

SECTION 107

FAITH: Mormonism | TEXT: Doctrine and Covenants | VOLUME: 2013 | AUTHOR: Joseph Smith

OVERVIEW

Doctrine and Covenants Section 107 is a foundational administrative and theological text for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, delivered by Joseph Smith in 1835. It establishes a complex ecclesiastical structure based on a dual-priesthood model: the 'Melchizedek' (higher/spiritual) and the 'Aaronic' (lesser/temporal). The text delineates the specific duties, jurisdictions, and relationships between governing bodies, including the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the Seventy, and the High Council. Beyond administration, it roots this authority in a patriarchal history, tracing a direct line of ordination from Adam through the biblical patriarchs to the present day. It introduces the concept of Adam-ondi-Ahman, a meeting where Adam blessed his posterity and the Lord appeared. The text asserts that the Melchizedek Priesthood holds the 'keys' necessary to commune with God and receive the 'mysteries of the kingdom,' effectively institutionalizing a mediatorial structure between the believer and the divine. It concludes with a stern warning that those who neglect their priesthood duties will not be 'counted worthy to stand.'

KEY FIGURES

Joseph Smith, Melchizedek, Aaron, Adam (Michael), Moses, Noah (Gabriel), Enoch, Seth

DOCTRINES ANALYZED

1. DUAL PRIESTHOOD STRUCTURE

Assertion: There are two distinct priesthoods (Melchizedek and Aaronic) required to administer spiritual and temporal ordinances.

"There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic... (D&C 107:1)"

Evangelical Comparison: D&C 107 re-establishes a Levitical/Aaronic order which the New Testament explicitly states was fulfilled and set aside by Christ (Hebrews 7:11-12, Hebrews 8:13). While Evangelicals view the 'Priesthood of Melchizedek' as belonging exclusively to Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:24) because He lives forever, Mormonism views it as an order of authority that men can and must possess to officiate in ordinances. This creates a caste of mediators between the laity and God, contrasting with the Evangelical doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers (1 Peter 2:5-9), where every Christian has direct access to the Father through the Son.

2. ECCLESIASTICAL INFALLIBILITY/AUTHORITY

Assertion: The President of the High Priesthood is a seer, revelator, translator, and prophet like Moses.

"preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses... to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet (D&C 107:91-92)"

Evangelical Comparison: The text elevates the President of the Church to a Mosaic status, granting him the keys to reveal new truth and translate. In Evangelical theology, the canon is closed, and the office of Apostle/Prophet in the foundational sense ceased with the establishment of the New Testament church (Ephesians 2:20). Placing a man in a position to define truth 'like Moses' violates Sola Scriptura, as it allows for extra-biblical revelation to supersede or redefine biblical teaching.

3. KEYS OF COMMUNION

Assertion: Access to the presence of God and the mysteries of the kingdom is dependent on holding the Melchizedek Priesthood.

"The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys... to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father (D&C 107:18-19)"

Evangelical Comparison: This doctrine effectively rebuilds the veil of the temple. D&C 107 claims that a specific priesthood office is required to 'have the heavens opened' and 'enjoy the communion and presence of God.' In contrast, the New Testament teaches that the veil was torn at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:51) and that

all believers have 'boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus' (Hebrews 10:19), independent of human priestly mediation.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Divergence Status: Yes

Theological Gap: The fundamental gap lies in the sufficiency of Christ's mediation. Evangelicalism asserts that Jesus is the sole Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) and that His priesthood is intransferable (aparabatos, Hebrews 7:24). D&C 107 constructs a system where human priests are necessary intermediaries to 'open the heavens' (v19). Furthermore, it re-institutes a legalistic framework where spiritual standing is determined by ecclesiastical performance ('learning one's duty') rather than justification by faith alone.

Shared Values:

Desire for order in the church; Importance of leadership integrity (v30); Belief in the historical reality of Biblical patriarchs

Friction Points:

1. [Critical] Sola Scriptura – Establishes a 'living prophet' (Moses figure) whose revelations supersede or add to the Bible.
2. [Critical] Universal Priesthood / Solus Christus – Restricts access to God and spiritual blessings to those holding specific priesthood offices.
3. [Major] Sola Fide – Conditions standing before God on diligence in priesthood duties (v99-100).

Semantic Warnings:

"Priesthood"

In Text: Authority and power of God delegated to men to act in His name and perform saving ordinances.

