

How the LDS Husband Hopes to Resurrect His Wife According to the LDS Temple Ceremony

By Sandra Tanner

The LDS Church teaches that at the end of the world everyone will be resurrected. They also believe that almost everyone will go to heaven, which is divided up into three main levels. Bad people go to the lowest, the **Telestial Kingdom** (*Doctrine and Covenants* 76:81-86). Good people, who were not Mormons, will go to the middle level, the **Terrestrial Kingdom** (*D&C* 76:71-79). Mormons will go to the highest level, the **Celestial Kingdom** (*D&C* 76:50-70).

However, only those who merit the highest part of the Celestial Kingdom will have **Eternal Life** [the ability to live in a marriage relationship and continue to beget children—see *D&C* 132:20-24, also see “Mormons Hope to Become Gods of Their Own Worlds”]. All others have **immortality** [which is defined as the ability to live forever in a single condition, not married and no future children] but do not have Eternal Life. One must be married in the LDS temple and then obey all of the Mormon regulations to get to the highest degree of heaven.

The first time a Mormon attends the temple endowment ceremony he/she will be given a new name [usually a Bible name like *Peter* or *Mary* or the name of European royalty]. These will supposedly be their names in eternity. The wife must tell her husband her new name, and no one else, as he is supposed to call her up in the resurrection. If he does not call her up she would still resurrect, but not as his wife.

When a Mormon returns to the temple, on various occasions, to go through the endowment ceremony, he/she will stand in by proxy for a dead person. For instance, a man may be going through the ritual in behalf of his dead uncle. A new temple name would be assigned to the dead person, which could be *Joseph*, *David*, *Paul*, etc. In the case of a dead woman, a Mormon woman would stand in by proxy for her, and the dead woman would be given a new temple name, like *Rachael*, *Eve*, *Rebecca*, etc.

LDS Apostle Charles W. Penrose wrote:

In the divine economy, as in nature, the man “is the head of the woman,” and it is written that “he is the savior of the body.” But “the man is not without the woman” any more than the woman is without the man, in the Lord. Adam was first formed, then Eve. In the **resurrection**, they stand side by side and hold dominion together. **Every man** who overcomes all things and is thereby **entitled to inherit all things, receives power to bring up his wife** to join him in the possession and enjoyment thereof.

In the case of a man marrying a wife in the everlasting covenant who dies while he continues in the flesh and marries another by the same divine law, each wife will come forth in her order and enter with him into his glory. (Charles W. Penrose, “Mormon” *Doctrine Plain and Simple, or Leaves from the Tree of Life*, Salt Lake City, 1897, p. 66)

LDS Apostle Erastus Snow preached the following on Sunday, October 4, 1857:

Do the women, when they pray, remember their husbands? . . . Do you uphold your husband before God as your lord? “What!—my husband to be my lord?” I ask, **Can you get into the celestial kingdom without him?** Have any of you been there? You will remember that you never got into the celestial kingdom [during the temple ceremony] **without the aid of your husband**. If you did, it was because your husband was away, and some one had to act proxy for him. **No woman will get into the celestial kingdom, except her husband receives her**, if she is worthy to have a husband; and if not, somebody will receive her as a servant. (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5, p. 291)

William Clayton, secretary to Joseph Smith, also discussed some of the temple work in his journals. In the Introduction to *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* we read:

Clayton described the temple endowment, a ritualized drama of the creation, fall, and redemption of Adam, during which its participants promise obedience and loyalty to the church, and repeat passwords and signs they believe will enable them to enter into the celestial or highest kingdom of heaven. He wrote about washings and anointings, preparatory rituals for the endowment ceremony, and described dramatic role-playing in which church members act out the Garden of Eden story of Adam, Eve, and the serpent.

As church members rehearsed this celestial drama, they wore special clothing and volunteered the necessary words and signs to enter the highest heaven, the Celestial Kingdom. Clayton recorded that “The tokens and covenants are . . . the key by which you approach God and be recognized.” **In this ceremony, each husband escorted his wife through a veil, calling her by a “new temple name.” The woman’s salvation would depend upon her husband’s priesthood authority.** Clayton reported Brigham Young saying that “the man must love his God and the woman must love her husband,” adding that “**woman will never get back, unless she follows the man back.**” (George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, Introduction, Signature Books, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii; see also pp. 204-240.)

