

The Aaronic Priesthood

Harmony of Priesthoods Working Together

By Priest Aaron Presler ~ October 2014 (revised 2023)

PART ONE: PURPOSE OF THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

1. **Called by God, not man, through the Holy Spirit in the one who called him:** *Every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon, is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him; and he is to be ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him. [D&C 17:12a-b]*
2. **Called by God, not to something less, but to God's purpose for you now:** *Therefore, take with you those who are ordained unto the *LESSER priesthood, and send them before you to make appointments, and to prepare the way, and to fill appointments that you yourselves are not able to fill. Behold, **this is the way that mine apostles, in ancient days, built up my Church** unto me. [D&C 83:20a-b]*
3. **All of His priesthood are of equal importance; each call is vital to His Church:** *Therefore, let every man stand in his own office, and labor in his own calling; and let not the head say unto the feet it hath no need of the feet, for without the feet how shall the body be able to stand? Also, **the body hath need of every member, that all may be edified together, that the system may be kept perfect.** [D&C 83:21a-b]*

Our Decisions			God's Works			
REPENTANCE From Dead Works	FAITH Toward God	BAPTISM WATER	ISMS SPIRIT	LAYING ON OF HANDS	RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD	ETERNAL JUDGEMENT
AARONIC—PREPARATORY MINISTRY			MELCHISEDEC—SPIRITUAL MINISTRY			

A. What is meant by *LESSER Priesthood?

1. **Let's define "lesser"**
 - a. **NOT less important** to our Saints' health, growth, spiritual maturity
 - b. Simply **focused on lesser (temporal) things**, affecting very day life
 - 1) helping our members live in the world, but not of the world
 - 2) shifting our members' focus from treasure on earth, to treasure in heaven
 - c. Melchisedec Priesthood focuses on the **greater, spiritual things**
 - d. Aaronic Priesthood focuses on the **lesser, temporal things**
2. **Importance of the Aaronic's "lesser" ministry**
 - a. Just as it was vital that John the Baptist prepare the way for Jesus (and the "high" spiritual things Jesus was to bring during His life, His death and His resurrection), so the Aaronic priesthood prepares the way for the Saints to receive the "greater" spiritual ministry of Jesus which comes through the Melchisedec priesthood.
 - 1) *And in those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, **Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For I am he who was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord and make His***

paths straight. [Matthew 3:27-29]

2) I indeed **baptize you with water, upon your repentance**; and when He of whom I bear record cometh, who is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, (or whose place I am not able to fill,) as I said, I indeed baptize you before He cometh, that **when He cometh He may baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire.** [Matthew 3:38]

3) "God can bless us only with that which we are **prepared** to receive." [Earl Currie]

This process of preparing the people, as John the Baptist did, is at the heart of Aaronic ministry.

b. Without the Aaronic ministry, and its **preparatory gospel**, the Saints can never fully receive the spiritual ministry of the Melchisedec Priesthood; **NEVER reaching the spiritual maturity** required to build or live in Zion

1) without repentance, there is only separation from God

2) without surrender to Jesus (letting go of what's important to us, replacing it with what's important to God), there is no salvation

3) without a broken heart and contrite spirit, there is no acceptable sacrifice we can give to God

4) without commitment to live like (and with) Jesus daily, there is no Zion, no walk with God like Enoch

c. Called to **preach nothing but repentance** to this generation ... Why?

1) we (the Saints) are too easily distracted by temporal things

2) we (the Saints) may believe simply living in a righteous way brings us into God's presence and love

3) we (the Saints) may not fully understand that **ONLY by Jesus giving His life for us on the cross are we even offered the gift of salvation** – which is the promise of living with God now and in eternity

4) and we **MUST first accept Jesus as Savior**

d. ALL above is at the **heart of the ministry of the Aaronic Priesthood**

B. Most important jobs of EVERY priesthood member

1. LEAD each person to accept Jesus as Savior through repentance

2. INVITE each person to covenant relationship with Jesus by baptism

3. ENCOURAGE Saints to live in daily relationship Jesus

4. ASSIST Saints to grow spiritually and become citizens of Zion

5. Everything else about priesthood is to help ACHIEVE THESE FOUR JOBS

PART TWO: AARONIC FOCUSES ON THE TEMPORAL CHURCH

Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst and the holy priesthood also; and the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the MINISTERING OF ANGELS and the PREPARATORY GOSPEL, which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the LAW OF CARNAL COMMANDMENTS. [D&C 83:4c]

A. Ministering of Angels

The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic, priesthood is, to hold the keys of the Ministering of Angels [D&C 104:10]

1. Infers the one holding the key is steward over that which is unlocked

- a. steward opens the door for others to enter
- b. steward enters the door first that others may follow
- c. the Aaronic priesthood has been given to be these stewards

2. Who are these angels?

- a. *are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, ... [Hebrews 12:1-2]*
- b. *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, ... [Hebrews 12:22, 23]*

1) CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN

- *And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. [Genesis 9:23-24]*
- *And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn; and all those who are begotten through me, are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn. [D&C 90:4a]*

2) SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT, those who have gone before us who have been faithful in their calling

