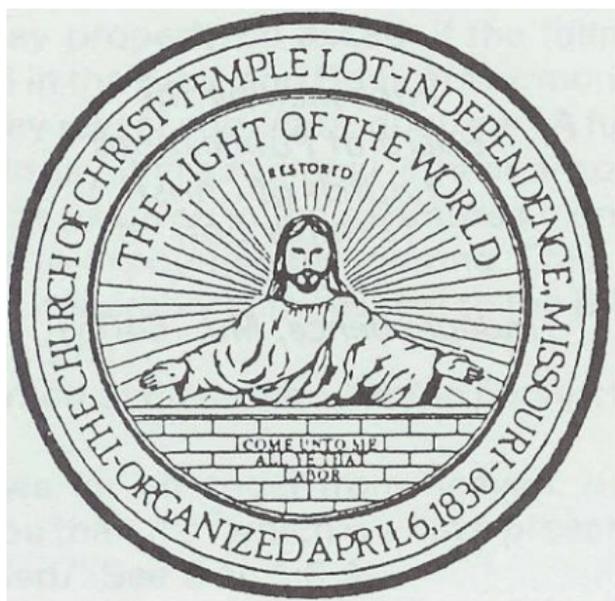


## What About Those Temple Ordinances?

# IS MARRIAGE FOR TIME AND ETERNITY?



*By Apostle William A. Sheldon*

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## What About Those Temple Ordinances?

### IS MARRIAGE FOR TIME AND ETERNITY?

By *Apostle William A. Sheldon*

A popular philosophy has developed among some of the latter day saint faith which we wish to examine, believing that the scriptures of the Bible and Book of Mormon are the only safe standards of measurement (see Isa. 8:20; Ezek. 37:19). Latter day revelation gives assent to these standards in this language:

"And again, the elders, priests, and teachers of this church, shall teach the scriptures which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the *fullness of the gospel*..." Book of Commandments 44:13; see also Utah D. & C. 42:12. All emphasis here and subsequently, is mine, (W.A.S).

The question may properly be asked: if the fullness of the gospel of Christ is contained in the Bible and Book of Mormon, will the words of the Lord in the latter day reveal *additional* doctrine? A fullness is a *fullness*, is it not? This is not to say that additional light may not be revealed relative to points of doctrine a!> given in the scriptures mentioned, but such will amplify rather than to expound new doctrine. This, the Book of Mormon accomplishes most admirably with respect to the Bible, in which all latter day saints should agree.

Apostle Paul warned of those who "would pervert the gospel of Christ, saying further:

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." See Gal. 1 :6-9.

This warning is as timely and applicable today as it was then, and therefore the question before us deserves serious consideration, followed by wholehearted support (if true), or condemnation (if

false): is marriage for time and eternity?

That marriage is altogether holy and provided for by God as a desirable and necessary condition upon the earth for the well-being of mankind and its propagation, all latter day saints will agree. That the same conditions and needs are to be experienced beyond this mortal existence is quite another matter, which we expect to refute. While the ability to reproduce its own kind is a God given power to all living things, and is a primary reason for the marriage bond in the human family, yet when man has fulfilled this measure of God's purpose, there remains an overriding fulfillment of purpose in the creation: this is, that the human family should use the further gift of God - his intelligence and freedom of choice - to serve the Lord. This latter purpose is by far the more important. Were we to believe in a necessity of there being great multitudes of people in order for the Lord to raise up a righteous seed unto Himself, we might well concede polygamy or plural marriage, as a divine requirement. But God's seed is spiritual, not physical, and is few or many; just as many as obey His voice. Please read, in this connection, Mosiah 8:25, 39-43; Utah Book of Mormon, Mosiah 14:10; 15:10,11.