This is not to say that the husband determines whether or not a woman will be resurrected or which level of Mormon heaven she will inherit. Only a worthy LDS priesthood holder will be able to call his worthy wife up from the grave to be his eternal mate in the Celestial Kingdom. BYU professor W. John Walsh gave the following explanation:

First, Latter-day Saints do not believe that husbands have the ability to decide whether or not their wives will be 1) resurrected, or 2) enter the celestial kingdom. . . . Now, Latter-day Saints do believe that in some instances, a woman's husband will be given the privilege of performing the resurrection ordinance for and in behalf of the Savior. In cases where a woman does not have a worthy husband, the Savior may allow her father to do so. Likewise, a man's father will be given the privilege of resurrecting him. In such cases, the person performing the resurrection ordinance is simply performing the ordinance for and in behalf of the Savior. He is not acting on his own and has no ability to decide what degree of glory a person will live in for eternity. . . . Can a man refuse to call forth a worthy wife? Any man who would refuse to resurrect his wife at the Savior's request would prove that he himself is unworthy of living in the celestial kingdom and the Savior would never ask such a person to perform the task in the first place. (W. John Walsh, "Do Husbands Resurrect Their Wives?" http://www.lightplanet.com/mormons/response/qa/women_resurrection.htm - retrieved 11-8-2013)

Writing in 1870, former Mormon Mary Ettie Smith related her experience with the LDS Church and the temple ritual:

My husband, . . . and myself, were called to the [Nauvoo] Temple to receive our "Endowments." . . .

The room I had entered was nearly filled with women; no men were in this room; and no women were in the room at the right, where Wallace had entered. Here we were undressed and washed in a large tub of warm water . . . and then anointed with "consecrated oil," . . . we were then dressed with a white night-gown and skirt, and shoes of bleached drilling, and with our hair loose and dripping with consecrated oil, **each received a new name**, and were instructed that we were never to pronounce this name on earth but once: and that, when we came to enter within the "Veil," hereafter described.

The same process is gone through with in the men's washing-room . . . and when all was ready in both rooms, each party was piloted by one of their own sex into a common room, fitted up to represent, and called the Garden of Eden. . . . "We . . . each put on the "garment," [Special LDS underwear. An abbreviated version is still worn by faithful Mormons today.] which is so arranged as to form a whole suit at once; and the "robe," which is a strip of white muslin [cotton], say three-fourths of a yard wide, and long enough to reach to the feet, gathered in the middle, and tied by a bow, to the left shoulder, and brought across the body, and the edges fastened together on the right side, with a belt around the waist of the same. Over this was put the apron we had received in the "first glory;" and the women wore what is called a veil . . .

We were next led into what is called the Terrestrial Glory; where Brigham Young received us, . . . he gave each a pass-word and grip necessary, he said, to admit

us into the "Celestial Glory;" . . . there are many gods, and they do not acknowledge the one Triune God of the Bible, but that every man will sometime be a "god;" and that women are to be the ornaments of his kingdom, and **dependent upon him for resurrection and salvation**; and that our salvation is dependent upon the recollection of these passwords; . . ." (N. W. Green, *Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition. Embracing the Narrative of Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith, of Her Residence and Experience of Fifteen Years with the Mormons.* . . . Hartford, 1870, pp. 42-48)

After Mrs. Smith and her first husband, Wallace Henderson, left Nauvoo and headed west, their marriage began to fall apart. Among other indiscretions, Mr. Henderson took another wife and Ettie left him. When she later explained to Apostle Orson Hyde why she had left her husband, Mr. Hyde replied:

"The reasons you have given do not constitute a lawful excuse for leaving your husband, according to the laws of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

I then rose up to go, as I did not propose to discuss the matter with him. But he stopped me, and said, "You may, if you wish, be 'sealed' to me, and then you know there would be no risk to run, in case you should die. Otherwise, if by chance you should drop away, **having no husband to raise you at the last day, you could not be 'resurrected' as a saint**, and would only be raised like any Gentile, as a servant for the Saints, i.e., for the Mormons."

