

based on our faithfulness, we can return to dwell in the presence of our Heavenly Father forever.

*See also* Fall

## **Paradise**

In the scriptures, the word *paradise* is used in different ways. First, it designates a place of peace and happiness in the postmortal spirit world, reserved for those who have been baptized and who have remained faithful (see Alma 40:12; Moroni 10:34). Those in spirit prison have the opportunity to learn the gospel of Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, and receive the ordinances of baptism and confirmation through the work we do in temples (see D&C 138:30–35). When they do, they may enter paradise.

A second use of the word *paradise* is found in Luke’s account of the Savior’s Crucifixion. When Jesus was on the cross, a thief who also was being crucified said, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). According to Luke 23:43, the Lord replied, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that this is a mistranslation; the Lord actually said that the thief would be with Him in the world of spirits.

The word *paradise* is also found in 2 Corinthians 12:4, where it probably refers to the celestial kingdom. In the tenth article of faith, the word *paradisiacal* describes the earth’s glory in the Millennium.

*See also* Death, Physical; Plan of Salvation; Resurrection

## **Patriarchal Blessings**

Patriarchal blessings are given to worthy members of the Church by ordained patriarchs. Your patriarchal blessing declares your lineage in the house of Israel and contains personal counsel from the Lord to you.

As you study your patriarchal blessing and follow the counsel it contains, it will provide guidance, comfort, and protection. To find out how to receive a patriarchal blessing, talk with your bishop or branch president.

### Declaration of Lineage

Your patriarchal blessing includes a declaration of your lineage, stating that you are of the house of Israel—a descendant of Abraham, belonging to a specific tribe of Jacob. Many Latter-day Saints are of the tribe of Ephraim, the tribe given the primary responsibility to lead the latter-day work of the Lord.

Because each of us has many bloodlines running in us, two members of the same family may be declared as being of different tribes in Israel.

It does not matter if your lineage in the house of Israel is through bloodlines or by adoption. As a member of the Church, you are counted as a descendant of Abraham and an heir to all the promises and blessings contained in the Abrahamic covenant (see “Abrahamic Covenant,” pages 5–6).

### Learning from Your Patriarchal Blessing

Once you have received your patriarchal blessing, you should read it humbly, prayerfully, and frequently. It is a personal revelation from your Heavenly Father, who knows your strengths, weaknesses, and eternal potential. Through your patriarchal blessing, He will help you learn what He expects of you. Your blessing may contain promises, admonitions, and warnings. As time goes on, you will recognize the power of the revelation in it.

As you follow the counsel in your blessing, you will be less likely to stumble or be misled. If you do not follow the counsel, you will not be able to receive the promised blessings.

While your patriarchal blessing contains inspired counsel and promises, you should not expect it to answer all your

questions or to detail all that will happen in your life. If your blessing does not mention an important event, such as a full-time mission or marriage, you should not assume that you will not receive that opportunity.

Similarly, you should not assume that everything mentioned in your patriarchal blessing will be fulfilled in this life. A patriarchal blessing is eternal, and its promises may extend into the eternities. Be assured that if you are worthy, all promises will be fulfilled in the Lord's due time. Those that are not realized in this life will be fulfilled in the next.

Your patriarchal blessing is sacred and personal. You may share it with immediate family members, but you should not read it aloud in public or permit others to read it or interpret it. Not even your patriarch or bishop or branch president should interpret it.

Treasure in your heart the precious words in your patriarchal blessing. Ponder them, and live so that you will be worthy to receive the promised blessings in this life and in the life to come.

## **Peace**

Many people think of peace as the absence of war. But we can feel peace even in times of war, and we can lack peace even when no war is raging. The mere absence of conflict is not enough to bring peace to our hearts. Peace comes through the gospel—through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the ministration of the Holy Ghost, and our own righteousness, sincere repentance, and diligent service.

Even when the world is in turmoil all around you, you can receive the blessing of inner peace. This blessing will continue with you as you stay true to your testimony of the gospel and as you remember that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love you and watch over you.

In addition to feeling peace yourself, you can be an influence for peace in your family, your community, and the world.