

Information and Suggestions for Patriarchs

(The Patriarch's Handbook)

Transcriber's Foreword

A copy of this handbook was leaked to Reddit on 12/5/2016.

This version of the Patriarch's Handbook has some minor edits such as structure, internal hyperlinks, and the removal of some frivolous publisher's information. The original .pdf cannot be posted at this time for privacy reasons.

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To the Stake Patriarch

The Patriarchal Office

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One of the offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood is that of patriarch. Patriarchs are called and ordained to give patriarchal blessings to worthy members of the Church within the patriarch's designated area of responsibility. This is a sacred, spiritual calling.

The patriarchal office is unique. It is one of blessings, not of administration or counseling. Other officers are called to administer the organizations and programs of the Church and to counsel Church members. If members seek counsel from the patriarch on matters that do not pertain to patriarchal blessings, he should refer them to their bishop or quorum leader, who can advise them or direct them to additional help if needed.

The call of a patriarch is for a lifetime, so he is not released. However, if necessary he may be given nonfunctioning status, excusing him from giving blessings, as outlined in "[Changes in Status for Patriarchs](#)".

A patriarch should be devoted to his calling. At first, he may have some feelings of loneliness if he has been accustomed to working with others in the ward or stake. But as he receives the spirit of his calling and devotes himself to it, he will find it to be spiritually fulfilling.

Relationship with the Stake President

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The Quorum of the Twelve has delegated to stake presidents the responsibility to supervise the work of patriarchs in the stakes of Zion. The stake president instructs and interviews patriarchs as outlined in "[Calling and Ordaining Stake Patriarchs](#)" and "[Supervising the Stake Patriarch](#)". The patriarch should consult with the stake president whenever he needs counsel on matters pertaining to his calling.

Preparation for Giving Blessings

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Patriarchs are expected to be deeply spiritual men who are close to the Lord. The following suggestions will help patriarchs prepare to give blessings.

A patriarch should be personally worthy to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit. The sacred nature of a patriarchal blessing requires a patriarch to make most earnest solicitations for divine guidance in his inspired utterances and declarations in the promises, cautions, and admonitions he gives to the recipient.

A patriarch should maintain a close and loving relationship with his wife and family. He should meet all the standards listed in the temple recommend interview. He should study the scriptures, especially the life and teachings of the Savior, and apply those teachings in his life. He should avoid

contention, conflict, and controversy in personal relationships and in associations he may have in the community.

A patriarch should seek to gain a thorough knowledge of the gospel and learn all aspects of the patriarchal office. He should study the lives of the prophets and patriarchs, the lineage of Abraham and his successors, and the tribes of Israel and their mission and promises. He also should study the inspired blessings given to family members by Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Lehi, Alma, Mormon, and others. In addition, he should study the principles discussed on pages “[Content and Language of Patriarchal Blessings](#)” and “[History and Doctrine Concerning the House of Israel](#)”.

A patriarch should learn the covenants of the gospel and the eternal principles of the plan of salvation. He also should learn about the gifts of the Spirit as outlined in [D&C 46](#), [Moroni 10](#), and [1 Corinthians 12](#). In addition, he should be familiar with the Lord’s counsel that pertains to receiving revelation (see, for example, [D&C 6:15, 22-23](#); [8:2-3](#); [9:7-9](#); [11:13-14](#); [112:10](#); [1 Nephi 17:45](#))

Because a patriarch should be worthy at all times to receive impressions from the Holy Spirit, it should not be necessary that he fast each time before giving a patriarchal blessing. However, he should schedule blessings at a time when, through prayer and meditation, he can be fully in tune with the Spirit.

A newly called patriarch may benefit from reading some patriarchal blessings that have been given by experienced patriarchs. He should read the type of language used, the essentials to be included, and the important fact that there are differences between blessings for different individuals.

When and Where to give Patriarchal Blessings

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Patriarchal blessings may be given in a patriarch’s home, in a church office, or in any other suitable room within the stake where the atmosphere is quiet and spiritual. When possible, blessings should be scheduled at times that do not conflict with Church meetings that either the patriarch or the recipient should attend.

