

## PRIESTHOOD

Doctrine and Covenants: 68:13-21, Numbers 16:48

By Raymond White

It is impossible to overstate the importance of priesthood. Our English word priest derives its meaning from the latin word pontifex which means bridge builder — pons means bridge and facere means to make. So, the duty of a priest, and the only duty of a priest, is to build a bridge from man to God. All other notions concerning priests and priesthood (leadership for one, prophecy for another) are peripheral add-ons that have nothing to do with the core meaning of priesthood. What a priest does that defines him as a priest is to perform some action that brings men into the presence of God. If it happens that a priest is also a prophet or a king or a teacher or a judge or a whatever, those other offices are irrelevant to the duty or office or calling of priesthood. Priesthood is one thing, everything else is everything else.

The Bible of course has much to say about priesthood, and any understanding of the Bible without an understanding of biblical priesthood will be fatally flawed. It is therefore my intent here to explore some of the main concepts of priesthood as the Bible presents them. I make no claim to thoroughness, mine is by no means an exhaustive compilation. And I will not even attempt to present the duties and workings of the Aaronic priesthood — the book of Leviticus is the most tedious of all the books of the Bible, in my view. But what I have here will be useful to you, I think. So enjoy.

### [1] MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD OF THE COMING MESSIAH

*Genesis 14:18* And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. :19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth :20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

*Psalms 110:4* The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

These four verses are critical to understanding the expected Messiah. Psalms tells us that when Messiah comes he will be a priest of Melchizedek.

But what does that mean? And who was Melchizedek? Genesis tells us two things: (1) He was a priest *and* a king, and (2) Abraham submitted to him. That's all we learn, but that's enough.

The image this gives us of Christ is like the two sides of a coin: Christ is priestly (he brings us to God) and Christ is royal (he rules us for God). He is divine and he is secular, like Melchizedek.

In ancient Israel, there was no priest who was also a king, and there was no king who was also a priest. Messiah, when he comes, must be both, ruling men for God, and reaching God for men.

There was one man, however, who did fill the two roles of spiritual leader and secular leader, and that man was Moses. But his two roles were separated when God

anointed Aaron to be a priest thus making Aaron the head of the church which allowed Moses to be full time head of state.

In the next generation, those separate roles fell to Joshua (head judge and head of state), and Eleazar (head priest and head of church). What developed here was a clear separation of church and state.

By the way, both men were prophets. That means they each received prophetic direction from God how to discharge the duties of their offices. The lesson here is that whatever your calling in life, you should be receiving direction from God.

Now consider two things:

*First:* Joshua was Israel's secular leader, and his Hebrew name becomes the Greek name Jesus.

*Second:* Eleazar was Israel's priest. In Hebrew, he was the Misheck, the "anointed one." In English, the "Messiah." And in Greek, the Xristos, the Christ.

So, bring the two together, and what do we get? We get Joshua the anointed, or in English Jesus the Christ, the secular leader and holy leader, the king and priest, like Melchizedek.

There will be no separation of church and state when Jesus Christ returns to claim his throne. His will be a theocratic government.

But no Christian should ever attempt to create such a government. That is Christ's prerogative, and not ours. Church rule leads to inquisition thinking and we've had too much of that already.

I am quite content with our political notion of separation of church and state so long as government does not interpret that to mean eliminating religion from anything. America's founding fathers were right to assert in our first amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." There are times when I feel like asking congress and our courts, "what part of 'no law' do you not understand?"

Finally, there is one man, and only one man, who can create and justly run a theocracy, the man Jesus Christ. For that perfect society, we'll have to wait for him.

## [2] THE SURVIVING MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD – MAYBE

Ancient Israel's national identity and religious worship centered around their Aaronic priesthood and its temple sacrifices. But this odd person Melchizedek who suddenly appears and as suddenly disappears causes us to wonder: does this Melchizedek priesthood have anything bearing at all on ancient Israel? Or was it just a fluke. My answer is: well, maybe.

*Joshua 10:1* Now it came to pass, when Adonizedec king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; *:2* That they feared greatly... *:3* Wherefore Adonizedec king of Jerusalem sent unto Horham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying *:4* Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.

*Joshua 15:63* As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

Here is a curious thing that I just noticed a few days ago (in September 2008, not that it matters). Our notions of priesthood hinge mostly on two short Bible texts. First, *Genesis 14:18-20*, and second, *Psalms 110:4*. To review:

- (1) Melchizedek was a king;
- (2) and a priest;
- (3) of Salem which, more likely than not, became Jerusalem.

