**The Priesthood**

**How am I to understand the lines of Melchizedek and Aaronic?**The few biblical mentions of the name "Melchizedek," have prompted the Jews to make numerous guesses as to the meaning. However, the bible verse clearly states; "The LORD hath sworn (a covenant) and will not repent (go back or return), Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4) The Hebrew name Melchizedek ". . . is composed from the two elements: melekh(h), (king), and ṣedeq (righteousness), which . . . literally translates to "king of righteousness." (Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic) According to Dead Sea Scrolls fragments, Melchizedek will proclaim the "Day of Atonement" ". . . and he will atone for the people . . . also will judge the peoples." (11Q13 (11QMelch) The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources p. 85 Fred L. Horton – 2005) Atonement and judgement are the nature of the Son of God! The other priesthood line or use of "Aaronic" or "Levitical priests," (kohanim,) are traditionally required by Halakha (Jewish law) to be of direct father/son descent from the biblical brother of Moses, Aaron. Clearly explaining the priesthood lines is latter-day revelation: "There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood. Why the first is called the Melchizedek Priesthood is because Melchizedek was such a great high priest. Before his day it was called the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God. But 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 that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood. All other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this priesthood. But there are two divisions or grand heads—one is the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the other is the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood. The office of an elder comes under the priesthood of Melchizedek. The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things. 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 107:1-9)

**How are these authorities chosen to maintain unity and righteousness?**

It is worth repeating this insight given by an original member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Orson Pratt (1811-1881). *"Whenever God has called and authorized men to perform a work in any age or dispensation, it has been done by revelations, and not by mere impressions, or some undefinable, internal feelings, which leave the mind in uncertainty and doubt. Noah was called by the word of the Lord to be a preacher of righteousness, and to build an ark. Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, were called by revelation to perform a great variety of duties. Moses and Aaron were called to the priest’s office by the word of the great Jehovah. Seventy elders of Israel were called by revelation to assist Moses. Joshua was appointed by the word of the Lord through Moses to be his successor in leading Israel. The successors of Aaron were appointed to the priesthood by revelation. The Judges of Israel were called by visions, by angels and by the inspiration of the Spirit. Samuel was called by the voice of the Lord. And finally, all their officers, wise men and prophets, down to the days of Malachi, were called by new revelation."* (Orson Pratt Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, No. 2 (1850), p.17)

**How does a covenant relate to priesthood?**  
The Priesthoods given anciently and restored in Latter-days are covenants between God and man. Consider that one of the many names that describe Him is “covenant.” He is the Messenger of the Covenant. “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 3:1) To the Jews who have lost the priesthood and thereby have lost the true understanding of God, comes an encouraging promise-a-guarantee-that they will receive a new “covenant.” This could also mean that their current concept of God, “old” to them, will be replaced with a “new” (yet original) understanding of Him. The restoration brings back the Lord and His priesthood that was broken. “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

**How is the order of the Lord administered?**  
The original true religion had an order governed by the priesthood of God. Consider the leadership of the children of Israel, a council of three, with Moses, Aaron & Hur, a Council of Twelve Elders and a Council of Seventy. It is comparable to the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The latter-day Israelites led now by the tribe of Ephraim (Joseph) are also organized with a “First Presidency of three, a Quorum of Twelve and a Council of Seventy.” The organization and growth of the Church in the Meridian of Times parallels the organization of the true religion in ancient and modern times. These were and are leaders, in their respective times, who had authority from God to bring light and truth to the people. In the scriptures, the term “judge” has an ecclesiastical connection. Biblically, they were the leading elders of the people. Latter-day Saints have “Elders” (Apostles) who are the “Judges of Israel.” Part of their responsibility is to share the gospel. Hence those brothers that represent the Twelve were called “Elders.”