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## Lesson 56 - The Priesthood Restored

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# Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets.

## LESSON 56.—THE PRIESTHOOD RESTORED.

TIME.—*May 15, and June, 1829.* PLACE.—*Near Harmony, Susquehanna Co., Pa.*  
TEXT.—*Exodus, 28: 1. Alma, 13: 8, 9.*

And take thou unto thee, Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Now they were ordained after this manner: Being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the High Priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and High Priesthood, is without beginning or end:

Thus they become High Priests for ever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen.

1. Leviticus 8: 2. Numbers, 18, 7. II. Chronicles 26: 18, 21. Hebrews 5: 1, 4.  
2. Mosiah 29: 42.

### LESSON STATEMENT.

The work of translation proceeded rather slowly, Martin Harris acting as scribe and writing from the Prophet's dictation. It is impracticable here to enter into all the details of this labor. During the progress of the work Martin brought very deep trouble upon both himself and Joseph by allowing the first 116 pages of manuscript to be lost. For a time it seemed that Joseph would lose his calling for having allowed Martin to take the manuscript away, but by his sincere repentance he regained the favor of God, although his error cost him great sorrow and much additional labor. Martin Harris, however, was never permitted to be his scribe again. His place was filled temporarily by Emma, the wife of Joseph, but she was so bowed down with sorrow with the death of her babe that she could render but little assistance.

It was at this time that Oliver Cowdery, a young school teacher who had received a testimony of the divinity of

Joseph's mission, came and offered to act as a scribe. This offer was most willingly accepted, and the work of translation was resumed April 7, 1829.

While proceeding with their work, they came to a passage in the record referring to baptism for the remission of sins, and desiring light on this subject, on the 15 of May, 1829, they went into the woods to pray. As they were thus engaged, an angel appeared to them, announcing himself as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ and the one who baptized Him. Laying his hands upon their heads, he said, "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."

He then gave them instructions as to the powers of the Aaronic Priesthood, and told them to baptize each other for the remission of their sins. After John the Baptist left them they followed out his instructions and experienced such joy as they had never before known.

During the month following this event the work of translation proceeded, and many persons became convinced of the truth of Joseph's teaching. Eleven of these were chosen as witnesses to the record, and their testimony is found in the commencement of the Book of

Mormon. This record was at last completed and published, and the plates were given back to Moroni.

In the month of June, 1829, Peter, James, and John, three of Christ's apostles appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and bestowed upon them the Melchisedek Priesthood, giving them instructions as to its powers. Thus the Holy Priesthood, in all its glory, was restored to the earth in our day.

#### NOTES.

**AARONIC PRIESTHOOD.**—Named After Aaron, the brother of Moses (see Exodus, 28.) It embraces the callings of Deacon, Teacher and Priest, and includes the duties of the Bishopric. Its labors are largely devoted to temporal affairs.

**MELCHISEDEK PRIESTHOOD**—The higher grade of the Priesthood, and named after Melchisedek, (see Genesis 14, 18-20.) It comprises the callings of Elder, Seventy, High Priest, Patriarch and Apostle, and embraces the lesser Aaronic Priesthood, that is, a man holding any degree of the Melchisedek Priesthood can officiate as a Priest, Teacher or Deacon. The term priesthood really expresses the authority given to men to act in the name of the Lord.

**JAMES.**—A son of Zebedee and one of the Twelve Apostles; when called to this holy calling he and his brother John were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. From the time of his call he became, with Peter and John, one of the most trusted of the Savior's friends. These three appear to have been with Him on many important occasions when none of the other apostles were present and to have received divine manifestations and a knowledge of heavenly things with which the rest of the disciples were not blessed. James was slain by Herod Agrippa at Jerusalem, A. D. 44.—*Acts 12: 1, 2.*

**JOHN.**—The son of Zebedee and a brother of James. He is especially known as the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was called to be an apostle at the same time as his brother, and like him was one of the most intimate friends of the Savior. He was with Jesus in the glory of the transfiguration, in the agony at Gethsemane at the trial of the Savior before the High Priest and before Pilate. He was the first of all the apostles to reach the supulchre when Mary brought the strange news of Christ's resurrection. To him the promise was given that he should tarry in the flesh until the Savior again came. After the death of Jesus, John spent much of his time in and about Jerusalem; but in later years went to Ephesus. Tradition says he was

afterwards taken to Rome, and in the persecution of the Saints under Domitian he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, which, however, did not hurt him. He was then sentenced to work in the mines on the Island of Patmos, where he wrote his Revelation, but being afterwards released he returned to Ephesus. Here history loses sight of him.

#### WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That men are likely to gain the displeasure of God if they are too self-willed.
2. That much trouble may be brought upon a servant of God by the foolishness of another person.
3. That Oliver Cowdery was inspired to come to Joseph in answer to the Prophet's prayer.
4. That it was necessary for the Priesthood to be restored to the earth by those who last held the keys of it.
5. That the remission of sins by baptism is followed by divine joy.
6. That John the Baptist conferred the lesser Priesthood on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.
7. That the Apostles Peter, James and John conferred the Melchisedek Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver and ordained them Apostles.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. What caused Martin Harris to be rejected as Joseph's scribe?
2. How did the Prophet regain the favor of God?
3. Why could Joseph's wife not render much assistance?
4. How was a scribe finally supplied?
5. What do you know of Oliver Cowdery?
6. What passage in the record did Joseph and Oliver desire to better understand?
7. What did they do?
8. How were their prayers answered?
9. What do you know of John the Baptist?
10. Repeat the words he used in conferring the Priesthood upon them?
11. What did he tell them to do?
12. What feeling followed the performance of this ordinance?
13. What was the date when this event occurred?
14. When was the translation of the Book of Mormon completed?
15. What did Joseph then do with the plates?
16. What even occurred in June, 1829?
17. What do you know of Peter?
18. Of James?
19. Of John?
20. What is the Priesthood?
21. What are the powers and offices of the Aaronic Priesthood?
22. From whom was it named?
23. Tell what you know of the Melchisedek Priesthood?
24. After whom was it named?

#### ILLUSTRATIVE PASSAGES.

**THE PRIESTHOOD.**—If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.—*Hebrews 7: 11, 12.*

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.—*1. Peter 2: 9.*