Patriarchal blessings are given in private, except that a limited number of family members may be present. A spouse or parents may appropriately accompany the member.

A patriarch should avoid being alone when giving a blessing to a sister.

Getting Acquainted with and Counseling Those Who Come To Receive Patriarchal Blessings

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Before giving a blessing, it is desirable for the patriarch to talk briefly with the recipient to get acquainted and to feel his or her spirit. However, the patriarch does not interview the person for worthiness. Nor should the patriarch ask questions or discuss matters that might interfere with a full and free outpouring of impressions of the Spirit when the blessing is given. The blessing should not be

given from what the patriarch may know about the person, but rather from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in concert with the patriarch's thoughts and capacity to express them.

If the patriarch feels it would be helpful, he may briefly review the nature and purpose of patriarchal blessings. The patriarch may also briefly counsel the person regarding the use of the blessings as a guide for life. The patriarch could include any of the following thought in this counsel:

- A patriarchal blessing should be read periodically and prayerfully. It will provide insights and applications or warnings from time to time as they are needed.
- Each patriarchal blessing is sacred, confidential, and personal. It should not be read by casual friends or acquaintances. "Church members should not compare blessings and should not share them except with close family members. Patriarchal blessings should not be read in church meetings or other public gatherings" ([*Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics \[1998\], 35*](#)).
- Although a patriarchal blessing is a sacred guideline from the Lord to help a person through life, a person should not expect it to outline all that will happen or to answer all questions. If a possible future development such as a mission or marriage is not stated in a patriarchal blessing, this does not necessarily mean it will not occur.
- A patriarchal blessing should be viewed from an eternal perspective. Blessings promised may not be fulfilled in this life but may be realized in eternity; the Lord will fulfill them in the time and manner that will be for the person's greatest benefit and that is consistent with a faithful life.

Content and Language of Patriarchal Blessings

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A patriarchal blessing is given by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood and through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. At some point in each blessing the patriarch should state that he is pronouncing it by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood and in the name of Jesus Christ.

A patriarchal blessing should include an inspired declaration of lineage of the recipient (see "[Declaration of Lineage](#)").

A patriarchal blessing should also include inspired and prophetic statements about the life possibilities of the recipient. To the extent that the spirit directs, the patriarch should identify for the recipient accomplishments to be realized, challenges to be overcome, and blessings to be received. The patriarch also includes such promises, admonitions, and warnings as he may be prompted to give. In these ways a patriarchal blessing should help the recipient define his or her responsibilities and goals.

In each blessing the patriarch should make clear that the realization of the promises is contingent upon the faithfulness of the recipient and the will of the Lord.

A patriarchal blessing should encourage the person to keep the commandments and to qualify for eternal life.

A patriarch should avoid wordy, complicated language. He should speak in his own words, using dignified, spiritual terms and clear, simple sentences.

A patriarch should pronounce only those promises that are prompted by the Spirit. He should avoid sensational or extravagant promises. For example, he should not make references to world calamities or the timing of the Second Coming.

A patriarchal blessing should be in harmony with the teachings of the prophets.

A Patriarch may use the term *seal* in patriarchal blessings, but he should avoid using language that could relate this term to the ordinances or blessings of the temple.

A patriarch should not allow a blessing to become overly long in preachment or exhortation. He should give a blessing, not a prayer or a sermon of admonition or information. He should make clear that spiritual blessings come from the Lord and that the patriarch is the Lord's agent of communication.

Because the principles of the gospel apply to all who live them, there will be some similarities in patriarchal blessings. However, no two blessings should be precisely the same. Each son and daughter of God is different; therefore, each patriarchal blessing should be suited to the individual recipient.

The common pronouns in current usage - *you*, *your*, and *yours* – should be used in speaking to the person who is receiving the blessing. Reverential pronouns (such as *Thee*, *Thou*, *Thy*, and *Thine* in English) should be reserved for addressing the Lord.