- **Giants in faith** - Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James and John
- **Personal spiritual mentors** who have passed on
- **Mentors in our own congregations** now gone from us

3. What is the ministry these angels provide?

- a. ENCOURAGEMENT – *Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repenteth. [Luke 15:10]*
- b. COMMUNICATION and TEACHING FROM ON HIGH – *... behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a vision, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; ... [Matthew 2:3]*
- c. PRESENCE at blessings, worship, etc.
- d. PROTECTION FROM DANGER – *My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; ... [Daniel 6:22]* – *And it came to pass as they smote us with a rod, behold, an angel of the Lord came and stood before them and he spake unto them, saying: "Why do ye smite your younger brother (Nephi) with a rod? [1 Nephi 1:93]*

4. Why do we seek/want/need the ministry of angels?

- a. *Hath miracles ceased? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they (angels) are*

subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, **shewing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind** (His priesthood?), in every form of godliness. And the office of their (angels) ministry is, to **call men unto repentance, and to fulfill and to do the work of the covenants of the Father which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men** (preparatory gospel is call of Aaronic priesthood ... angels are to assist in that work) by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him; And by so doing, the **Lord God prepareth the way** that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; ... [Moroni 7:29-34]

- b. Why wouldn't we want the help of heavenly persons to assist us?
- c. It makes sense that the Aaronic priesthood holds the keys to ministering of angels since our call to ministry is also preparatory.

B. Preparatory Gospel

For the gate by which ye should enter is **REPENTANCE** and **BAPTISM by water**, And then cometh a **REMISSION OF YOUR SINS by fire** and by the Holy Ghost, ... [2 Nephi 13:24]

1. **REPENTANCE** – I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to **repentance**. [Luke 5:32]
2. **BAPTISM** – Therefore we are **buried with him by baptism into death**; that like as **Christ was raised up from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life**. [Romans 6:4]
3. **REMISSION OF SINS** – through his name whosoever believeth in him (Jesus) shall receive remission of sins. [Acts 10:43]

C. Law of Carnal Commandments

1. OVERCOMING THE WORLD

- a. **REJECTING SIN**, but how in our human condition?
*For to be **carnally minded is death**; but to be **spiritually minded is life and peace**. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; ... [Romans 8:6,7]*
- b. **SEEKING THE SAVIOR** to overcome sin
*For whatsoever is born of God **overcometh the world**; Who is he that overcometh the world, but **he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?** [1 John 5:4,5]*
- c. **BORN AGAIN** (salvation through Jesus)
*Except **a man be born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. [John 3:3]*
- d. **REPENTANCE** (seeking grace and mercy of Jesus)
*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may **obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need**. [Hebrews 4:16]*
*Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye **sorrowed to repentance**;*

for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing; [2 Corinthians 7:9]

e. LIVING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS of Jesus

Therefore if any man **live in Christ**, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are **become new**, [2 Corinthians 5:17]

There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; Therefore, I would that ye should **take upon you the name of Christ**—all you that have entered into the covenant with God—that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. [Mosiah 3:11]

2. LIVING IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT

And be **not conformed to this world**; but **be ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God is. [Romans 12:2]

- a. Financial stewardship and managing finances (unique to Deacon)
- b. Relationships with people (family, church, business, community)
 - Resolve conflicts (unique to Teacher)
 - Encourage harmony (unique to Teacher)
- c. Relationship with Jesus / Worship
 - Seek God in family and congregation
 - In congregation preach, teach, exhort, encourage, etc.
 - Family worship, daily praise and worship at home (unique to Priest)
 - Encourage members towards Christ-like living every day

Offices of the Aaronic Priesthood

Duties and Privileges

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Therefore, let every man stand in his own office, and labor in his own calling; and let not the head say unto the feet it hath no need of the feet, for without the feet how shall the body be able to stand? Also, **the body hath need of every member**, that all may be edified together, that the system may be kept perfect. [D&C 83:21a-b]

Every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon, is to be **ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him**; and he is to be **ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him**. [D&C 17:12a-b]

A. PRIEST: Duties and Privileges – D&C 17:10a-d

1. PREACH

- And let your **preaching be the warning voice**, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and in meekness. [D&C 38:9d]
- Yea, even he commanded them that they should **preach nothing save it were repentance and faith** on the Lord who hath redeemed His people. [Mosiah 9:53]

- All of my preaching, since I came to know Jesus as my Savior in 1999, has been about **repentance and trust** in Jesus for everything.

2. TEACH

- *Priests ... of this Church shall **teach the principles of my gospel** which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in which is the fullness of the gospel; and they shall **observe the covenants and Church articles** to do them, and **these shall be their teachings**, as they shall be **directed by the Spirit**; and the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith, and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach. [D&C 42:5ab]*
- My experience teaching a class when I prayed and heard the Spirit say to me, “Ask if anyone has a particular scripture in mind.” One elderly woman did and we started reading that scripture. Nothing. Then, turning the page, suddenly the scriptures began to speak about some concerns we had in our congregation the previous months. How wonderful to discuss these issues, but in a kindly way directed by the Spirit rather than me trying to sermonize to the group!