It is not our purpose here to enter into a discussion of polygamy (though it is relative), because to do so would make this treatise longer than desirable. Suffice it to say at this point, that the Book of Mormon expressly condemns it, despite the twisting of one statement recorded therein by some of polygamy's apologists to make it appear favorable to the Lord. It is interesting (though sad) to witness the theological acrobatics engaged in attempting to reconcile the polygamous revelation (Utah D & C 132) with this: "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and *none else...*" (Book of Commandments 44:22; Utah D & C 42:22); and this: "Wherefore it is lawful that he should have *one* wife, and they *twain* shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made." (Book of Commandments 52:17; Utah D & C 49:16).

If the earth is to be "filled with the measure of man" - the full measure of all whom God has intended should be here - why should it be necessary, or even reasonable, that mankind should continue the procreative process beyond mortality, in the resurrected state? The thought has been advanced that men are "co-creators" with God. This can only be in a limited sense; not in actuality. All things in the heavens and the earth were created - the work was finished - in the six days of creation, as recorded in Genesis, and this included *all* men; every spirit which was to become a living soul when given a fleshy tabernacle.

"Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image (Christ speaking, W.A.S.)? Yea, even *all men were created in the beginning*, after mine own image." (Ether 1:80; Utah, Ether 2:15).

In the Utah Doctrine and Covenants 131 is recorded the following language:

"In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage); and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase."

The "increase" referred to is, children. Again, we read in section 132:4:

"For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then ye are damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory."

In the two preceding quotations, we find reference to marriage as a "new and everlasting covenant". The contexts show that this covenant is to be administered "through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power", and that "there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred" (see para. 7 and 18). This covenant was to be "for time and for all eternity", and the original administrator was to be Joseph Smith. Let us take note of these two points.

*First:* what is the "new and everlasting covenant"? A revelation received previously, in April 1830, speaks of "a new and everlasting covenant; even that which was from the beginning"

(Book of Commandments 23:1; Utah D & C 22:1). This referred to baptism, under a divinely authorized priesthood commission, as restored in the latter days, and it militated against sectarian baptisms. Of course! The new and everlasting covenant pertains to entrance into the kingdom of God through this prescription! Is there more than one "new and everlasting covenant" which is pertinent to salvation, or entering into His glory? Certainly not; the idea is unthinkable! We are to covenant with God to take upon us the name of Christ through baptism by water to "*fullfill all righteousness*" (think on this) that we may receive a remission of our sins. And then "if ye shall press forward feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold; thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life .....and there is *none other way*..... .....whereby man may enter into the kingdom of God.....this is the doctrine of Christ and the *only and true doctrine* of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end." See 2 Ne. 13; Utah, 2 Ne. 31. Dear reader, the doctrine of section 132 (Utah D & C) is *not* the doctrine of Christ.

But let us examine this section further.

"For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then ye are damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory" (par. 4).

If this be true, how dare any of its believers to do otherwise? LeGrand Richards (A Marvelous Work and a Wonder) interprets the foregoing thus:

"When the Lord indicated that if one does not enter into this everlasting covenant of marriage he will be "damned", he did not mean that he is consigned to eternal burning in a lake of fire and brimstone, as most Christians understand damnation. He simply informed the people that the progress of such an individual is stopped; he cannot have eternal increase and hence he cannot enter into "my glory" " (pg. 194).

Marvellous conclusion, this! But such an interpretation is without scriptural backing, or foundation in reason. Hear further:

"A man may get along all right without a woman in this world or a woman without a man, but without each other they cannot enter into his glory in the world to come" (I bid. pg. 195)

This leaves one virtually speechless, not for want of refutation, but as a matter of human credulity. Since when is salvation or exaltation dependent upon whether one is married, or not married!! Our informant answers:

"This glorious principle of eternal marriage did not come to the prophet Joseph Smith by reading the Bible, but through the revelations of the Lord to him" (Ibid pg. 195).

It is not our purpose to attack a man, nor a church; but as the foregoing fairly represents a system inimical to the pure doctrine of Christ and His apostles, we do not hesitate to raise the voice and exercise the pen against such a principle. It is certainly a "new" covenant, but one-sided, and thus without force, for God has never instituted such.