Declaration of Lineage

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A vital part of every patriarchal blessing is the declaration of lineage. A patriarch should study the scriptures relating to the history and lineage of the patriarchs from Adam to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph and the other sons of Jacob, and Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The patriarch is to discern and declare a person's lineage through the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. The declaration of lineage is not determined by a person's race or nationality. Because of the scattering of Israel among all nations of the Earth, the lineage of Israel is found in people of most races and nationalities.

In declaring lineage, the patriarch identifies the tribe of Israel through which the person will receive his or her blessings. The patriarch also outlines the special promises and blessings the person may receive through that lineage. It should be understood that even though lineage may give a person the right to receive blessings in Israel, these blessings may be obtained only by faithfulness and obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

Many members of the Church are of the lineage of Ephraim, but some are of another tribe of Israel, such as Manasseh or Judah. Ordinarily, it is not appropriate to designate the lineage of an individual as being from the tribe of Joseph only.

Because the tribes of Israel have intermixed with one another, most people are of mixed lineage. Even family members can be of mixed lineage, and occasionally children of the same parents receive patriarchal blessings that declare their lineage to be from different tribes. The blessing of one tribe may be dominant in one child, and the blessings of another tribe may be dominant in another.

Some Church members may not have any of the lineage of Israel. For these members a patriarch may not be prompted by the Spirit to declare lineage from a particular tribe. Instead, he may declare that the individual will receive his or her blessings through Abraham.

It should be understood that regardless of the lineage, all who gain a testimony of Jesus Christ and accept baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost from the Lord's authorized servants are accounted as Abraham's "seed" as promised in the Abrahamic covenant (See [Abraham 2:10](#), [Galatians 3:14](#), [Ephesians 3:6](#)). Therefore, the fullness of the Lord's blessings will come to all by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

Recording and Transcribing the Copies of Patriarchal Blessings

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The patriarch must ensure that each patriarchal blessing is recorded so that accurate transcribed copies can be made of it. Blessings may be recorded by a stenographer or on a voice recording machine for transcription.

If a malfunction of the voice recording machine should occur, the patriarch should, as soon as possible, record or write the blessing from memory with the help of prayer and inspiration. If preferable, he may give the blessing a second time.

It is recommended that each blessing be transcribed initially into a preliminary draft. A typist may be called by the stake president to assist with this (see "[Calling a Typist for the Patriarch](#)").

The patriarch should carefully check the preliminary draft to ensure that the transcription is complete and accurate. He also should edit the blessing for spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and content. He must ensure that the words accurately convey the thoughts that were impressed on his mind and confirmed by the Holy Spirit during the blessing. When the patriarch is satisfied that the transcription is correct, the final copy may be prepared. If a blessing is more than one page long, the final copy should be typed on both sides of the page.

After the patriarch carefully checks the final copy for accuracy, he or his typist should make a duplicate copy of each blessing. Both the original and the duplicate are to be signed in dark ink by the patriarch.

The original copy of the blessing is to be placed in the patriarchal blessing binder. At least every two years, or more often if the binder becomes full, the blessings should be removed from it, safely packaged, and sent or taken to the Church Historical Department, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3821.

The copy of the person who received the blessing should be given to him or her promptly. Generally this should be within a week or ten days and never more than two or three weeks. No charge is to be made, nor gratuity accepted, for the blessing or the copy.

A voice recording of the blessing for the recipient is not authorized.

Supplies and Equipment

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The Church provides each patriarch with a copy of this booklet, a binder for original copies of blessings (for eventual filing at the Church Historical Department), a supply of Patriarchal Blessing Record Forms, a tape recorder, and postage and envelopes as needed. For information about these supplies, see "[Providing Supplies and Equipment for the Patriarch](#)".

