

Are You Having an Identity Crisis?

Put on Your Robe, Please!

1 Peter 2:4-9

When the Mormon arrives at your door, he will size you up and soon decide between one of several tacks. If he senses you might be a Christian, he will most likely get around to asking you “What is your authority?” This is because he believes Jesus Christ removed His authority from the apostate church and vested it in Joseph Smith and the subsequent LDS priesthoods which evolved, (the Aaronic and the Melchizedekan). Boys 12 years old and up are part of the first, and men only are later ordained into the LDS Melchizedekan priesthood. According to Mormons, priesthood holders can be authorized to preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of salvation, and govern the kingdom of God on the earth.

To be sure, *your* authority to preach comes directly from Matthew 28:18-20. The Great Commission was given to all those disciples who were present, not just apostles. But this is not where it ends. You are also a priest who ministers directly under our High Priest of the Melchizedekan order, the Lord Jesus Christ, who administers the everlasting New Covenant, not Mormonism’s imaginary covenant which supposedly replaces it. Enough about cults; let’s talk about us.

The part we must not ignore is that we now have priestly privileges and duties that are very carefully delineated in God’s Word. To name a few, we have sacrifices to make (Romans 12:1-2), we have prayers of petition and thanksgiving to offer (Heb. 13:15), the souls we bring to Christ (Romans 15:16), and even the giving of our material gifts are priestly offerings (2 Cor. 8).

Furthermore, as priests, we will be called upon to answer directly to Christ Himself regarding how we built upon Christ’s temple (the church) and how we kept it pure (2 Corinthians 3).

Sadly, very few Christians view their priesthoods as little more than a flowery metaphor. They have no idea that priestly *dynamics* come into play when we begin to carry out our priestly functions. In the end, they are powerless and fruitless. Give up on the empty pursuit of “Kingdom Authority” (which belongs to a future age) and begin experiencing the dynamics of your own priesthood priestly authority! Your priesthood is one of your New Covenant treasures. Enjoy it!

How these facts change the way I think and act.

I will begin investigating all that is involved in my holy priesthood, learn its dynamics, and present the kinds of offerings which please my God. I will build for eternity by building on Christ’s temple, now!

Things I want to reflect upon or remember....

Dispensational Definitions
The Role of the Church in this Dispensation

Our previous chapter was a simple generalization of various dispensational views. *You're not going to die if you didn't understand all those nuances. You're just better off if you do. Our purpose in this chapter is to look at *our present Dispensation* much in the way that God looks at it.

His Great Cause

First, we'll just *munch* on some of the riches of Ephesians for a few minutes (noticing those recurring words!) This is for our hearts. We'll see God's purpose in our family position, in the grand scheme of history, in overcoming principalities and powers, in filling all things, and in making us His temple.

His Glorious Church

Today's generation hates two things equally. They hate to give a direct answer to a direct question, and they hate being definitive. These tendencies represent the spirit of antichrist. It is extremely important that we understand the words, *church*, _____, *body*, and _____. We will not be discussing the term bride of Christ at this time.

It's time to work a little with our accompanying charts... Don't get lost in the detail. We will talk about the word *kingdom* first (slide only), and then the words *church*, *baptism*, and *body*. Remember, just reach for the big picture. Here is what we want to conclude:

Firstly: Now that you have looked at the chart, notice all the *unique things* which *combine* to make what we call the church today. **1.** It is uniquely founded upon _____ (Matt. 16:18.) **2.** It is uniquely unified and empowered through the _____ of the Spirit. **3.** It is uniquely the mystery form of Christ's _____ through which He works exclusively in our day. **4.** It is uniquely Christ's temple through which He carries out His _____ ministries. **These four elements combine to make this church unique in this age.** Remove or alter _____ of these elements and we are no longer dealing with the church which Paul describes. These *define* the church as we know it.

Secondly: These *uniquely combined* aspects of the church were _____ existent in the Old Testament, and will _____ be existent in the tribulation or the millennium.

