

# The Doctrine of Adoption into the Family of God

## Power to Become Sons of God

The following scriptures show the necessity of becoming sons of God:

- But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. (**John 1:12**)
- And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled. (**3 Nephi 9:17**)
- And after that he came men also were saved by faith in his name; and by faith, they become the sons of God. Moroni  
Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. (**Moroni 7:26,48**)
- But verily, verily, I say unto you, that as many as receive me, to them will I give power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on my name. (**D&C 11:30**)
- Who so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons of God. Wherefore you are my son; (**D&C 34:3**)
- I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was crucified for the sins of the world, even as many as will believe on my name, that they may become the sons of God, even one in me as I am one in the Father, as the Father is one in me, that we may be one. (**D&C 35:2**)
- I came unto mine own, and mine own received me not; but unto as many as received me gave I power to do many miracles, and to become the sons of God; and even unto them that believed on my name gave I power to obtain eternal life. (**D&C 45:8**)
- AND it came to pass that Enoch continued his speech, saying: Behold, our father Adam taught these things, and many have believed and become the sons of God, and many have believed not, and have perished in their sins, and are looking forth with fear, in torment, for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God to be poured out upon them. (**Moses 7:1**)

## Adam Became a Son of God

### Moses 6:64-68

And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water.

And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.

And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and

the Son, from henceforth and forever;

And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity.

Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons.

## Adoption Comes Through Ordinances

### Ezra Taft Benson

When our Heavenly Father placed Adam and Eve on this earth, He did so with the purpose in mind of teaching them how to regain His presence. Our Father promised a Savior to redeem them from their fallen condition. He gave to them the plan of salvation and told them to teach their children faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance. Further, Adam and his posterity were commanded by God to be baptized, to receive the Holy Ghost, and to enter into the order of the Son of God. *To enter into the order of the Son of God is the equivalent today of entering into the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is only received in the house of the Lord.* ("What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children About the Temple," *Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, pp. 42-43; also, *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, p. 8; emphasis added.)

## Adopted into the Family of God Necessary to Become As God

### John Taylor

A man, as a man, could arrive at all the dignity that a man was capable of obtaining or receiving; but it needed a God to raise him to the dignity of a God. For this cause it is written, "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him." And how and why like Him? Because, through the instrumentality of the atonement and the adoption, it is made possible for us to become of the family of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; and that as He, the potential instrument, through the oneness that existed between Him and His Father, by reason of obedience to divine law, overcame death, hell and the grave, and sat down upon His Father's throne, so shall we be able to sit down with Him, even upon His throne. (*Mediation and Atonement*, pp. 145-146)

### Bruce R. McConkie

As the literal Son of God -- the Firstborn in the spirit, the Only Begotten in the flesh -- Christ is the natural heir of his Father. It thus became his right to inherit, receive, and possess all that his Father had. (John 16:15.) And his Father is possessor of all things: the universe; all power, wisdom, and goodness; the fulness of truth and knowledge; and an infinity of all good attributes. By heirship and by obedience, going from grace to grace, the Son attained these same things. (D. & C. 93:5-17.)

By obedience to the fulness of gospel law, righteous men are adopted into the family of God so that they also become heirs, Joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:14-18; Gal. 3:26-29; 4:1-7), inheritors

of all that the Father hath. (D. & C. 134:33-41.) In his famous King Follett Sermon, speaking of those who “shall be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ,” the Prophet asked what their glory should be. Answering his own query, he described joint-heirship as inheriting “the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before.” (Teachings, p. 347.)

A joint-heir is one who inherits equally with all other heirs including the Chief Heir who is the Son. Each joint-heir has an equal and an undivided portion of the whole of everything. If one knows all things, so do all others. If one has all power, so do all those who inherit jointly with him. If the universe belongs to one, so it does equally to the total of all upon whom the joint inheritances are bestowed.