Second Patriarchal Blessings and Addendums

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Occasionally a member may request a second patriarchal blessing. However, this is generally not encouraged and should rarely be approved. If a worthy member has an important reason for such a request, he or she should discuss it with the bishop. If the bishop feels that a second blessing is appropriate, he should obtain approval from the stake president for the individual to receive it. Upon authorization from the stake president, the bishop may issue a recommend for a second blessing. The patriarch may then give a second blessing.

On rare occasions a patriarch, after giving a blessing, may recognize that he has omitted the declaration of lineage. He may then lay his hands again on the recipient's head and give an addendum in which he identifies the lineage, adding whatever words he is inspired to speak.

If an addendum is given before a blessing is transcribed, it can be included in the transcription of the original blessing.

If the omission of a declaration of lineage is not discovered until after the blessing has been transcribed, the recipient should go to the bishop for a recommend to receive an addendum. In such a case, the patriarch should fill out the top part of a new blessing form and give the addendum the next available number in his binder of blessing, just as he would a new blessing. He should mark it as an addendum and explain why it was given, who gave the original blessing, and when the original blessing was given.

An addendum to a blessing becomes part of the original blessing. It should be brief – only to declare lineage – and should not become a second blessing.

The original copy of an addendum should be sent to the Church Historical Department along with other blessings the patriarch has given; it does not need to be sent separately. A copy of the addendum should be given to the recipient at attach to his or her original blessing.

Requests for Patriarchs to Give Other Priesthood Blessings

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In the priesthood is the power to bless. Those who hold the appropriate priesthood use it to bless their families, bless others, perform gospel ordinances, give priesthood blessings, share the gospel, and serve in the Lord's Church.

Patriarchal blessings are the only blessings that patriarchs are specifically called to give. Church members ordinarily should go to husbands, fathers, home teachers, or other Melchizedek Priesthood holders for blessings other than patriarchal blessings.

Nevertheless, patriarchs may, as requested, administer to the sick and give priesthood blessings of comfort and counsel. Such blessings are of no greater significance than similar blessings given by other Melchizedek Priesthood holders, nor are they to be treated differently than these blessings.

Counsel Not to Solicit Opportunities to Give Blessings

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Patriarchs should not solicit opportunities to give patriarchal blessings. However, patriarchs may occasionally be invited to speak in Church meetings on gospel subjects, including the calling and duties of a patriarch.

Giving Patriarchal Blessings to Members Outside the Patriarch's Stake

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The *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*, states:

“A stake patriarch normally gives patriarchal blessings only to members of his own stake. However, he may give blessings to members from outside his stake in the following circumstances:

1. A patriarch may give blessings to his own lineal descendant (children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren) wherever they live. The member must have a recommend signed by the bishop. If the patriarch lives in a different stake than the person receiving the blessing, the recommend must also be signed by a member of the stake presidency.
2. A member in a stake ... that does not have a patriarch or where the patriarch is unable to give blessings may go to a patriarch in a nearby stake. The member’s recommend must be signed by the bishop and a member of the stake presidency. [A member in a mission district may also go to a patriarch in a nearby stake. The member should have his or her recommend signed by the branch or district president and mission president.]
3. A member who speaks a language that is different from the language of the stake patriarch may go to a patriarch in a nearby stake to receive a blessing in his or her own language. The member must have a recommend signed by the bishop and a member of the stake presidency” (see page 35; see also [“Receiving Patriarchal Blessings in a Language the Recipient Can Understand”](#)).

Custody of the Binder of Blessings when a Patriarch Moves to Another Stake

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If a patriarch moves from one stake to another, he should send all blessings he has given to the Church Historical Department, making note of the number of the last blessing given. He should report his arrival to the president of the new stake as explained in [“Changes in Status for Patriarchs”](#). If he is sustained as a functioning patriarch in the new stake, he should continue numbering his blessings

consecutively. For example, if 854 was his last blessing in the first stake, then 855 would be his first blessing in the second stake.

