



# The Gospel Doctrine Class



Doctrine & Covenants - Lesson 40

Temple and Family History Work

*"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 heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."* (D&C 132:3)

*A study of this lesson will help us see the many different ways we can participate in temple and family history work and to encourage us to prayerfully determine the ways we should participate now.*

President Joseph Fielding Smith: "The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, 'The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead.' The reason for this is that all the dead must be redeemed from their sins through obedience to the gospel just as the living are. It is required of us to perform this labor in their behalf.

"Moreover, we cannot be made perfect without our faithful dead who are also heirs of celestial exaltation. There must be a welding, or joining together of generations, from Adam down. Parents must be sealed to each other and children to parents, in order to receive the blessings of the celestial kingdom. Therefore our salvation and progression depends upon the salvation of our worthy dead with whom we must be joined in family ties. This can only be accomplished in our temples.

"The Prophet further declared that the doctrine of salvation for the dead is the 'most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel.' The reasons for this are the great magnitude of the labor, and the fact that we have the privilege of officiating for the dead and assisting in giving to them the privileges that we also enjoy, through our obedience to the gospel." (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:146-147)

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "In a spirit of love and consecration, we must extend ourselves in the work of redemption of the dead through service in the temples of the Lord." (Ensign, May 1983)

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "Take advantage of the blessings of the house of the Lord. What a privilege. Every man or woman who goes to the temple comes out of that building a better man or woman than he or she was when entering into it. That's something that's remarkable that happens with all of us. Is life filled with cares for you? Do you have problems and concerns and worries? Do you want for peace in your heart and an opportunity to commune with the Lord and meditate upon His way? Go to the house of the Lord and there feel of His spirit and commune with Him and you will know a peace that you will find nowhere else. Take advantage of it. What a great and wonderful blessing it is." (Ensign, Apr 1996)

Elder Eldred G. Smith: "We need to gather all the records of our ancestors that we possibly can. I do not mean just a half-hearted attempt. Seek diligently, constantly, and prayerfully. Do not wait for a convenient time—a convenient time may never come. Do not put it off until old age when we are not able to do anything else. We never know what tomorrow will bring, and we must see that the work is done of completing the sealing of each family group. There is no one who can escape the responsibility of this work. We will not be excused because we thought an aunt or some other relative was doing the work.

"One young lady, a genealogist, was asked the question, 'What if you find an undesirable character in your family tree, such as a pirate or convict or the like?' She answered, 'My responsibility does not concern how he lived, but just that he lived and died. After all, I owe my existence to him, and my only way of paying that debt is to do the baptism and sealing work for him. It will be up to him to accept it.'

"This is a responsibility for each of us. Not one of us can be made perfect without this work. I doubt if the Lord will accept the excuse that we are so busy with other church work that we cannot spend a part of our time in genealogy. Any part of this we do not do, which we should do, must be done by someone else, for it must be done. If we shirk our responsibilities, how can we expect to receive the blessings?" (Ensign, Nov 1975)

President Spencer W. Kimball: "On a number of occasions I have encouraged the Saints to keep personal journals and family records. I renew that admonition. We may think there is little of interest or importance in what we personally say or do, but it is remarkable how many of our families, as we pass on down the line, are interested in all that we do and all that we say.

"Any Latter-day Saint family that has searched genealogical and historical records has fervently wished its ancestors had kept better and more complete records. On the other hand, some families possess some spiritual treasures because ancestors have recorded the events surrounding their conversion to the gospel and other happenings of interest, including many miraculous blessings and spiritual experiences." (President Kimball Speaks Out, 54)

## Next Week's Reading Assignment

D&C 1:4–5, 30; 65; 88:81; 109:72–74;

Our Heritage, pages 116–17, 124–25