

## Priesthood in Mormonism – Part 2

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Our last article discussed the definition of LDS “priesthood” given by LDS leaders and gave some brief biblical responses to those claims. Because priesthood is so important to Mormons, we will continue that discussion.

*Gospel Principles* is a study manual written under the direction of LDS General Authorities and published by the LDS Church. It says,

Our heavenly Father shares his priesthood power with *worthy male members* of the [LDS] Church. The priesthood enables them to *act in God’s name* for the *salvation* of the human family. Through it they can be authorized to preach the gospel, administer the *ordinances of salvation*, and *govern God’s kingdom* on earth... We *must* have priesthood authority to act in the name of God when performing the sacred ordinances of the gospel, such as *baptism, confirmation, administration of the sacrament, and temple marriage*. If a man does not have the priesthood, even though he may be sincere, the *Lord will not recognize* ordinances he performs (see Matthew 7:21-23). These important ordinances *must be performed on the earth by men holding the priesthood*. Men need the priesthood to preside in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to direct the work of the Church in all parts of the world. When Christ lived on the earth, *he chose his Apostles and ordained them* so that they could lead his Church. *He gave them the power and authority of the priesthood to act in his name* (See Mark 3:13-15; John 15:16). Another reason the priesthood is needed on the earth is so we can *understand the will of the Lord* and carry out his purposes. *God reveals his will to his authorized priesthood representative on earth, the prophet* [of the LDS Church]. The prophet who is President of the Church, serves as spokesman for God to all members of the Church and all people on the earth (pp. 81-82).

The above statement says that priesthood is necessary for several things. I will list seven of them in italics and briefly respond to them:

1. *God shares His priesthood power with worthy LDS males*. The Bible does not teach that God has priesthood or that He shares it only with certain men. In the Old Testament there were male priests who were Hebrews without blemish from the tribe of Levi and of the family of Aaron. No such priesthood existed in the New Testament Church because Christ is the believer’s only High Priest (Heb. 7:11-28). The only priesthood Christians share in the New Testament is in 1 Peter 2:5, 9 and Revelation 1:6 and it is the holy or royal priesthood that *all* believers have whether

male or female.

2. *Priesthood enables LDS men to act in God's name for the salvation of mankind, including preaching the gospel, administering ordinances of salvation, and governing God's kingdom.* Priesthood is not required in the Bible to preach the gospel or do anything else in God's name.

3. *Priesthood is necessary to perform baptisms, confirmations, administer sacrament (communion) and participate in temple (eternal) marriage.* In the Bible priesthood is never mentioned in connection with baptism, confirmation, etc., and temple marriage isn't even in the Bible.

4. *Without priesthood God will not recognize anything man does (Matt. 7:21-23).* The Bible never says God recognizes what man does only if he has the priesthood. Matthew 7:21-23 was used to support that LDS claim, but it says nothing about priesthood. It is about those who *claim* to do great things in the Lord's name when they aren't even His people. In order to be His people they must put their trust in Him alone (John 1:12-13).

5. *When Jesus was on earth He chose His apostles and ordained them to the priesthood so that they could lead His Church (Mark 3:13-15; John 16:15).* Priesthood isn't mentioned in either of those Bible texts. But the word "ordained" is in both texts of the King James Version of the Bible. LDS claim *ordained* means that Jesus laid His hands on them and gave them the priesthood. Most contemporary Bible versions have the word "appointed" instead of "ordained" since that is the meaning in the original Greek language. LDS scripture in *Doctrine & Covenants* 89:10, 12, 14 also shows that "ordained" does not mean to "lay hands on someone and give them priesthood" as LDS have been taught. It says that herbs, flesh of beasts and fowls and all grain are "*ordained* for the use of man." Obviously those items were not given priesthood but were *appointed* for certain uses. If Jesus ordained His 12 apostles to *lead the church*, why was James (a half brother of Jesus who was not an apostle) leading the church council in Acts 15? The apostle Paul was also a church leader but he was *not* one of the 12 apostles that Jesus chose.

6. *Priesthood is needed to understand the will of the Lord.* The Bible says in John 16:13, "When the Spirit of truth comes, *He* will guide you into all truth...". In the Bible the Spirit of truth is the Holy Spirit, not priesthood.

7. *God reveals His will only to the President of the LDS Church who is His authorized representative on earth and a prophet of God.* Since LDS believe their President is a prophet his word is just as authoritative as any of their scriptures, including the Bible. LDS scripture in the *Doctrine & Covenants*, Section 21:5 has Jesus saying, "For his [the LDS President's] word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all holiness before me."

So, LDS believe their prophets speak for God, whether or not they have scripture to support it. There were "prophets" in the New Testament, but they aren't called God's authorized representatives on the earth. The *office* of prophet ended with John the Baptist (Luke 16:16). Hebrews 1:1-2 says that God spoke in the *past* through prophets but He has *now* spoken through His Son. In John 12:48 Jesus said

the word He had *already spoken* would judge men ultimately so no prophet can add anything to that. Mormonism claims to be Christian and that their beliefs are based on the Bible (see *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 513; *What the Mormons Think of Christ*, p. 2), but not *one* of the seven claims above can be found in the Bible!

Those who want to read more about LDS priesthood can do so in *Gospel Principles*, published by the LDS Church in 1997. Next time we will continue our discussion of Priesthood.