(4) Melchizedek blessed Abram with a priesthood blessing of the only true God which gives us a plausible explanation of why Abram came to this land in the first place: he was looking for God and found him, in an obscure city called Salem, the city of peace.

(5) Melchizedek is superior to Abram in that Melchizedek blessed Abram — *Hebrews 7:7* ...*the less is blessed of the better*. Also, that Abram paid him tithes proves that Melchizedek was Abram's superior.

(6) Melchizedek blessed Abram with victory over his enemies not realizing that, centuries later, his own descendents would be counted among those enemies that Abram's descendents would one day be sent by God to destroy.

So now centuries later, Joshua brings his irresistible army into the land to kill everyone, and in this city of Jerusalem, which is on Joshua's hit list, is this king Adonizedec.

Who is Adonizedec, this king of Jerusalem whose name couples the name of God, Adoni, with the name of his great forerunner Melchizedek?

It is no stretch to imagine Adonizedec to be a descendent of Melchizedek, and a king and a priest of the same city. Yet God had marked him and his city for destruction.

Why would God destroy his own prophets?

Balam, you may recall, was also a true prophet of the true God. But he was not an Israelite, he was a Midianite. No problem there, the Midianites were God's people too, until they asserted themselves against Israel at which point Balam abused his prophetic privilege and so he died.

The two eldest sons of Aaron were priests, and they likewise abused their priestly privilege and so they died.

So now Adonizedec and his people of Jerusalem are in God's gun sights along with everyone else in the land.

But this story has a happier ending. These people of Jerusalem, Jebusites, were not destroyed. And why not? The only reason given is that *Judah could not drive them out*.

Well now that is peculiar because God had promised Joshua total victory over everyone. So, *why* could Israel not drive them out? We can only speculate, and I will.

I'll offer this possible reason: Maybe they, like Israel, were under the protection of a covenant promise of God, which God could not violate in spite of their bad behavior, and therefore, Israel could not drive them out because God wanted them to remain.

What does this have to do with priesthood? Plenty. Because it would mean that these survivors, these Jebusites, survived with another priesthood passed down to them from their ancestor Melchizedek.

All this of course is a stretched supposition based on the thinnest of evidence. I'm not trying to persuade you, I'm simply pointing to the possibility.

In any case, the next time you visit Jerusalem, have reverence for the place. It was the seat of God from very ancient times, long before Moses and even before Abraham. I believe that was why Abraham went there, searching for the true God and for a people with a true priesthood. Midway between Ur and Egypt, at an obscure city called Peace, Abraham found true prophets communicating with *the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth*.

### [3] THE SURVIVING AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

Christians typically believe that with the arrival of Christ, the Jewish priesthood, the priesthood of Aaron, lost its validity. Actually, the Bible says nothing of the sort. Let's find out what the Bible does say.

*1 Chronicles 23:13 The sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses: and Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever.*

Forever is a long time. I make this claim: Aaron's priesthood was passed down as a birthright and not by ordination, and, as God promised, it would be so forever. My point is this: not even apostasy could annul it, and therefore, the Jewish priesthood, the priesthood of the Cohens, is valid today, so that when the Jews are ready to rebuild their temple and "offer again an offering in righteousness," God will accept it. They do not need any Mormon priesthood or any other priesthood to make a valid offering to their God. If you doubt this, read those verses in the Doctrine and Covenants that pertain to the priesthood of Aaron. I will list them below.

*Jeremiah 33:18 Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. :20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; :21 Then may also my covenant be broken...with the Levites the priests, my ministers.*

This says, clearly enough, that the Aaronic priesthood, the Jewish priesthood, will not end and must therefore be a valid priesthood today. Remember: to the sons of Aaron, it is a birthright, not an ordination. We Mormons receive it by ordination because we don't have the birthright.

A further argument: If the Jewish priesthood became invalid at the moment of Christ's death or resurrection (parting of the veil, Jesus entering heaven), then Jewish temple activity also became invalid and for any Christian to participate in any temple

activity would be apostate behavior. But that is not how Paul and the other apostles saw it. They attended the temple and saw no religious conflict in doing so.