“Give Utterance to the Message of the Lord”

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Addressing patriarchs, President Spencer W. Kimball said:

“In a real sense, your voice is to give utterance to the message of the Lord which he has in store for the individuals who come to you. You are not the source of the promises; you have no blessings for anyone; you are but the [conduit] through which the blessing flows [and] through which the promises are carried. You must be sure that you do not arrogate to yourselves any of these powers. One of the most important qualities for a patriarch to possess is that of humility...

Patriarchal blessings are revelations to the recipients ... to protect, inspire, motivate toward activity and righteousness.

An inspired patriarchal blessing could light the way and lead the recipient on a path to fulfillment. It could lead [him or her] to become a new [person] and to have ... a new heart.” ([The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball](#), ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 505)

To the Stake President

Calling and Ordaining Stake Patriarchs

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Patriarchs are called to serve in organized stakes in the Church as indicated by the [Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1](#):

“The Quorum of the Twelve directs the calling of stake patriarchs (see [D&C 107:39](#)). To recommend a man to be called as a stake patriarch, the stake president completes a New Patriarch Recommendation form [item number 31674; available at Church distribution centers] and submits it to the Quorum of the Twelve. In making this recommendation, he should fast and pray for the Spirit to direct him. The recommendation should be approved by his counselors.

A man whom the stake president recommends as stake patriarch should be a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder. He should be mature in the gospel and the Church, a worthy [husband and] patriarch in his own home, and sensitive to guidance from the Spirit. He should have received his own patriarchal blessing, and normally should be age 55 or older [and married].

If the Quorum of the Twelve approves the recommendation, the stake president may be authorized to interview and call the patriarch, present his name for a sustaining vote at the next stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting, and ordain him. Because the calling of patriarch is an office of the Melchizedek Priesthood, a patriarch is ordained, not set apart. A stake president may not assign a counselor to ordain a patriarch” (page 6)

The ordination of a patriarch is performed in the same manner as other ordinations to offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood. However, the stake president should not invite others to stand with him during the ordination of a patriarch. A patriarch is not given priesthood keys because the calling is not one of priesthood presidency.

After the ordination, the stake president should submit to the Quorum of the Twelve the Report of Ordination of Stake Patriarch form (Item number 32019; a blank form is sent by the Office of the Quorum of Twelve with the approval to call a patriarch). A certificate of ordination will be sent to the stake president to give to the patriarch.

Calling a Second Patriarch

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“The Quorum of the Twelve normally does not approve calling a second patriarch for a stake unless the present patriarch is unable to give the number of blessings requested or has been given nonfunctioning status. Nor does the Quorum of the Twelve normally approve an additional patriarch simply because a stake is geographically large or includes members who do not speak the majority language” ([Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1](#), 6)

For instructions about how to proceed if a patriarch moves to another stake, see “[Changes in Status for Patriarchs](#)”.

Supervising the Stake Patriarch

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The Quorum of the Twelve has delegated to stake presidents the responsibility to supervise the work of patriarchs in the stakes of Zion. The patriarch and the stake president should have a close working relationship.

The stake president instructs a newly called patriarch in the sacred, revelatory nature of the office before the patriarch begins giving blessings. The stake president gives him a copy of this booklet and carefully reviews its instructions with him. The stake president interviews the patriarch at least once each year. At least twice each year he reviews blessings the patriarch has given. If needed, the stake president may make a general suggestions regarding the content of the patriarch's blessings. The stake president also discusses the patriarch's feelings about the work, the welfare of his family, his health, and any other matters on which the patriarch seeks or needs counsel (See [Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1, 6-7](#)).

As necessary, the stake president ensures that the patriarch follows the guidelines in "[Recording and Transcribing Copies of Patriarchal Blessings](#)" for preparing transcriptions of blessings, giving copies to the recipients, and sending the originals to the Church Historical Department. If a nonfunctioning patriarch gives blessings to lineal descendants, the stake president should also review those blessings and ensure that they are sent to Church headquarters.