Joint-heirs are possessors of all things. (D. & C. 50:26-28.) All things are theirs for they have exaltation. (D. & C. 76:50-60.) They are made “equal” with their Lord. (D. & C. 88:107.) They gain all power both in heaven and on earth and receive the fulness of the Father, and all knowledge and truth are theirs. (D. & C. 93:15-30.) They are gods. (D. & C. 132:20.) Celestial marriage is the gate to this high state of exaltation. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 2, pp. 24, 35-39; D. & C. 131:1-4; 132.) [*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 394-395]

## Power of Elijah—Link the Family of God Together

### Brigham Young

I will here refer to a principle that has not been named by me for years. With the introduction of the Priesthood upon the earth was also introduced the sealing ordinance, that the chain of the Priesthood from Adam to the latest generation might be united in one unbroken continuance. It is the same power and the same keys that Elijah held, and was to exercise in the last days. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” By this power men will be sealed to men back to Adam, completing and making perfect the chain of the Priesthood from his day to the winding up scene. . . . I have had visions and revelations instructing me how to organize this people so that they can live like the family of heaven, but I cannot do it while so much selfishness and wickedness reign in the Elders of Israel. (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:269)

## There is Only One Family of God

### Joseph Fielding Smith

- Eventually, when this work is perfected, and Christ delivers up to his Father the keys and makes his report, and death is destroyed, then that great family from the days of Adam down, of all the righteous, those who have kept the commandments of God, will find that they are one family, the family of God, entitled to all the blessings that pertain to the exaltation.” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:68)
- When everything gets finished, we will all be one family—every member of the Church a member of one family, the family of God. And we will all be subject to our first progenitor, Adam,

Michael, the archangel, who has been appointed and given authority under Jesus Christ to stand at the head and preside over all his posterity. We are one family. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:173-174)

### Brigham Young

- We now want to organize the Latter-day Saints, every man, woman and child among them, who has a desire to be organized, into this holy order. You may call it the Order of Enoch, you may call it co-partnership, or just what you please. It is the United Order of the Kingdom of God on the earth; but we say the Order of Enoch on the same principle you find in the revelation concerning the Priesthood, which, to avoid the too frequent repetition of the name of the Deity, is called the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. This order is the order of heaven, the family of heaven on the earth; it is the children of our Father here upon the earth organized into one body or one family, to operate together. (*Journal of Discourses*, 17:44)
- It is lamentable to any person who understands by the visions of eternity the plan of salvation, the providences of God to His creatures, to see one who has his mind opened to see, understand, and embrace the principles of life and salvation in his faith, and who has the privilege of being adopted into the family of heaven, of becoming an heir with the Saints that have formerly lived upon the earth, an heir with the Prophets and with Jesus Christ, and of being numbered with the children of the Most High, with a legal administrator to officiate for the attainment of all these privileges, and to open the door of salvation and admittance into the kingdom, neglect so great a salvation. (*Journal of Discourses*, 4:58-59)

## We Cannot Be Saved Without Our Kindred Dead

### Joseph F. Smith

The same principles that apply to the living apply also to the dead. . . . And so we are baptized for those that are dead. The living cannot be made perfect without the dead, nor the dead be made perfect without the living. There has got to be a welding together and a joining together of parents and children and children and parents until the whole chain of God’s family shall be welded together into one chain, and they shall all become the family of God and His Christ. (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith*, p. 411).

### Wilford Woodruff

When I went before the Lord to know who I should be adopted to (we were then being adopted to prophets and apostles), the Spirit of God said to me, “Have you not a father, who begot you?” “Yes, I have.” “Then why not honor him? Why not be adopted to him?” “Yes,” says I, “that is right.” I was adopted to my father, and should have had my father sealed to his father, and so on back; and the duty that I want every man who presides over a temple to see performed from this day henceforth and forever, unless the Lord Almighty commands otherwise, is, let every man be adopted to his father. When a man receives the endowments, adopt him to his father; not to Wilford Woodruff, nor to any other man outside the lineage of his fathers. That is the will of God to this people. I want all men who

preside over these temples in these mountains of Israel to bear this in mind. What business have I to take away the rights of the lineage of any man? What right has any man to do this?. No; I say let every man be adopted to his father; and then you will do exactly what God said when he declared he would send Elijah the prophet in the last days. Elijah the prophet appeared unto Joseph Smith and told him that the day had come when this principle must be carried out. Joseph Smith did not live long enough to enter any further upon these things. His soul was wound up with this work before he was martyred for the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ. He told us that there must be a welding link of all dispensations and of the work of God from one generation to another. This was upon his mind more than most any other subject that was given to him. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p.155)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

