

Born in the Covenant

Handbook 1, 3.6.2

Children who are born after their mother has been sealed to a husband in a temple are born in the covenant of that sealing. They do not need to receive the ordinance of sealing to parents. Being born in the covenant entitles children to an eternal parentage, depending on their faithfulness.

Russell M. Nelson

Years ago as a young medical student I saw many patients afflicted with diseases that are now preventable. Today it is possible to immunize individuals against conditions that once were disabling—even deadly. One medical method by which acquired immunity is conferred is inoculation. The term inoculate is fascinating. It comes from two Latin roots: *in*, meaning “within”; and *oculus*, meaning “an eye.” The verb *to inoculate*, therefore, literally means “to put an eye within”—to monitor against harm.

An affliction like polio can cripple or destroy the body. An affliction like sin can cripple or destroy the spirit. The ravages of polio can now be prevented by immunization, but the ravages of sin require other means of prevention. Doctors cannot immunize against iniquity. Spiritual protection comes only from the Lord—and in his own way. Jesus chooses not to inoculate, but to indoctrinate. His method employs no vaccine; it utilizes the teaching of divine doctrine—a governing “eye within”—to protect the eternal spirits of his children....

We are also children of the covenant. We have received, as did they of old, the holy priesthood and the everlasting gospel. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are our ancestors. We are of Israel. We have the right to receive the gospel, blessings of the priesthood, and eternal life. Nations of the earth will be blessed by our efforts and by the labors of our posterity. The literal seed of Abraham and those who are gathered into his family by adoption receive these promised blessings—predicated upon acceptance of the Lord and obedience to his commandments....

Children born to parents thus married are natural heirs to the blessings of the priesthood. They are born in the covenant. Hence, “they require no rite of adoption or sealing to insure them place in the posterity of promise.”

Rewards for obedience to the commandments are almost beyond mortal comprehension. Here, children of the covenant become a strain of sin-resistant souls. And hereafter, President Hunter, Emily, other children of the covenant, and “each generation would be linked to the one which went on before ... [in] the divine family of God.” Great comfort comes from the knowledge that our loved ones are secured to us through the covenants. (April 1995)

David A. Bednar

The following quotation appears in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith during his service as Church historian and recorder: “When a seal is put upon the

father and mother, it secures their posterity, so that they cannot be lost, but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father and mother.”

“When a father and mother of a [family](#) have [been sealed], their children *who have not transgressed* are secured by the seal wherewith the Parents have been sealed. And this is the Oath of God unto our Father Abraham and this doctrine shall stand forever.”

Faithful members of the Church can find comfort in knowing that they can lay claim to the promises of divine guidance and power, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the privileges of the priesthood, in their efforts to help family members receive the blessings of salvation and exaltation...

{There is} a type of spiritual power, a heavenly pull or tug that entices a wandering child to return to the fold eventually. Such an influence cannot override the moral agency of a child but nonetheless can invite and beckon. Ultimately, a child must exercise his or her moral agency and respond in faith, repent with full purpose of heart, and act in accordance with the teachings of Christ...

The influence of parents who honor covenants and obey commandments indeed can have a decisive spiritual impact upon children who stray by activating the tentacles of divine Providence—in ways that have not been revealed fully and are not understood completely. However, righteous parental influence (1) does not replace in the life of an individual the need for the redeeming and strengthening power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, (2) does not overrule the consequences of the unrighteous exercise of moral agency, and (3) does not negate the responsibility of an individual as an agent “to act ... and not to be acted upon” ([2 Nephi 2:26](#)).

Faithful parents may find strength to endure as they follow the examples of other righteous parents with disobedient children.

As parents are patient and persistent in loving their children and in becoming living examples of disciples of Jesus Christ, they most effectively teach the Father’s plan of happiness. The steadfastness of such parents bears powerful witness of the redeeming and strengthening powers of the Savior’s Atonement and invites wayward children to see with new eyes and to hear with new ears (see [Matthew 13:43](#)).

Acting in accordance with the teachings of the Savior invites spiritual power into our lives—power to hear and heed, power to discern, and power to persevere. Devoted discipleship is the best and only answer to every question and challenge. (Ensign, March 2014)

James E. Talmage (*Quorum of the Twelve*)

This system of holy matrimony, involving covenants as to time and eternity, is known distinctively as Celestial Marriage—the order of marriage that exists in the celestial worlds.... Children who are born of parents thus married are natural heirs to the Priesthood; "children of

the covenant" they are called; they require no rite of adoption or sealing to insure them place in the posterity of promise. (*Articles of Faith*, p.404)

Orson Pratt (*Quorum of the Twelve*)

[T]hose who have received the ordinances of marriage according to the divine appointment are married for all eternity; [and] their children are the legal heirs to the inheritances, and glories, and powers, and keys and Priesthood of their fathers, throughout the eternal generations that are to come. (*Journal of Discourses*, 17:189)

David B. Haight (*Quorum of the Twelve*)

Many of you were born under the covenant, your parents having made a covenant with God. You can, if worthy, "inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities," and have "exaltation and glory ... sealed upon [your] heads...forever and ever" (D&C 132:19). ("You Are Different," *New Era*, Apr 2003, p. 4)

Russell M. Nelson (*Quorum of the Twelve*)

We have the right to receive the fulness of the gospel, enjoy the blessings of the priesthood, and qualify for God's greatest blessing—that of eternal life.