The patriarch should consult with the stake president whenever he needs counsel on matters pertaining to his calling. If a stake president needs counsel on these matters, he should address the questions to the Quorum of the Twelve. Also, the patriarch, with the authorization of the stake president, may confer with a visiting General Authority about questions that cannot be handled within the stake.

Providing Supplies and Equipment for the Patriarch

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When a new patriarch is called, the stake president should give him a copy of this booklet, a binder for original copies of blessings (for eventual filing at the Church Historical Department), and a supply of Patriarchal Blessing record forms (item number 32016). This paper is acid-free archival quality bond. A Church distribution center will send these supplies to the stake president to give to a new patriarch.

If a patriarch needs additional forms, the stake president can order them from a distribution center without cost.

If a new patriarch needs a tape recorder to record blessings for transcription, the stake president should indicate this when he submits the Report of Ordination of Stake Patriarch form. The Church will then send a tape recorder directly to the patriarch. If an existing patriarch needs a tape recorder, the stake president should ask the stake physical facilities representative to obtain one through the Church's Central Purchasing Division. These tape recorders are stake equipment and should be returned to the stake president if the patriarch moves, is put in nonfunctioning status, or dies.

The stake may also provide postage and envelopes as needed.

Calling a Typist for the Patriarch

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It is recommended that the stake president call a worthy, skilled member of the stake to type the patriarchal blessings given by the patriarch, unless he can transcribe them himself and prefers to do so. More than one typist may be called if needed. They should provide this service as a Church calling, without financial remuneration. Typists should be cautioned that every blessing is sacred and confidential. They may not retain a copy of any blessing.

Changes in Status for Patriarchs

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Because the call of patriarch is for a lifetime, he is not released. However, he may be given nonfunctioning status, excusing him from giving blessings, as explained in the [Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1](#):

“If a patriarch is incapacitated by age or illness, as determined by the stake president or the patriarch, the stake president writes a recommendation to the Quorum of the Twelve that the patriarch be given nonfunctioning status. If the Twelve approve the recommendation, the stake president does not have the stake patriarch’s name presented for a sustaining vote at the next stake conference when Church officers are sustained. The stake president notifies bishops and branch presidents not to send members to that patriarch. He also ensures that all the blessings the patriarch has given are sent to the recipients and to the Church Historical Department.

A patriarch is also given nonfunctioning status if he leaves to serve a mission, is absent from his home for other reasons, moves to a different stake, or is approved to be called to a position of Church administration ... In such circumstances, the stake president sends a written notification to the Quorum of the Twelve and follows the instructions in the previous paragraph.

A patriarch who has been given nonfunctioning status may continue to give patriarchal blessings to his lineal descendants [children, grandchildren, and great-grand children] if he is able to do so. These blessings should be processed as if he were still a functioning patriarch.

Returning a Patriarch to Functioning Status

To return a patriarch to functioning status, the stake president interviews him carefully and sends a written recommendation to the Quorum of the Twelve. If the Twelve approve the recommendation, the stake president has the patriarch presented for a sustaining vote at a stake conference or stake general priesthood meeting.

Patriarchs Who Move to a Different Stake

When a patriarch moves to a different stake, he should contact his new stake president. If the stake president wants him to serve as a patriarch in the new stake, he contacts the patriarch’s former

stake president to confirm the patriarch's worthiness and past service. The new stake president then follows the procedure in the preceding paragraph [to recommend returning the patriarch to functioning status].

If the stake president decides not to recommend having the patriarch serve in the new stake, the patriarch is given nonfunctioning status. ... [However, the stake president should notify the Office of the Quorum of the Twelve of the patriarch's residency in the stake.]

[Patriarchs Are Rarely Called to Other Church Positions]

A patriarch may not be called to serve in a position of Church administration, such as bishop, high councilor, or stake president, unless the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve approve the call. Such a request is rarely approved. If it is approved the patriarch is given nonfunctioning status" (pages 6-7)

If a patriarch is called to serve as a General Authority, Area Authority Seventy, or as a member of a stake, mission, or temple presidency, he will be given nonfunctioning status until he is released from his other calling. If the stake president would like the patriarch to be returned to functioning status, he should follow the procedures outlined above.

