an end?

The answer lies within the meaning and use of the Hebrew word used in Exodus 40:15 and Numbers 25:13. More often than not, the word "everlasting" is used in the way that we would "expect". First let us look at four different sources as to the meaning of this Hebrew word. Then we will look at some Bible verses where this same Hebrew word is used. You can verify this by using your Strong's Concordance.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"EVER, EVERLASTING

"`olam ^5769^, "eternity; remotest time; perpetuity. This word has cognates in Ugaritic, Moabite, Phoenician, Aramaic, Arabic, and Akkadian. It appears about 440 times in biblical Hebrew and in all periods.

"First, in a few passages the word means 'eternity' in the sense of not being limited to the present. Thus, in <Eccl. 3:11> we read that God had bound man to time and given him the capacity to live 'above time' (i.e., to remember yesterday, plan for tomorrow, and consider abstract principles); yet He has not given him divine knowledge: 'He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.'...the word is used hyperbolically meaning 'for a long time': 'I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself...' This word may include all the time between the ancient beginning and the present:"

Brown-Driver-Briggs'

"5769 `owlam or `olam – long duration, antiquity, futurity, forever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient, world ancient time, long time (used of the past) (used of the future) forever, always continuous existence, perpetual everlasting, indefinite or unending future, eternity"

Strong's "5769 `owlam (o-lawm'); or `olam (o-lawm'); from 5956; properly, concealed, i.e. the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequently, adverbial (especially with prepositional prefix) always:

"KJV – always (-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, [n]) ever (-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of), old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+without end). Compare 5331, 5703."

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database

"EVERLASTING

"(ev-er-last'-ing) (olam, `adh; aidios, aionios): 'Everlasting,' in strictness, is that which endures forever; either that which has no beginning and will have no end (in which sense it is applicable to God only), or that which, having a beginning, will have no end, but henceforth will exist forever (thus of beings created for immortality; see IMMORTALITY). Figuratively also the term is applied to objects of impressive stability and long duration, as mountains, hills (e.g. <Gen 49:26; Hab 3:6>)." C1

Looking at these four sources of this Hebrew word, we can see that the word "everlasting" can and often does mean literally "forever". However, this is not always the case in every instance. Now we'll look at the Bible to see where this same Hebrew word is used in a way that is not literally forever. You can use your Strong's Concordance for verification that these instances are indeed the same Hebrew word.

Genesis 49:26 (KJV)

“The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”

Habakkuk 3:6 (KJV)

“He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.”

Are the hills going to literally last forever? According to Peter they will come to an end.

2 Peter 3:10 (KJV)

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

What we have here is the same Hebrew word in two instances being used to describe an “everlasting” priesthood. Then this same Hebrew word is used to describe “everlasting” hills or mountains. The New Testament tells us the Priesthood came to an end, and it also tells us the mountains will come to an end. The Hebrew word by definition can be used for eternity, or to indicate an extended period of time. The priesthood and the mountains are examples of the word being used in the latter context.

In summary, Phinehas was Aaron's grandson, and because the Lord was pleased with him, the Levitical priesthood was channeled through him. In this case the word "everlasting" indicated a long period of time. This was actually a couple thousand years, but it did come to an end in the book of Hebrews, when Jesus paid the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins. After the Levitical Priesthood ended, all we have is the Melchizedek priesthood, which only Jesus Christ holds, and that which is referred to as a holy priesthood or a royal priesthood, which when you examine the context, belongs to born again believers.