That He has permitted some things ("And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30) we are free to admit; but that He has ever given commandment to such, we must deny. Ancient Israel demanded a king, contrary to the counsel of God. God gave them a king, and blessed such in righteousness - but it was not His will, and they suffered for it. When He gave to Adam a wife, it was one, not more than one - "and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Just incidentally: can a man be "one flesh" with more than one woman in the sight of God? The implication is that a man shall be wholly given\_ to a woman, and vice versa.

"And did not He make one? Yet had He the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one" That He might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth". Mal. 2: 15.

The provision for a man for a woman, and a woman for a man (I Cor. 11 :11) is evidently pertaining to mortality; not, immortality. "Hold," says one! "If it is not good for a man to be alone in mortality, it is not good beyond this life". Well, so we reason, and so it might appear; but God's way is not man's way, saith the scripture. If it be so that the marriage bond should continue into the immortal state, then it should have been so in the pre-existent state; and if it were so then (of which we have never heard claim), then why marry in the here and now? The pre-existent mating should have continued into mortality.

Again: if damnation is for those who abide not this "new and everlasting covenant", should not those who espoused polygamy as a part of this covenant have maintained it to the bitter end, despite the law of the land? Should not a people hearken to God rather than man? (Acts 5:29). Well, however misguided, some have done so through the years, but President Wilford Woodruff on behalf of his church, declared against it advising the Latter Day Saints "to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land." Thus, the laws of the land superseded what was supposedly God's law – the "new and everlasting covenant" which approved of plural marriage.

This new covenant, as before stated, provided for but one at any given time to have the keys, or authority, to bind it upon the faithful adherents. This was given to Joseph Smith, according to section 132; after his death, it is assumed that the authority was to be transferred to his successor, and so on. How many hundreds or thousands of couples have been sealed to each other by reason of this "revelation" (?) we may only guess. We are informed that the sealing authority remains with the president, or successors to Joseph Smith in their order of presidency, but that this authority is delegated to others to assist in this sealing ordinance. How this delegation of authority is justified is certainly not indicated in section 132; we will leave this matter to the reader's judgment. We presume it hinges in the main, on the validity of section 132.

Another provision in this revelation which was made to Joseph, and by inference, to all others of the seed of Abraham who should receive this new covenant, is that their seed should multiply in this world and *out of the world* (par. 30 and 55); that they should receive "crowns of eternal lives". It is evidently for this reason that the faithful have their fathers and mothers and children, etc. sealed to them in the temples (and these sealings may only be obtained in a temple). We affirm that all sealings in marriage and of children or relatives to those who have been sealed is contrary to the word of God as revealed in the Bible and Book of Mormon. The Gospel of Christ requires obedience to His law and endurance to the end of life in the faith of Christ (the only means by which any may attain to the celestial kingdom of God).

It is pure assumption to teach or believe that such temple

sealings can secure a continuation of the family relationship into eternity. This flies in the face of any reasonable concept of free agency granted to mankind, and is without a shadow of Scriptural evidence or proof.

Before leaving our consideration of section 132, a few observations of Joseph Smith's connection to it will be in order.

It was supposedly given to him in 1843 (recorded July 12, 1843), but the document did not come to light until after Joseph's death in 1844; not until produced by Brigham Young in 1852. This fact throws a large shadow upon its authenticity as having come through Joseph; and if divine, why was it withheld?

That Joseph was connected with the production of a doctrine which formed the basis for the development of polygamy is virtually undeniable. This doctrine was a "spiritual wife" system; a sealing of a man to his wife for eternity as well as for time.

That polygamy was also secretly practiced in the church during the later years of Joseph's life is a known fact; however, it is also known that Joseph and his brother Hyrum, denounced it soundly, cutting off its' main proponent, John C. Bennett, from the church. Various women testified to having been sealed to Joseph as his spiritual wives. If so, it was all in secret, having been kept from his lawful wife, Emma. In later years, she testified that Joseph had no other wife than herself. It appears certain that there were no children by Joseph except through Emma, and therefore, that he was not guilty of polygamy. We suspect that any recorded sealings of other women to Joseph was done after his death.