Death of a Patriarch

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When a patriarch dies, the stake president should notify the Office of the Quorum of the Twelve as soon as possible. The stake president also should obtain the book of blessings and any patriarchal blessing equipment owned by the stake. He should forward to the Church Historical Department the blessings that the patriarch has given.

General Instructions

Those Who May Receive Patriarchal Blessings

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Every worthy member of the Church is entitled to receive a patriarchal blessing. If a member lives in a mission district or in a stake where there is not a functioning patriarch, he or she may still receive a blessing as outlined in [“Giving Patriarchal Blessings to Members Outside the Patriarch’s Stake”](#).

The [Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1](#) states:

“The Bishop interviews members who want to receive patriarchal blessings. If a member is worthy, the bishop issues and signs a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend [item number 32017; available at Church distribution centers]. The recommend must also be signed by a member of the stake presidency if the blessing will be given by a patriarch who lives outside the member’s stake ...

When issuing a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend, the bishop ensures that the member is of sufficient age and maturity to understand the meaning and importance of the blessing. Ideally the member should be young enough that many of the important decisions in life are still ahead, though older adults should also be encouraged to receive their patriarchal blessings. Local priesthood leaders should not establish a minimum age for a member to receive a patriarchal blessing.

The bishop helps members understand the sacred nature of this blessing. He emphasizes the importance of being spiritually prepared to receive it.

[Where possible,] a missionary should receive a patriarchal blessing before beginning missionary service. [If this is not possible, the missionary should receive a recommend from his or her bishop and receive the blessing while at a missionary training center.]

A new convert should understand the basic doctrines of the Church before receiving a patriarchal blessing.

If a member has a mental disability, the bishop may issue a recommend only when, in consultation with the parents, he believes there is a sufficient level of understanding. ... [It should be remembered that a patriarchal blessing is for the recipient and not for the parents.]

When worthy members of the Church enter military service, priesthood leaders encourage them to receive their patriarchal blessing before reporting for active duty. If it is not possible for a member to receive this blessing before leaving, he or she can receive it from a patriarch where the ... duty station is located. To do this, the member presents a recommend from the bishop of his or her home ward to a member of the stake presidency where the ... duty station is located. The member of the stake presidency then interviews the person and signs the recommend if he or she is worthy” (pages 34-35; see also page 24)

Encouraging Church Members to Receive Patriarchal Blessings

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Priesthood leaders and youth leaders should encourage worthy Church members to receive their patriarchal blessings. Parents should teach their children about the sacred nature of patriarchal blessings and encourage them to prepare to receive their own blessings.

Helping Church Members Prepare to Receive Patriarchal Blessings

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A member who desires a patriarchal blessing should make an appointment with his or her bishop for a Patriarchal Blessing Recommend interview. As soon as the recommend is received, the member should make an appointment with the patriarch. The member should bring the recommend to the appointment.

“Members should go to the patriarch with a prayerful attitude and in Sunday attire. They may fast, but fasting is not required” ([Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1, 35](#))

Receiving Patriarchal Blessings in a language the Recipient Can Understand

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If possible, a person should receive a patriarchal blessing from a patriarch who can give it in a language the person can understand. “If a stake includes members who speak different languages, bishops and stake presidencies may authorize them to go to a patriarch in a nearby stake who can give the blessing in the member’s own language” ([Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1, 6](#))

Translation of Patriarchal Blessings

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The Church does not provide translations of patriarchal blessings. Nor are members encouraged to translate patriarchal blessings, since it is difficult to convey the inspired depth of meaning and feeling of a blessing. Nevertheless, if a member desires to have a patriarchal blessing translated into another language, it is his or her responsibility to find a trusted and worthy member of the church who can provide the translation. The translator should be carefully selected, skilled in the language, and capable of understanding the spiritual nature and confidentiality of the blessing.

Translated copies of blessings are not filed in the archives of the Church Historical Department.

