



### **YOUR PERSONAL LIAHONA**

"Your blessing is not to be folded neatly and tucked away. It is not to be framed or published. Rather, it is to be read. It is to be loved. It is to be followed. Your patriarchal blessing will see you through the darkest night. It will guide you through life's dangers. . . . Your patriarchal blessing is to you a personal Liahona to chart your course and guide your way."

**President Thomas S. Monson, "Your Patriarchal Blessing: A Liahona of Light," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 66.**

# Understanding Your Patriarchal Blessing



By Allie Arnell and Margaret Willden

Life is full of uncharted waters: *Where should I go to school? What should I study? Should I go on a mission? Whom should I marry?* If you were given a personal map to navigate the decisions of life, would you follow it?

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have given us such a map—patriarchal blessings—to give us direction in our lives. Though we are given the gift of agency to make decisions of our own free will, patriarchal blessings can shed light on what paths will bring the greatest happiness.

But simply having a map isn't enough. We must study, understand, and apply the meaning within the map. Likewise, as you come to understand the language used in your patriarchal blessing—your own personal guide to life—you will be able to discern who you are in God's eyes and what you can become.

## Discover Your Lineage

First and foremost, your patriarchal blessing declares your lineage, or the specific tribe of the twelve tribes of Jacob (who was later called Israel) to which you belong. Though we are not all literal descendants of Jacob, the scriptures teach us that Church members are adopted into the house of Israel: "For as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father" (Abraham 2:10).

Shelisa Schroepel of Utah, USA, says, "Knowing that I'm from the house of Jacob helps me understand my purpose in this life and why I'm called to certain callings in the Church."

Your patriarchal blessing may also describe any related blessings that accompany your particular tribe. For instance, many members of the Church belong to the tribe of Ephraim, a tribe that has the unique responsibility to

Identifying the parts of your blessing can help you find direction for your life.

spread the message of the restored gospel to the world (see Deuteronomy 33:13–17; D&C 133:26–34).

## Find Personal Counsel

When used properly, a map keeps a traveler from becoming lost. Similarly, on this earthly journey, your patriarchal blessing may offer counsel and direction for your life. Your patriarchal



## TIPS FOR STUDY

- Identify counsel, warnings, talents, and promises in your patriarchal blessing. Pray about how they might apply to you in your current stage of life.
- Study your blessing thoroughly and often throughout your life. The same sentence can have multiple meanings to you at different times.
- Remember that a patriarchal blessing doesn't mention every aspect of your life. Even if an important goal isn't mentioned in your blessing, it can still be an important thing to strive for.
- Be obedient to the gospel. The blessings in your patriarchal blessing are contingent upon your righteousness.
- Set goals to seek the gifts and develop the talents mentioned in your blessing.
- Reflect on where you are headed in life and where you eventually want to be. How do your goals align with your patriarchal blessing?
- Consider making a copy of your patriarchal blessing to use for study. You can write insights, highlight words that stand out, and note scriptures that relate to your blessing.

blessing doesn't simply tell you what to do, but it can offer personalized insights about which paths—if pursued in faith—can help you know when you're aligning your life with Heavenly Father's will. As you study your patriarchal blessing and seek to live in a manner that invites the Spirit of the Lord, you can find safety, joy, and direction.

Gabriel Paredes of Lima, Peru, says, "Some of the counsel that was given to me in my blessing I have only been able to fully apply with my family after being sealed to my wife.

"Recently we had been wondering what we could do to strengthen and build our new family. Our question was answered through my patriarchal blessing. In it I am advised to prioritize respect, tolerance, and love in my family, because these are some of the important foundations of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"As we have focused on this, my wife and I have been able to overcome problems. We still have occasional challenges as a family, but we're happy. I felt like the Lord was reminding me how I could have the family that He promised me. I know that the Lord speaks through patriarchal blessings and that the counsel in them is to be used in our lives."

### Heed Admonitions

A map won't necessarily mark every hazard along the way, but fortunately, patriarchal blessings often

sound warnings to protect us along the way. Some of these admonitions help protect us from Satan's influence; others might enlighten us on how we can overcome the natural man within us.

For Caitlin Carr of Utah, some of the admonitions in her patriarchal blessing weren't immediately clear, but later study of her blessing yielded new insights.

"When I received my patriarchal blessing, I was warned about people who would try and sway me from the truth with pleasing talk. I didn't think much of it; I had a firm belief in the doctrines I'd been taught.

"However, the following year I was confronted with ideas and philosophies that, on the surface, seemed rooted in fairness and love but were not. These messages seemed to be coming from everywhere: the media, school, even close friends. Even though I knew these philosophies were contrary to God's plan, I found myself wanting to support both these new worldly ideas *and* the Church. I soon realized that 'no man can serve two masters' (Matthew 6:24) and that I shouldn't rely on the wisdom of men. Heavenly Father resolved my doubts through the scriptures and spoke peace to my mind and heart. As a result, my testimony has been strengthened and I have become more firm in defending that which I know to be true."

## Develop Gifts and Talents

Your patriarchal blessing can also mention spiritual gifts and talents that the Lord has given you to build up His kingdom. If your blessing mentions a talent that is unfamiliar to you, this could be because you may not yet have had the chance to discover or develop this talent. Through diligent seeking and the help of the Lord, you can grow to embody this talent and many more.

Developing your talents helps you recognize the unique things you contribute to the Lord's work. Johanna Blackwell of California, USA, ponders the gifts and talents in her blessing when she feels tempted to compare herself with others: "As I look over the words in my patriarchal blessing, I am reminded that I have been blessed with the gifts I've personally needed to overcome trials and participate in the hastening of the Lord's work.

"My blessing tells me of my ability to love, forgive, and have the courage to mingle with those around me. As I've practiced these gifts, the Lord has blessed me with an increased desire to encounter and connect with new people and cultures. Consequently, my testimony has grown that we are all children of a loving Heavenly Father, and I've been able to serve others as we each seek to become more like Christ."

## Seek Promised Blessings

Lastly, our patriarchal blessings reveal Heavenly Father's promised blessings to us if we remain faithful to Him. There is no guarantee as to when these promises will be fulfilled, but we can know that as long as we obediently live the gospel, they will be fulfilled, whether in this life or the next.

Sergio Gutierrez of Nevada, USA, relies on a promise in his patriarchal

blessing whenever he feels worried about his future career plans: "At times I feel anxious about the uncertainty in my future, but there is a promise in my patriarchal blessing that always sets my mind at ease. This promise helps me know that as long as I work hard and remain faithful, I will have the necessary resources to be able to care for my family and to build up the Church. I don't know exactly what career path I want to pursue yet, but having this promise gives me faith and confidence."

If you've ever wondered what Heavenly Father's will is for you, you're not alone. The Lord understood that you would be faced with many different paths you could pursue in your life, so He has provided you with a personal map to keep your life aligned with His gospel. Patriarchal blessings can't make our decisions for us, but they can lead us to our own personal revelation. Through our patriarchal blessings, we are shown how we fit into the Lord's plan to gather Israel by learning of our tribe; we are given personal counsel, admonitions, and promises; and we are taught about the unique gifts and talents Heavenly Father has given us to serve Him. As long as you try to live in accordance with all of these elements of your own patriarchal blessing, you can know that your decisions have been within the Lord's will for your life. ■

*The authors live in Illinois, USA, and New York, USA, respectively.*



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