*Acts 2:46 And the, continuing daily with one accord in the temple...*

*Acts 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.*

Had the apostles considered any of this to be apostate behavior, certainly they would not have done it. The fact is, the church (or much of it anyway) considered themselves to be Jewish for another three hundred years. And when the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. the Christians felt the pain of the loss as well as the Jews.

So, was the Jewish priesthood apostate? Impossible!

#### **[4] IS IT POSSIBLE THAT ONLY MORMONS HAVE VALID PRIESTHOOD?**

Now I'm about to get into trouble with everyone. Mormons will disagree with me because they believe they have the only valid priesthood. All non-Mormons will disagree with me because they believe Mormons have no priesthood. So, why must I recklessly proceed? Because it's what I honestly believe the scriptures are saying.

The previous section showed that the Jewish priesthood is forever, passed from father to son by birth and not by ordination. It's hard to imagine how the Jewish priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood held in perpetuity, could *not* be valid today.

But to make the case more iron clad, let's explore the Mormon's own scripture, the Doctrine and Covenants.

*D&C 68:13 And now, concerning the items in addition to the covenants and commandments, they are these—:14 There remain hereafter, in the due time of the Lord, other bishops to be set apart unto the church, to minister even according to the first; :15 Wherefore they shall be high priests who are worthy, and they shall be appointed by the First Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood, except they be literal descendants of Aaron. :16 And if they be literal descendants of Aaron they have a legal right to the bishopric, if they are the first born among the sons of Aaron; :17 For the first born hold the right of the presidency over this priesthood, and the keys or authority of the same. :18 No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant and the firstborn of Aaron. :19 But, as a high priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood has authority to officiate in all the lesser offices he may officiate in the office of bishop when no literal descendant of Aaron can be found, provided he is called and set apart and ordained unto this power, under the hands of the First Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood. :20 And a literal descendant of Aaron, also, must be designated by this Presidency, and found worthy, and anointed, and ordained under the hands of the Presidency, otherwise they are not legally authorized to officiate in their priesthood. :21 But, by virtue of the decree concerning their right of the priesthood descending from father to*

*son, they may claim their anointing if at any time they can prove their lineage, or do ascertain it by revelation from the Lord under the hands of the above name Presidency.*

These verses say a lot. To sum it up:

A Cohen has the priesthood by birth. [:20 in *their* priesthood.] They have *their* priesthood already, or it wouldn't be *their* priesthood, would it? It is not given to him by Mormon ordination.

However, without a Mormon ordination, a Cohen cannot “officiate in their priesthood,” which is to say, yes, we Mormons accept that a Cohen's priesthood is valid, without a Mormon ordination, but he can't preside over *our* people, over a Mormon ward, without Mormon consent; namely, a Mormon ordination.

However, they do already have, by birth, all the God given authority they need to preside over their own Jewish congregations. What else could *legal right* possibly mean? Legal right can only mean they don't need someone else's permission. If they *do* need someone else's permission, then it is not legal right.

I suppose it's like a retired bishop who, although still a bishop, no longer has a ward to be bishop over. Or like an apostle emeritus who, while still an apostle, no longer has the church to “apostle” over.

Here is a precise example of this sort of thing —

*Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father...*

*Acts 13:2 ...the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. :3 And when they have fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

When Paul became an apostle, it was not Peter or James or any man who made him an apostle, it was Jesus Christ who made Paul an apostle. He was an apostle, but with nothing to “apostle” over (please forgive my makeshift verb). But when it was time for Paul to act as an apostle with a calling, he was set apart by presiding authorities for that calling.

Likewise, a Cohen is a bishop, with or without a Mormon ordination — and, for that matter, with or without a Mormon baptism. A Cohen's right is by birth and has nothing to do with membership in our church. If he has to have a Mormon ordination, then, as I said, it is not a legal right. A Mormon ordination would not give a Cohen any priesthood right other than the right to preside over *our* wards. Here is some evidence of that —

*Malachi 3:3 ... he shall purify the sons of Levi ... that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.*

It is highly doubtful that these Levites who will offer a righteous offering will be Mormon Jews or Christian Jews. Why? Because no Christian would ever sacrifice an animal. To do so would be to deny the final sacrifice of Christ. No. This righteous

offering has to be performed by Jewish Jews, Jewish Cohens on temple mount. And to do that, their Jewish priesthood must be valid, without any Christian ordination.