3. EXPOUND

- *Priests are to have a sufficient time to **expound all things concerning the Church of Christ** to their (new members) understanding, previous to their partaking of the sacrament ... [D&C 17:18b]*

4. EXHORT (Really Important in Home Ministry)

- *Visit the house of each member, **exhorting them to pray** vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties. [D&C 17:10d]*

5. MINISTER THROUGH ORDINANCES

- BAPTIZE – *priest’s duty is ... **baptize** ... [D&C 17:10a]*
- SERVE COMMUNION – *priest’s duty is ... **administer the sacrament**. [D&C 17:10a]*
- SOLEMNIZE MARRIAGE – *the **solemnization should be performed** by a presiding high priest, high priest, bishop, elder, or priest, [D&C 111:1c ...]*
- ORDAIN – *and he (priest) may **also ordain** other priests, teachers, and deacons; ... [D&C 17:10c]*

6. OTHER DUTIES

- PRESIDE – *A branch (congregation) may be **presided over** by a high priest, an elder, **priest**, teacher, or deacon, chosen and sustained by the vote of the branch. [D&C 120:2a]*
- TRAVEL AS A MISSIONARY – *And, behold, the high priests should **travel**, and also the elders, and also **the lesser priests**; ... [D&C 83:22]*
- LEAD MEETINGS – *and he is to **take the lead of meetings** when there is no elder present, ... [D&C 17:10d]*

B. TEACHER: Duties and Privileges – D&C17:11a-f

1. WATCH OVER THE CHURCH

- *The teacher's duty is to **watch over the Church** always, and be with, and strengthen them ... [D&C 17:11a]*
- *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.** [D&C 83:22]*

2. BE A PEACE MAKER WITHIN THE CHURCH (also an aspect of “watching” over the Church)

- ***See that** there is no iniquity in the Church, neither hardness with each other; neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking; [D&C 17:11a]*

3. BE AN ENCOURAGING INFLUENCE (also an aspect of “watching” over the Church)

- *And **see that** the Church meet together often, and also **see that** all the members do their duty, [D&C 17:11b]*

4. PREACH (at home congregation)

- ***Preach** repentance and remission of sins **within the branch** to which he belongs. [Rules & Resolutions 449]*
- *And let your **preaching be the warning voice**, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and in meekness. [D&C 38:9d]*
- *Yea, even he commanded them that they should **preach nothing save it were repentance and faith** on the Lord who hath redeemed His people. [Mosiah 9:53]*

5. TEACH

- *Teachers of this Church shall **teach the principles of my gospel** which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in which is the fullness of the gospel; and they shall **observe the covenants and Church articles** to do them, and **these shall be their teachings**, as they shall be **directed by the Spirit**; and the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith, and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach. [D&C 42:5ab]*

6. EXPOUND, EXHORT, WARN, INVITE TO CHRIST

- *They (teachers) are, however, to **warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite** all to come unto Christ. [D&C 17:11]*

7. OTHER DUTIES

- **PRESIDE (PASTOR)** – *A branch (congregation) may **be presided over by** a high priest, an elder, priest, **teacher**, or deacon, chosen and sustained by the vote of the branch. [D&C 120:2a]*
- **LEAD MEETINGS** – *and he (teacher) is to **take the lead of meetings** in the absence of the elder or priest, ... [D&C 17:11c]*

C. DEACON: Duties and Privileges – D&C17:11a-f

1. WATCH OVER THE CHURCH

- *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.** [D&C 83:22]*

2. BE MINDFUL OF THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH whether through social, financial or spiritual means

- *Perform any duties necessary by which the welfare of the Saints is secured through careful administrations of the ordinances.*
- ***maintain order** in Church meetings.*
- *to **have charge of the keys** for opening, closing, and care of the (Church) building*
- *(to **watch over**) the health and comfort of the Saints while they are in meeting*
- *Inherent in the deacon's duties are an awareness of the **financial law of stewardship** and the ability to **encourage and assist** the Saints in following that law. [Rules & Resolutions 471]*

3. BE MINDFUL OF THE NEEDS OF THE POOR (also related to the financial law)

- ***Visit the poor**, ascertain their needs, and report back to the Church [Rules & Resolutions 471]*

4. PREACH (at home congregation)

- ***Preach with a warning voice**, in mildness and meekness within the branch to which he belongs. [Rules & Resolutions 449]*
- *And let your **preaching be the warning voice**, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and in meekness. [D&C 38:9d]*
- *Yea, even he commanded them that they should **preach nothing save it were repentance and faith** on the Lord who hath redeemed His people. [Mosiah 9:53]*

5. WARN, EXPOUND, EXHORT, TEACH, AND INVITE TO CHRIST

- *D&C 17:11 they (deacons) are, however, to **warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all** to come unto Christ.*

6. OTHER DUTIES

- **PRESIDE (PASTOR)** – *A branch (congregation) may **be presided over by a high priest, an elder, priest, teacher, or deacon**, chosen and sustained by the vote of the branch. [D&C 120:2a]*
- **LEAD MEETINGS** – *and he (teacher) is to **take the lead of meetings** in the absence of the elder or priest, ... [D&C 17:11c]*