Evangelical: The status of all believers who offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5), and the unique office of Christ.

Example: In D&C 107, 'Priesthood' is an office one is ordained to; in the NT, it is a status all believers possess through union with Christ.

"Bishop"

In Text: A local presiding judge who manages temporal things and judges transgressors (v68-74).

Evangelical: An overseer/pastor charged with teaching and shepherding the flock (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1).

Example: D&C 107 emphasizes the Bishop's role in 'administering all temporal things' and being a 'judge in Israel,' whereas the NT emphasizes teaching and spiritual oversight.

"Apostle"

In Text: A member of the 'Traveling High Council' (v23, 33) with administrative authority equal to the Presidency.

Evangelical: An eyewitness of the resurrected Christ commissioned to lay the foundation of the church (Acts 1:21-22, Ephesians 2:20).

Example: D&C 107 views Apostleship as a transferable office in a perpetual quorum; Evangelicals view the office as foundational and non-transferable.

SOTERIOLOGY

Salvation Defined: Implicitly defined here as access to the 'mysteries of the kingdom' and the 'presence of God' (Exaltation).

How Attained: Through the administration of the Melchizedek Priesthood and diligence in one's calling.

Basis of Assurance: Confidence is based on valid ordination and performance of duty ('he that is slothful shall not be counted worthy').

Comparison to Sola Fide: Directly opposes Sola Fide by making access to God dependent on priesthood keys and personal diligence in office rather than faith in Christ alone (Romans 5:1-2).

MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

Explicit Commands:

1. Let every man learn his duty (D&C 107:99)
2. Act in the office in which he is appointed in all diligence (D&C 107:99)
3. Decisions must be made in unity/unanimous voice (D&C 107:27)
4. Ordain evangelical ministers (patriarchs) (D&C 107:39)

Implicit Obligations:

1. Submission to the hierarchical structure
2. Acceptance of the President as a Moses-figure
3. Pursuit of priesthood advancement to access spiritual blessings

Ritual Requirements:

1. Ordination by laying on of hands
2. Administration of outward ordinances (baptism, sacrament) by proper authority

EVANGELISM TOOLKIT

Discovery Questions:

1. D&C 107:19 says the Melchizedek Priesthood is needed to 'enjoy the communion and presence of God.' How do you read Hebrews 10:19-22, which says we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus?
2. Verse 99 says 'he that learns not his duty... shall not be counted worthy to stand.' Does this pressure to perform ever make you worry about your standing before God?
3. The text mentions the Aaronic priesthood (v13). Why do you think the New Testament says the priesthood was changed because the Levitical/Aaronic priesthood could not bring perfection (Hebrews 7:11)?

Redemptive Analogies:

1. The desire to see God – The text correctly identifies the human longing to be in God's presence. The Gospel answers this not with a priesthood ladder, but with the torn veil. [Matthew 27:51, Hebrews 10:19-20]
2. The need for a Mediator – The text acknowledges Jesus as mediator but adds a layer of human bureaucracy. We can affirm the need for mediation while pointing to the sufficiency of Christ alone. [Hebrews 9:15]

Spiritual Weight:

1. Performance Anxiety / Fear of Failure [Severe] – The explicit threat that those who are 'slothful' or fail to learn their duty will not be 'counted worthy to stand' creates a perpetual anxiety about doing enough to secure one's place.
2. Gatekeeping / Dependence [Moderate] – Believers are taught they cannot fully commune with God without the authorization and ordinances of the hierarchy, creating a spiritual dependency on men rather than direct reliance on the Spirit.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowledge Source: Hierarchical Revelation. Truth flows from the Head (President/Moses figure) down to the body.

Verification Method: Obedience to the priesthood structure and personal spiritual confirmation of that structure.

Evangelical Contrast: Biblical epistemology tests all leaders and prophecies against the fixed standard of Scripture (Acts 17:11, Galatians 1:8). D&C 107 centralizes truth-determination in the 'Presidency of the High Priesthood' (v79-80) whose decision is 'an end of controversy.'

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Dating: Recorded 1835; incorporates revelation from 1831.

Authorship: Joseph Smith (claimed dictation from God).

Textual Issues: The text is a composite of a 1831 revelation and 1835 additions regarding the Twelve and Seventy. This redaction history suggests an evolving theology of church government rather than a static, original blueprint.