*D&C 107:13 The second priesthood is called the Priesthood of Aaron, because it was conferred upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations. [What part of all do you not understand?] :16 No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant of Aaron. 17 But as a high priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood has authority to officiate in all the lesser offices, he may officiate in the office of bishop when no literal descendant of Aaron can be found, provided he is called and set apart and ordained unto this power by the hands of the Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood.*

This is wonderfully interesting. A proper Cohen has the priesthood already by birth, and with it the legal right to the office of bishop. Mormons and other Christians, on the other hand, have no such birth right. To be a bishop, Mormons must be ordained to it. A Cohen needs no such thing. You can't give him what he already has.

#### [5] CAN ONLY PRIESTS OFFER SACRIFICES?

Priestly duties are only for priests. Right? Well, maybe. But here are a couple of verses that argue the other way.

*Judges 6:25 The LORD said unto him [Gideon] :26 offer a burnt sacrifice.*

Gideon was from the tribe of Manassah and he was no priest. But God ordered him to make a burnt offering.

*Judges 13:19 So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it.*

Manoah was from the tribe of Dan and was no priest. But God accepted his offering: *13:23.*

Now wait a minute. These verses seem to fly in the face of everything we've so far read about priests and sacrifices and such. Gideon and Manoah were not priests! They weren't even Levites. Gideon was from Manassah and Manoah from Dan. Who said Gideon could offer a sacrifice? God did. And Manoah's offering was accepted.

So we really need to cast a suspicious eye on anyone, any prophet, any priest, who insists, "God said I can do this, therefore you can't." Maybe that's true, or maybe it's not.

We might perhaps conclude from these two verses that priesthood is not required to make an offering *for oneself*, but priesthood is certainly required to make offerings *for others*. If that be so, then a priest is an agent (like a real estate agent) who acts in behalf of others as well as himself.

Now, couple that thought with the fact that in Mormon temples, good Mormon sisters perform priesthood-like ordinances without priesthood. So things are not so absolute as they seem.

So, whose right? Well, on one hand, this argues for Evangelicals. Maybe they can present *themselves* to God on the basis of faith alone. But on the other had this argues for Catholics and Mormons and other priesthood based churches. To reach beyond oneself and actually save others, priesthood is necessary. Lutherans seem to be caught in the middle. They believe that are saved by faith alone but they have priesthood. And that begs the question: if they are saved by faith, then why priesthood? Well, that's their riddle to solve, that's one I don't have to mess with.

But of all the priesthoods (or claimed priesthoods), the most far reaching is the Mormon priesthood because it claims to save even the dead. But that is a subject for another time, way beyond the scope of this writing. Here's my final verse on this subject.

*Hebrews 9:7 ...into the second [tabernacle] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.*

## [6] PRIESTHOOD POWER

Two thoughts here: priesthood is really very powerful and priesthood is not something to mess with.

*Numbers 16:38 The censers of these sinners against their own souls.*

An offering, even if it's a correct offering, made by unrighteous people can have disastrous results to the offerers.

• *Numbers 16:48 And [Aaron] stood between the dead and the living.*

There is no more powerful statement about the power of the priesthood. Priesthood influences God. It is the barrier between those whom God saves and those whom God damns. As the plague swept through the congregation, Aaron jumped into the middle with his offering as said, "God. Stop here!" And the plague stopped right there.

*1 Chronicles 26:16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up...and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar :17 And Azariah the priest went in after him...:18 and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou has trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. :19 Then Uzziah was wroth...and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead...:20 because the LORD had smitten him :21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death.*

Uzziah was a good king and was doing great until he decided to presume on God's priesthood. The lesson is clear: you cannot take authority that God has not given you, and it is dangerous to pretend to have it when you don't.

*John 15:16* Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you...

*Acts 8:18* And when Simon [the sorcerer] saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, **:19** Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. **:20** But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the power of God may be purchased with money.

*Acts 14:23* And when they had ordained them elders in every church...

*Acts 19:15* And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

### **[7] IS THERE A CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD?**

This is not a trivial question. The Evangelical argument goes like this: Christ had priesthood, but he was the last person to have a valid priesthood because no further priesthood was needed because he was the final offering and the final offeror. Therefore Christians have no need for any priesthood.

That Christ did indeed have priesthood is clear enough.

*Hebrews 5:5* So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my son, to day have I begotten thee.

With his atonement, which required his priesthood, there was no longer any need for any priesthood because the work of atonement was final. That's the argument.