Joseph had a conversation with William Marks, president of the high council at Nauvoo, in 1844, concerning polygamy. Marks stated orally, and bore written testimony, that Joseph came to him privately and told him that he (Joseph) thought it would benefit the church, but became convinced it would be a curse and prove destructive to it. Marks was to cut off those in the church who taught and practiced the doctrine and Joseph would preach against it. However, Joseph's enemies were upon him, and he soon lost his life; his plan *Was* not implemented. See RLDS Church History, vol. 2; pp. 733-34.

The whole fabric of temple marriage with its sealing ordinances is woven upon the framework of continuation and expansion of the family unit from this mortal state into that of immortality. Those sealed are to become gods, having their own dominion; to receive

exaltation upon exaltation, with out end. Glory and honor (worship??) is to be accorded throughout eternity by the numberless progeny of the union sealed upon earth. Eternal progress is the key, so that one may attain unto the glory of God, the Father of us all. He, in the meantime, is also progressing. According to this philosophy, our God has a father, and that father has a father, and so on add infinitum. Contrast this with the statement of God: " Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; *I know not any.*" Isa. 44:8.

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Our analysis of the subject before us would not be sufficiently complete (though this is not intended to be exhaustive) without a consideration of Isaiah 65:17-25. It is often the case that a given prophecy may cover generations of time, or even the scope of vision from eternity to all eternity in a few brief words or sentences. So it is with this text. Verse 17 refers to the "new heavens and a new earth" which is to occur after the 1000 year reign of Christ upon this earth (see Rev. 21:1). With verse 18, the scene is re-focused to that marvelous reign of peace upon this earth, when it shall have been transformed into its glorious Edenic beauty, as it was in the beginning.

It is well to read Isa. 11:6-9 in this connection, but we wish to pursue our main course in Isa. 65. The Lord is to "rejoice in Jerusalem" (which encompasses the "New Jerusalem" in America, and the Jerusalem of old, as re-created or, restored in righteousness). Now, we wish to quote rather fully to get the entire picture of our points of concern.

"There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old: but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed."

"And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them:

"They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands,"

"They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them." Isa. 65:20-23.

It should be noticed that this text includes not only the righteous who inherit "Jerusalem" (Zion), but also refers briefly to the sinner; those outside of Zion's camp. When the Lord shall have wreaked vengeance upon the nations prior to the millennial reign, it appears that only the more righteous will have been spared. Satan is to be bound thereafter, but all shall retain their freedom of choice as clearly indicated by Zech. 14: 16\_21. As a result, sin will yet enter into man's relationship with God, Satan will be freed to deceive such, after the thousand years, and the earth will pass away by fire (see Jacob 3:151-153 and 2 Pet. 3:10).

Now: There will be children born to the nations, and the saints will yet have families when the physical death as we know it, shall have been abolished for them. ("In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"). This is at the beginning of what is called the first resurrection, occurring at the inception of the millennial reign. The change may be loosely termed, death, but there will be no corruption; immortality shall replace mortality, instantly (see I Cor. 15:50-55).

Children living at the beginning of the millennium shall live to 100 years, and then shall be changed as above. The seed of the righteous will evidently choose righteousness, and be rewarded accordingly. If the children of the nations choose righteousness, so also with them; but if they choose to sin, at 100 years they "shall be accursed"; they will die in the *accepted sense* and come forth in the second resurrection at the conclusion of the millennium and the "little season". (Rev. 20).

It should be remembered that the righteous who are thus changed from mortality to immortality are not resurrected beings. These will have homes which they will build; they will labor, but not in vain; enmity between man and beast will have disappeared.

It appears that this wonderful state is to continue throughout the thousand years; marriage and begetting of children being a part of their enjoyment. '

However, we are forced to the conclusion, by the words of Christ ("...in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage"), that those who have died, and whose spirits Christ shall bring with Him to receive their re-vitalized, immortalized bodies - these being "the resurrection" - *shall not marry nor have children*. They are "*as the angels of God in heaven*."

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