**MEMBERSHIP IN FAMILY OF GOD.** When everything gets finished, we will all be one family -- every member of the Church a member of one family, the family of God. And we will all be subject to our first progenitor, Adam, Michael, the archangel, who has been appointed and given authority under Jesus Christ to stand at the head and preside over all his posterity. We are one family. And we all have to be joined to that family. So it is not merely enough that we be baptized for our dead or for ourselves, but also we have to be sealed to our parents. We must have the parents sealed to their parents and so on, as far back as we can go, and eventually back to Adam.

There will be cases where some of our ancestors will not be worthy and will drop out, but the links will have to be joined without them. So when the Prophet says we cannot be saved or exalted without our dead, he had this in mind. Suppose we do not do any work for our ancestors. Then where are we? We are out on a limb. We leave ourselves on the side lines. We are not joined into this great family. We may be born under the covenant and thus belong to our parents, but where there are breaks in that lineage we are not united.

**SEALINGS ESSENTIAL TO MEMBERSHIP IN GOD'S FAMILY.** And, therefore, when the Prophet says we cannot be exalted without them, he is thinking of the family connections -- generation to generation. And if we are going to sit down and do nothing and let our ancestors whose history we can obtain go without having their work done, we are just setting ourselves off on the side. We are not members, we do not have the credentials which permit us into that family. You see how important it is that we labor for our dead?

Why do we go into the temples to be sealed, husbands and wives, and children to parents, and why are we commanded to have this work done, not only for ourselves, but also to be sealed to our fathers and mothers, and their fathers and mothers before them, back as far as we can go? Because we want to belong to that great family of God which is in heaven, and, so far as the Church is concerned, on earth. That is why.

**NO PERFECTION WITHOUT OUR DEAD.** Now, some members of the Church have wondered just what was meant by the words of the Prophet, that we without our dead could not be made perfect. Will not a man who keeps the commandments of the Lord, who is faithful and true so far as he himself is concerned, receive perfection? Yes, provided his worthy dead also receive the same privileges, because there must be a family organization, a family unit, and each generation must be linked to the chain that goes before in order to bring perfection in family organization. Thus eventually we will be one large family with Adam at the head, Michael, the archangel, presiding over his posterity. . . .

**PERFECTION COMES THROUGH CELESTIAL FAMILY ORGANIZATION.** We are taught in the gospel of Jesus Christ that the family organization will be, so far as celestial exaltation is concerned, one that is complete -- an organization linked from father and mother and children of one generation, to the father and mother and children of the next generation, thus expanding and spreading out down to the end of time. If we fail to do the work, therefore, in the temples for our dead, you see our links in this chain -- genealogical chain -- will be broken; we will have to stand aside at least until that is remedied.

We could not be made perfect in this organization unless we are brought in by this selective or sealing power, and if we have failed to do the work for those of our line, who have gone before, we will stand aside until somebody comes along who will do it for us. And if we have had the opportunity and have failed to do it, then naturally we would be under condemnation, and I think all through eternity we would regret the fact that we had failed to do the thing that was placed before us to do and which was our duty to accomplish in the salvation of the children of men.

**NO SALVATION WITHOUT OUR WORTHY DEAD.** The expression about not being saved without our dead is greatly misunderstood. We will all be saved without some of our dead, without any question. The Lord cannot save the wilfully wicked, and they will not be saved, nor will those be who refused to accept the work. This expression means that we cannot be saved without our dead who prove themselves worthy of salvation. The Lord will not save all of his family. One third of them rebelled in pre-existence. We are doing the genealogical work for those who died before the gospel was restored and who did not have the chance, not for those who had all the chance in the world and would not receive it. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:173-176)

## **Sealing of Children**

### **James E. Talmage**

Children born to parents thus married under the celestial law are heirs to the Priesthood; 'children of the covenant' they are called; no ordinance of adoption or sealing is required to give them place in the blessed posterity of promise. (*The House of the Lord*, p.88.)

### **George Q. Cannon**

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, Vol.4)