That is a rational argument, but is it biblical? Here is the opposite argument —

*1 Peter 2:9* But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood...

While this verse is vague (what does “you are a priesthood” mean), it at least hints of a New Testament priesthood. But there are two verses which are not at all vague —

*Revelation 1:6* And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father...

*Revelation 20:6* ... they shall be priests of God and of Christ ...

God gives Christians a priesthood, there is no doubt about that. And not just any priesthood, but a “kings and priests” priesthood; that is, the Melchizedek priesthood; that is, the priesthood of Christ. No other conclusion is possible if you accept John's words.

### **[8] A PRIESTHOOD MYSTERY**

Why do Mormon scriptures have a specific date for the restoration of the Aaronic priesthood but not a specific date for the restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood?

*D&C 13:1 Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I [John the Baptist] confer the Priesthood of Aaron ... [dated May 15, 1829].*

*D&C 27:13 And also with Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles ... [dated August 1830 with no specific date].*

It is curious that the early church meticulously recorded the precise date of the first restoration while letting the date of the second carelessly fall through the cracks. I have not heard any explanation of this anomaly in church history other than “oh well.”

I will now offer my own explanation. I believe that the omission of the date of the restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood was not an accident, but was intentional on God’s part. It may have been Joseph’s blunder, but if so, it was God’s intentional doing. And why might that be so? Because —

*Hebrews 7:1 For this Melchizedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. :2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all ... :3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto Son of God; abideth a priest continually. :4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. :7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.*

The point of this text is clear: Melchizedek’s priesthood is greater than Aaron’s, therefore Christ who wields that priesthood is greater than the Jewish priesthood.

But what does “without father, without mother, without descent” have to do with that? Is the text really claiming that this man Melchizedek is an eternal divine person? No, that is not what the text is saying. It is saying that in the record, there is no account of his birth or death, therefore his is a picture of the priesthood that he held which did not begin (as Aaron’s priesthood began when he was ordained) and will never end. This is a necessary requirement of Christ’s priesthood if we are to trust it and him for our *eternal* salvation. If it had a beginning, then it might have an end, and how can you trust that?

To complete the image, not only do we not know when Melchizedek was born or died or ordained, we also do not know when Jesus was born or died or ordained, or *that* he was ordained — maybe he’s had his priesthood from eternity past; who knows. All we know is that Christ has his priesthood and that Melchizedek is the model.

*Psalms 110:4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

*Hebrews 5:5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my son, to day have I begotten thee.*

Now to the point. Christ’s priesthood and therefore also his salvation are eternal. The picture is a man whose birth and death are not accounted for in the biblical record.

And so, to continue this picture into the present day, God has denied us a calendar day for the restoration of that priesthood even though he has given us a calendar date for the restoration of the lesser priesthood. It was intentional and it completes the picture.

### [9] ANOTHER PRIESTHOOD MYSTERY

Here's a second priesthood mystery, more baffling, I think, than the first.

*D&C 84:22 For without this [priesthood] no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.*

What is so mysterious about that? Ah, the first vision. Joseph Smith, having no priesthood, walked into the sacred grove one day, prayed, and saw God. So, according to this verse, he ought to have died. How did he survive?

One feeble answer is, he didn't *really* see God, not with his physical eyes but only with his spiritual eyes. That's the kind of answer we'd expect from the orthodox who insist that Moses and the prophets didn't really see God when we and the Bible insist they did.

But the real weakness of that answer is that if Joseph saw God only with his *spiritual* eyes (whatever that means) then how can we claim that he saw a *physical* God? Which is *the* point of the first vision. That God is a man, physically, is evidenced by Joseph seeing him, physically. If it all was just a spiritual experience, then it might have just been a dream and the core message of the first vision is meaningless.

But there is a much, much better explanation of this verse than that, which is this: Joseph was indeed protected by priesthood, but not *his* priesthood, of which, he had none. He was protected by Jesus Christ's priesthood who stood right there, interceding between Joseph and God throughout the entire conversation.

And that is, after all, what priesthood is about, isn't it? — for one person to intercede for another, to act as agent, to stand between one person and God building a bridge so that person can cross over to God and survive! That's what Jesus did for Joseph in the Sacred Grove that morning, and we can read the story literally.

*Hebrews 4:15 For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. :16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

We do not wield priesthood for ourselves, we wield it for others as Christ did for Joseph and for us. Now go, and wield it. Do some good. That's what it's for.