Some of us are the literal seed of Abraham; others are gathered into his family by adoption. The Lord makes no distinction. Together we receive these promised blessings—if we seek the Lord and obey His commandments. But if we don't, we lose the blessings of the covenant....

Brethren of the covenant have the right to qualify for the oath and covenant of the priesthood....

Children of the covenant have the right to receive His doctrine and to know the plan of salvation. They *claim* it by making covenants of sacred significance. ("[Covenants](#)," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011)

George Q. Cannon (*First Presidency*)

It is not necessary, where parents are thus sealed together by the authority of the Holy Priesthood for time and for eternity, that their children should be adopted or be sealed to them. They are legitimate heirs of the Priesthood and of the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant. But not so with those who have been born outside of this covenant. There has to be some ordinance performed in order to make them legitimate; and that ordinance, the Prophet Joseph revealed, was the ordinance of adoption; that is, that which covers the ordinance or law, although we do not use the word adoption when we seal children to parents; we call that sealing. (*Collected Discourses*. 5 vols., ed. Brian H. Stuy [B. H. S. Publishing Woodland Hills, UT], Vol.4; April 8, 1894)

Joseph Fielding Smith (*Quorum of the Twelve*)

Death does not separate righteous parents who are joined by decree and authority of the Father, neither does it take from these parents their righteous children, for they are born under the covenant, and therefore, their parents have claim upon them forever....

It may be asked, what is the advantage coming to those born under the covenant? Being heirs they have claims upon the blessings of the gospel beyond what those not so born are entitled to receive. They may receive a greater guidance, a greater protection, a greater inspiration from the Spirit of the Lord; and then there is no power that can take them away from their parents.

Children, on the other hand, who are born to parents who were married until death separates them, have no claim upon such parents, and such parents have no claim upon the children after the resurrection from the dead.

Those born under the covenant, throughout all eternity, are the children of their parents. Nothing except the unpardonable sin, or sin unto death, can break this tie. If children do not sin as John says, "unto death," the parents may still feel after them and eventually bring them back near to them again....

All children born under the covenant belong to their parents in eternity, but that does not mean that they, because of that birthright, will inherit celestial glory. The faith and faithfulness of fathers and mothers will not save disobedient children.

Salvation is an individual matter, and if a person who has been born under the covenant rebels and denies the Lord, he will lose the blessings of exaltation....

It is the duty of parents to teach their children so that they will walk uprightly and thus obtain the blessings of their birthright.

But children born under the covenant, who drift away, are still the children of their parents; and the parents have a claim upon them; and if the children have not sinned away all their rights, the parents may be able to bring them through repentance, into the celestial kingdom, but not to receive the exaltation. Of course, if children sin too grievously, they will have to enter the telestial kingdom, or they may even become sons of perdition. (*Doctrines of Salvation* 2:90-91)

Brigham Young (*President*)

Were it not for what is revealed concerning the sealing ordinances, children born out of the covenant could not be sealed to their parents; children born in the covenant are entitled to the Spirit of the Lord and all the blessings of the kingdom. (*Journal of Discourses*, 18:249, 23 Jun 1874, Salt Lake City, Third Ward)

When a man and woman have received their endowments and sealings, and then had children born to them afterwards, those children are legal heirs to the Kingdom and to all its blessings and promises, and they are the only ones that are [heirs] on this earth. (*Journal of Discourses*, 11:118)

Our children who are born in the Priesthood are legal heirs, and entitled to the revelations of the Lord, and as the Lord lives, his angels have charge over them, though they may be left to themselves occasionally. (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:174)

Children born unto parents, before the latter enter into the fulness of the covenants, have to be sealed to them in a temple to become legal heirs of the Priesthood. It is true they can receive the ordinances, they can receive their endowments, and be blessed in common with their parents; but still the parents cannot claim them legally and lawfully in eternity unless they are sealed to them. (*Journal of Discourses*, 16:186)

Charles W. Penrose (*First Presidency*)

This is why he has given unto us laws with regard to the marriage relations, that Israel shall not marry Gentiles; that Israel shall wed Israel; that the daughters of God shall marry the sons of God, etc., in order that our children may be heirs to the blessings pertaining to the everlasting covenant, that by and by there may be a race of men and women upon the earth who will be holy unto the Lord, born with natural desires in them to do right, which they have inherited from their parents. (*Journal of Discourses*, 21:51, 29 Nov 1879, Provo, Tabernacle)