

works of Abraham” (D&C 132:32; cf. John 8:39), to be willing to be “chastened and tried even as Abraham” (D&C 101:4), and to recognize that Abraham’s willingness in offering up his son was “a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son” (Jacob 4:5). In short, the command to honor one’s father and mother does not end with death, nor with the unfolding growth of the human family.

All patriarchal blessings are recorded and transcribed; copies are preserved in official Church archives and by the recipient. They are held sacred by those receiving them.

In the history of ISRAEL, as of the Latter-day Saints, the moving appeal of these blessings is incalculable. They open many doors to self-awareness. They have inspired men and women of renown, as well as those in the most obscure and remote places, to lose themselves in a realization of mission; to serve and give in the spirit of CONSECRATION. They have been a strength amidst the tests and temptations of life, a comfort in the darkness of bereavement and loss, and an anchor in stormy days, a “daily help in all the affairs of life” (Widtsoe, p. 74).

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## PATRIARCHAL ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD

To Latter-day Saints, the patriarchal order of the priesthood is the organizing power and principle of celestial family life. It is the ultimate and ideal form of government. It answers the query of Elder Parley P. Pratt: “Who can endure to be forever banished and separated from father, mother, wife, children and every kindred affection and from every family tie?” (Pratt, *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 23 [Apr. 1932]:59).

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints there are two priesthood divisions: the Aaronic and the Melchizedek. The highest order of the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD is patriarchal authority. The order was divinely established with father ADAM and mother EVE. They are the fount and progenitors of all living, and they will appear at the culmination of earth’s history at the head of the whole sealed family of the redeemed. The

promises given to ABRAHAM and SARAH pertain to this same order.

Three principles underlie the patriarchal order. First, the primal parents of the race were in their paradisiacal state in Eden united in eternal bonds before death entered their lives. Second, the fall of man and the continual source of degeneration in this world have resulted in the estrangement of parents from God, from each other, and from their children. Third, the healing of this broken harmony is the essence of ETERNAL LIFE, as is the perpetuation of powers of creation and procreation—eternal increase.

The patriarchal order is, in the words of Elder James E. Talmage, a condition where “woman shares with man the blessings of the Priesthood,” where husband and wife minister, “seeing and understanding alike, and cooperating to the full in the government of their family kingdom” (*Young Woman’s Journal* 25 [Oct. 1914]:602–603). A man cannot hold this priesthood without a wife, and a woman cannot share the blessings of this priesthood without a husband, sealed in the TEMPLE.

Concerning patriarchal authority, the Prophet Joseph SMITH admonished the Saints: “Go to and finish the [Nauvoo] temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood” (*TPJS*, p. 323, cf. D&C 107:18, 20). This priesthood and its associated powers were introduced in NAUVOO, Illinois, in 1843. It was first conferred upon the FIRST PRESIDENCY, the APOSTLES, and their wives (*WJS*, pp. 244–45).

Today dedicated husbands and wives enter this order in the temple in a COVENANT with God. The blessings of this priesthood is given only to husbands and wives together. Their covenants extend beyond this life (D&C 76:59, 60), beyond death (D&C 132:20–24), and into the resurrection, to eternal lives, the eternal giving and receiving of life.

Thus united, they work in love, faith, and harmony for the glorification of their family. If they are not united in obedient love, if they are not one, they are not of the Lord. Eventually, through this order, families will be linked in indissoluble bonds all the way back to the first parents, and all the way forward to the last child born into this world. This priesthood order will be both the means and the end of reconciliation, redemption, peace, joy, and eternal life.

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