I was so much disgusted with this proposition, that I left him in the most unceremonious manner, in the midst of his disinterested effort for my salvation. Orson Hyde was, at this time, forty years of age, and had at least three wives and one daughter about my own age. I was then nineteen years old. (*Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition*, p. 132)

Later in her book, Mrs. Smith discussed the LDS concept of priesthood and salvation:

The priesthood, in some form, is understood to be necessary to the salvation of a male, or at least, to his exaltation; and **a female cannot be saved without being "sealed" to some male who is a Priest**. Hence all true Mormons are Priests, and women really do not amount to much in themselves, . . . Hence women are often "sealed," that is married to men, when they do not intend to live with them as an earthly wife, but merely that **they may be saved by them**: in that case they are "sealed" for eternity, as it termed. But when they are married for the natural purposes of a wife, i.e. to have children, they are then said to be "sealed" for time; and they may be "sealed" for one alone, or for both [Thus they can be married for time only, for time and eternity or for just eternity.] If a woman's husband is dead, she need not be sealed again, unless she chooses, and when she does marry again, she is "sealed" only for time, as **when she dies, her first**

husband will “resurrect,” i.e. save her; and she will be his in the next world. (*Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition*, p. 154)

The following is a summary of the early Utah temple ceremony as found in *History of Utah, 1540-1886*, by H. H. Bancroft:

[During the washing and anointing ceremony] The eyes are touched, that they may be quick to see; the ears, that the hearing may be sharp; the mouth, to bestow wisdom upon speech; and the feet, that they be swift to run in the ways of the Lord. Then **a new name**, which is rarely to be mentioned, is whispered into the ear, and all are marched into room No. 2, where they are seated, the sexes on opposite sides of the room, and facing each other. Here they are told by a priest that any person not strong enough to proceed may retire; but if any portion of the ceremony is disclosed, the throat of the person so offending will be cut from ear to ear. [In 1990 the Mormon Church removed the signs of the death penalties from the ceremony. See *Salt Lake City Messenger* #75 TEMPLE RITUAL ALTERED.] Those faltering, if any, having retired, the remainder are taken into room No. 3, where a representation of the creation, the temptation, and fall is given.

Each candidate then puts on over his robe an apron of white linen, upon which are sewn pieces of green silk representing fig-leaves, and also the cap or veil. All good Mormons are buried in their endowment robes, and **the veil worn by the women covers their faces when they are consigned to the grave. In the morning of the resurrection, this veil is to be lifted by the husband; otherwise no woman can see the face of the almighty in the next world.** This ends the first degree; and the initiated are now driven out of Eden into room No. 4, which represents the world, where they encounter many temptations, the chief of which is the false gospel preached by methodists, baptists, etc.

Finally St James and St John appear and proclaim the true gospel of Mormonism, which all gladly embrace. After this they receive certain grips and pass-words, and all are arranged in a circle, kneel, and the women lower their veils. Then, with the right hand uplifted, an oath is taken to avenge the death of Joseph Smith, jun., upon the gentiles who had caused his murder, to teach the children of the church to do likewise, [The oath against the murderers of the Smiths has since been removed.] to obey implicitly and without murmur or question all commands of the priesthood, to refrain from adultery, and finally, eternal secrecy concerning all that transpired in the endowment house is promised.

Then comes an address, after which another room is entered, leading from which is a door with a hole in it, covered with a piece of muslin [cotton]. The men approach this door in turn and ask to enter. Then a person behind the door reaches through the opening, and with knife in hand cuts a certain mark on the left breast of the shirt, another over the abdomen, and one over the right

knee, which marks are faithfully copied by the women in their own garments after returning to their homes. [These markings are already sewn on the garments today.] The man then mentions his **new name**, gives the grip of the third degree, and is permitted to pass in. This is called going behind the veil.

When the men are all in, **each woman is passed through by her husband**, or having none, by one of the brethren. This concludes the ceremony, with the exception of marriage, which will be noticed elsewhere. Of these ceremonies Mrs Stenhouse, from whose account the foregoing is partly taken, says: “About what was done in Nauvoo, I can only speak by hearsay, but have been told many strange and revolting stories about the ceremonies which were there performed. Of the endowments in Utah, everything was beautifully neat and clean, and I wish to say most distinctly that, although the initiation appears now to my mind as a piece of the most ridiculous absurdity, there was, nevertheless, nothing in it indecent or immoral. . . .” (H. H. Bancroft, *History of Utah, 1540-1886*, 1889, ch. 15, no. 17, pp. 357-358)

The LDS Church is still teaching that the husband will call the wife from the grave. However, there is no such teaching in the Bible. Jesus is quoted in the book of John as saying:

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. (John 5:21 ESV)

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. (John 5:25 ESV)

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:40 ESV)

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16 ESV)

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