

# When Should I Get My Patriarchal Blessing?

BY ROBERT K WAGSTAFF

Patriarch, Springville Utah West Stake

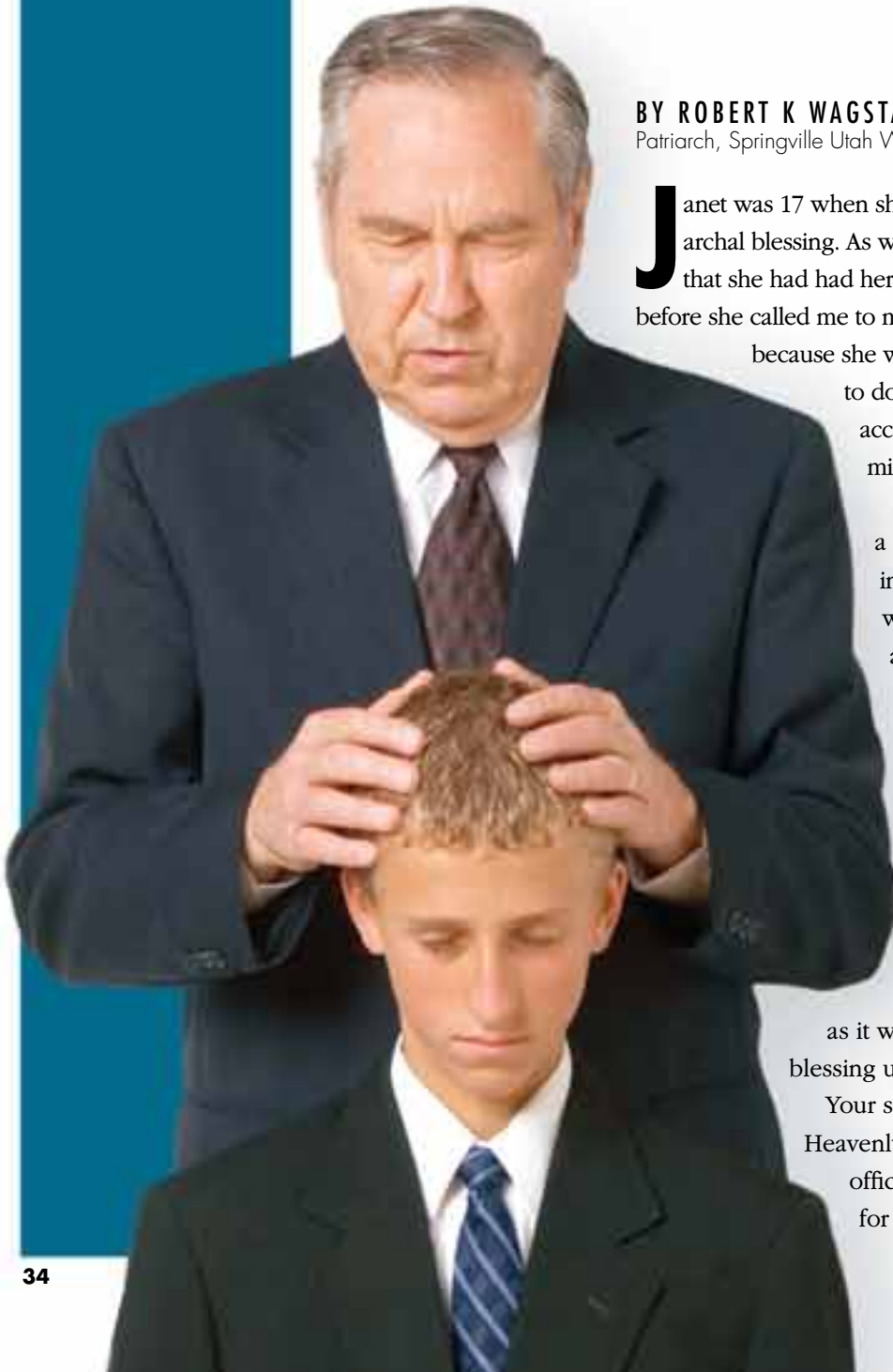
**J**anet was 17 when she came to my home to receive her patriarchal blessing. As we talked before her blessing, I learned that she had had her bishop's recommend for a few months before she called me to make the appointment. She had waited because she was afraid that her blessing would ask her to do things that would be too hard for her to accomplish. She was also worried that she might not be ready.

"A promise from Heavenly Father is not a commandment," I told her. "The promises in your blessing will be fulfilled only if you want and work for them to happen." I also assured her that as a patriarch, I would not judge her or reprimand her. I would give her a blessing.