My Constant Challenge

As a New Covenant correspondent, I am a fully vested _____. I am a fully vested _____ sharing Christ's tasks. I am a fully vested _____, with all the duties of a priest.

Because I am a member of Christ's church I share His perspective. I will love His church and remember that it is both _____ and _____ (Not Roman Catholic - which is neither). Eph. 5:22-23.

Because I have been *baptised into Christ* I have a new persona or identity. I am being changed (metamorphosised) into His image (2 Cor. 3:18). Specifically, I have been freed to share in the _____ of Christ.

Because I am a part of *Christ's body* I have a new partnership (_____) in ministry. 1 Cor. 10 Esp. vs. 16,17

Because I am a part of *Christ's temple*, I have a new priority. I will keep it pure and faithfully execute my _____ (priestly) duties. (The subject of our next chapter.)

*BTW: Students who would like to step deeper into the discussion are invited to ask for additional resources.

Dispensational Definitions

Note: Each of these terms is treated chronologically relative to the ages of the **Law** (left column), **Grace** (center column), and the **Kingdom** (on the right).

Chapter 13 - Dispensational Definitions, Cont.

<h3 style="margin: 0;">1. CHURCH</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">The word church simply means “called out ones” and can refer to any group of people in any time called out for any purpose. In this broadest sense, all of God’s people in every age can be seen as His church.</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">O.T. Acts 7:38</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Matt. 16:18 Church Age</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0;"> + Note: Because Jesus spoke of building a future church on a new foundation (Himself) we know that the church in this age is more than just a generic grouping of His people in all ages. </p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Matt. 18:17 Kingdom</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0;"> ↕ Yes - but in a broad sense only. There will be no local churches as we know them. </p>
<p style="margin: 10px 0;">Yes - but in a broad sense only.</p>	<p style="margin: 10px 0;"> + Yes. New Covenant ministry initiated the outward manifestation of the Baptism of the Spirit, first spread geographically, beginning in Acts 2. It results in the indwelling Christ, and indwelling Holy Spirit. </p>	<p style="margin: 10px 0;"> ↕ Yes, but...unlike the present manifestation of the Baptism of the Spirit, its manifestation will relate to the administration of the Kingdom. Scripture says little regarding how this plays out. <u>Therefore we do not speculate.</u> </p>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">2. BAPTISM of the Spirit</h3> <p style="margin: 10px 0;">No. Pre-Christian believers were credited with the righteousness of Christ but could not enjoy the practical benefits of the baptism of the Spirit which are only made available through the resurrection of Christ.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Romans 6 and I Cor 12:12,13</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Joel 2, Acts 2:16-21</p>
<p style="margin: 10px 0;">No. This concept was a mystery and absolutely foreign to the Old Testament believer.</p>	<p style="margin: 10px 0;"> + Body doctrine is closely linked to both of the previous terms. <i>We alone are the church which is His body.</i> This designation belongs to this age alone. More than a “metaphor,” Christ lives and works through us. </p>	<p style="margin: 10px 0;"> ↕ Beginning with the Day of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ executes the events of the tribulation and kingdom in His own physical body. </p>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">3. BODY of Christ</h3>	<p style="margin: 10px 0;"> + Temples are not simply the place where God places His name or dwells, they are the means through which the priesthood is administered. Temples and priests go together. </p>	
<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">4. TEMPLE</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">PHYSICAL TEMPLE</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0;">God allowed His name and His Shekinah presence to be associated with the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple. The Mosaic priesthood was also administered through the temple.</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">2 Samuel 7:13</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">SPIRITUAL TEMPLE</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0;"> 1. Christ indwells His temple and His Shekinah glory emanates from us. 2. We are a household of priests through whom our Priest ministers. </p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">Ephesians 2:19-22</p>
	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">PHYSICAL TEMPLE</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0;"> 1. Christ’s presence will once again be associated with the physical temple from which He reigns. 2. His priesthood will be administered from there. </p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">Zech. 6:12, Ezek. 42-43</p>	