Obtaining Copies of Patriarchal Blessings

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A person who has received a patriarchal blessing should carefully safeguard the copy he or she receives. However, if it is lost or destroyed, another copy may be obtained from the patriarch if he has the original in his binder of blessings. If the original has been sent to Church headquarters, a copy may be obtained from the Church Historical Department, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3821. Blessings are filed chronologically by consecutive numbering under the name of the

patriarch who gave the blessing, and under the date given; it is helpful to cite those, if possible, when requesting a copy.

History and Doctrine Concerning the House of Israel

Identity of the House of Israel

The house of Israel consists of the descendants of Jacob (Israel). Each of his twelve sons became the head of one of the tribes of Israel. Joseph received a double portion of the birthright, which was given to his sons Ephraim and Manasseh. They were considered sons of Jacob (Israel) and given tribal status (see [Joseph Smith Translation Genesis 48:5-6](#)). Ephraim was given the birthright (see [Genesis 48:17-20](#)), which includes the rights of the firstborn. The tribes of Israel therefore are Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Ephraim and Manasseh (for Joseph), and Benjamin (see [Genesis 29:32-35](#); [30:1-25](#); [35:18](#); [48:1-27](#)). Levi's descendants were dispersed among the other tribes to serve as ministers.

The Scattering of Israel

Israel was scattered among all nations and in all parts of the Earth. The scriptures speak of the scattering "into all the kingdoms of the Earth ... among all nations ... among all people, from the one end of the Earth even unto the other" ([Deuteronomy 28:25](#), [37](#), [64](#)). In his day, Nephi said "The house of Israel, sooner or later, will be scattered upon all the face of the Earth, and also among all nations. ... Yea, the more part of all the tribes have been lead away; and they are scattered to and fro upon the isles of the sea" ([1 Nephi 22:3-4](#)).

In the blessing the Lord gave Abraham, He said "I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal see, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the Earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal" ([Abraham 2:11](#)).

The Gathering of Israel

The Gathering of Israel consists of the restoration of the house of Israel "to the true church and fold of God" and of them being "gathered home to the lands of their inheritance" and being "established in all their lands of promise" ([2 Nephi 9:2](#)). Since the dispersion was over all the Earth and among all nations, the gathering must be out of all nations and from all parts of the Earth.

Israel today constitutes a large portion of the human family. The tribe of Joseph, meaning both Ephraim and Manasseh, shall gather first. Joseph will then "push the people together to the ends of the Earth: and [those who do this, having themselves first been gathered] are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh" ([Deuteronomy 33:17](#)). Of the significance of Joseph's blessing, the Lord said, "For thou shalt be a light unto my people ... and ... being salvation unto them" ([Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 48:11](#)).

In due course the other tribes will come "unto the children of Ephraim ... and be crowned with glory, even is Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even [by] the children of Ephraim" ([D&C 133:30](#), [32](#)).

The question is sometimes raised as to whether the declaration of lineage in a particular blessing is the literal lineage to the house of Israel or a declaration of adopted lineage. As noted

previously, a great majority of those who become members of the Church are literal descendants of Abraham. Others are adopted into the house of Israel.

Believing Gentiles Are Accounted as Abraham's Seed

The Lord told Abraham that his seed after him – that is, his natural descendants – would take the gospel and the priesthood “unto all nations”. Then He said, “as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy see, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father” ([Abraham 2:10](#))

We call this *adoption* into the house of Israel; Paul makes repeated use of the word *adoption* to describe how we may become the sons of God by faith (See [Romans 8](#), [9](#), and [11](#)).

King Benjamin speaks of faithful people becoming “the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters”; of them being “spiritually begotten ... through faith”; and of them being born spiritually into the family of Christ ([Mosiah 5:7](#)). When a person is baptized of water and of the Spirit, he or she takes upon himself or herself the name of Christ and is adopted into His family. Therefore, it makes no difference whether the blessings of the house of Israel come by lineage or by adoption.