## What Is a Patriarch?

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained, "Wherever the Church of Christ is established in the earth, there should be a Patriarch for the benefit of the posterity of the Saints, as it was with Jacob in giving his patriarchal blessing unto his sons."<sup>1</sup>

Your stake patriarch is a dedicated servant of Heavenly Father. He has been ordained to the office of patriarch and will hold that office for the rest of his life. He is usually an



older man who knows many things that you will face as you grow older.

His calling is to give blessings. He is not a counselor, so he does not counsel. He is not a bishop, so he does not judge. When he places his hands on your head to give you a blessing, Heavenly Father, through the promptings of the Holy Ghost, gives the patriarch ideas, concepts, and sometimes even specific words for you. The patriarch then includes those concepts and ideas in your blessing.

### What Is a Patriarchal Blessing?

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) described a patriarchal blessing as a “[paragraph] from the book of your possibilities.”<sup>2</sup> As your patriarch places his hands on your head, you will find that your blessing will usually include:

#### ***A statement of the authority of the patriarch.***

Blessings are given by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood and through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

***A declaration of lineage.*** Each member of the Church inherits spiritual blessings and responsibilities through one of the twelve tribes of Israel. By inspiration from the Spirit, the patriarch declares the tribe through which you will receive these blessings. This lineage is not



### A BLESSING AND TESTIMONY

*“A patriarchal blessing is a very unique and remarkable privilege that can come to the faithful members of the Church having sufficient maturity to understand the nature and the importance of such blessings. These privileged blessings are a powerful witness of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ in bringing exaltation to each of us. . . . Our testimonies can be strengthened and fortified and our lives given greater purpose every time we read and reread our patriarchal blessings.”*

**President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Patriarchal Blessings,” *Tambuli*, June 1983, 30; “Your Patriarchal Blessing,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 4.**

determined simply by your race or nationality. Members of the same genetic family can be from different tribes of Israel. This lineage often has to do with your responsibilities in the Lord’s kingdom. Many members of the Church are of the lineage of Ephraim, Manasseh, or Judah, which are the most common tribes of Israel at this time in our progress of preaching the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.<sup>3</sup>

***A personal blessing.*** In this portion of your blessing, you will receive inspired and prophetic statements about your life. Your blessing may also include various accomplishments to be realized, promises the Lord has for you, and admonitions and warnings to help protect you from harm or adversity. Your blessing will not include every event that will happen to you, but it will include those that you need to be especially mindful of. If fulfilling a mission is not mentioned, it does not mean that you cannot fulfill a mission. It may indicate only that fulfilling a mission is something God feels you can do without special emphasis in your patriarchal blessing.

Your blessing may be long or short. The length of your blessing is not a measure of your worthiness.

Reading your blessing is much like reading the scriptures. As you read it, new ideas about what you should do and good feelings about your life will come to you. The more you read your blessing, the more you will understand its meaning for you.

Your patriarchal blessing is a revelation given just to you.

It is personal, sacred, and confidential. You should not share it just to satisfy another's curiosity. "It is given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and should be read and interpreted under the influence of that same Spirit."<sup>4</sup>

### **When Should I Get a Patriarchal Blessing?**

Simply stated, the best time for you to receive a blessing is when you are ready. Being

"ready" means being emotionally as well as spiritually prepared. This will probably be during your teenage years. This is when you start to become independent and begin to wonder about life and what will happen to you.

You will reach the point when you truly desire to have a blessing—not

because your friends are getting theirs but because you desire it for yourself. This may happen when you see others do things that you know are wrong. It may happen when a friend or relative dies. It may happen when you hear a

talk in church that touches your heart. It may happen as you read the scriptures and learn more about the Savior. It may happen when you are alone and begin to feel God's love for you. It may happen as you approach the age to serve a mission, go away to college, enter military service, or marry in the temple.

### **How Do I Get a Patriarchal Blessing?**

When you are ready to receive a patriarchal blessing, you will be interviewed by your bishop or branch president. He will ask you questions about your worthiness, such as whether you live the Word of Wisdom, pay a full tithe, live a morally clean life, and are an active member of the Church. However, you do not need to be perfect to be worthy. Desiring a blessing and wanting to know how you can live closer to your Heavenly Father are also as important as being worthy. You can increase your desire for a blessing by personal prayer, gospel study, and by striving to listen to the Spirit.

After you receive your blessing, the patriarch will provide you with a written copy. Keep this copy in a safe place. Do not lose it. However, if you ever need to obtain a copy, you can contact Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

A patriarchal blessing is available to every worthy member of the Church. It is a personal gift to you from your loving Heavenly Father, who desires to enhance and guide your life and to help you return to live with Him. ■

### **NOTES**

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society course of study, 2007), 140.
2. Karl G. Maeser, quoted in Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places* (1975), 117.
3. See Dallin H. Oaks, "Patriarchal Blessings," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 8, 2005, 8.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, "Patriarchal Blessings," 10.

