

Put Ye On the Lord Jesus Christ

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Through honoring our covenants, we enable God to pour out the multitude of promised blessings associated with those covenants.

As my two youngest children were growing, I discovered books that were entertaining and engaging but also used symbolism in their stories. As we read together in the evenings, I loved helping my children understand the symbolism the author was using to teach deeper principles, even gospel principles.

I knew this was sinking in one day when my younger son was in his early teens. He had started a new book and just wanted to enjoy the story, but his mind kept trying to find the deeper meaning in everything he was reading. He was frustrated, but I was smiling inside.

Jesus taught through stories and symbols¹—a mustard seed to teach the power of faith,² a lost sheep to teach the worth of souls,³ a prodigal son to teach the character of God.⁴ His parables were symbols through which He could teach deeper lessons to those who had “ears to hear.”⁵ But those not seeking the deeper meaning would not understand,⁶ just as many who read those same books I read to my children never knew there were deeper meanings and so much more to get out of those stories.

When God the Father offered His Only Begotten Son as a sacrifice for us, Jesus Christ Himself became the highest symbol of our Father in Heaven’s undying love for each of us.⁷ Jesus Christ became the Lamb of God.⁸

We have the privilege and blessing of being invited into a covenant relationship with God, in which our own lives can become a symbol of that covenant. Covenants create the kind of relationship that allows God to mold and change us over time and lift us to become more like the Savior, drawing us closer and closer to Him and our Father⁹ and eventually preparing us to enter Their presence.

Each person on earth is a beloved son or daughter of God.¹⁰ When we choose to be part of a covenant, it enhances and deepens our relationship with Him. President Russell M. Nelson has taught that when we choose to make covenants with God, our relationship with Him can become much closer than it was before our covenant, and it enables Him to bless us with an extra measure of His mercy and love, a covenantal love referred to as *hesed* in the Hebrew language.¹¹ The covenant path is all about our relationship with God—our *hesed* relationship with Him.¹²

Our Father wants a deeper relationship with all His sons and daughters,¹³ but it is our choice. As we choose to draw nearer to Him through a *covenant* relationship, it allows Him to draw nearer

to us¹⁴ and more fully bless us.

God sets the conditions and obligations of the covenants we make.¹⁵ When we choose to enter into that relationship, we witness to Him, through the symbolic actions of each covenant, that we are willing to abide by the conditions He has set.¹⁶ Through honoring our covenants, we enable God to pour out the multitude of promised blessings associated with those covenants,¹⁷ including increased power to change and become more like our Savior. Jesus Christ is at the center of all covenants we make, and covenant blessings are made possible because of His atoning sacrifice.¹⁸

Baptism by immersion is the symbolic gate through which we enter into a covenant relationship with God. Being immersed in the water and coming up again is symbolic of the Savior's death and Resurrection to new life.¹⁹ As we are baptized, we symbolically die and are born again into the family of Christ and show we are willing to take His name upon us.²⁰ We ourselves embody that covenant symbolism. In the New Testament we read, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."²¹ With our baptism we symbolically put on Christ.

The ordinance of the sacrament also points to the Savior. The bread and water are symbolic of Christ's flesh and blood shed for us.²² The gift of His Atonement is symbolically offered to us each week when a priesthood holder, representing the Savior Himself, offers us the bread and water. As we perform the action of eating and drinking the emblems of His flesh and blood, Christ symbolically becomes a part of us.²³ We again put on Christ as we make a new covenant each week.²⁴

As we make covenants with God in the house of the Lord, we further deepen our relationship with Him.²⁵ Everything we do in the temple points to our Father's plan for us, at the heart of which is the Savior and His atoning sacrifice.²⁶ The Lord will teach us line upon line²⁷ through the symbolism of the ordinances and covenants as we open our hearts and prayerfully seek to understand the deeper meanings.

As part of the temple endowment, we are *authorized* to wear the garment of the holy priesthood. It is both a sacred obligation and a sacred privilege.

In many religious traditions, special outer clothing is worn as a symbol of a person's beliefs and commitment to God,²⁸ and ceremonial clothing is often worn by those leading worship services. Those sacred vestments carry deep meaning for those who wear them. We read in scripture that in ancient times, sacred ceremonial clothing was also worn in conjunction with temple rituals.²⁹

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, those of us who have chosen to make covenants with God in the house of the Lord wear sacred ceremonial outer clothing during temple worship, symbolic of the clothing worn in ancient temple rituals. We also wear the garment of the holy priesthood, both during temple worship *and* in our everyday lives.³⁰

The garment of the holy priesthood is deeply symbolic and *also* points to the Savior. When Adam and Eve partook of the fruit and had to leave the Garden of Eden, they were given coats of skins as a covering for them.³¹ It is likely that an animal was sacrificed to make those coats of skins—symbolic of the Savior's own sacrifice for us. *Kaphar* is the basic Hebrew word for atonement, and one of its meanings is "to cover."³² Our temple garment reminds us that the Savior and the

blessings of His Atonement cover us throughout our lives. As we put on the garment of the holy priesthood each day, that beautiful symbol becomes a part of us.

In the New Testament book of Romans, we read: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ... Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.”³³

I am so grateful for the privilege of wearing the garment of the holy priesthood to remind me that the Savior and the blessings of His infinite Atonement constantly cover me throughout my mortal journey. It also reminds me that as I keep the covenants I have made with God in the house of the Lord, I have symbolically put on Christ, who Himself is an armor of light. He will protect me from evil,³⁴ give me power and increased capacity,³⁵ and be my light and guide³⁶ through the darkness and difficulties of this world.

There is deep and beautiful symbolic meaning in the garment of the holy priesthood and its relationship to Christ. I believe that my willingness³⁷ to wear the holy garment becomes *my* symbol to Him.³⁸ It is my own personal sign to God, not a sign to others.³⁹

I am so grateful for my Savior, Jesus Christ.⁴⁰ His atoning sacrifice for us became the greatest symbol of His and our Father in Heaven’s infinite love for each of us,⁴¹ with the tangible symbols of that love and sacrifice—the marks in the Savior’s hands, feet, and side—remaining even after His Resurrection.⁴²

As I keep my covenants and obligations with God, including wearing the garment of the holy priesthood, my very life can become a personal symbol of my love and deep gratitude for my Savior, Jesus Christ, and my desire to have Him with me always.

If you have not yet done so, I invite you to choose a deeper relationship with God by making covenants with Him in the house of the Lord. Study the talks of our prophet (including the beautiful teachings in the footnotes of his talks, which most conference talks have). He has spoken repeatedly about covenants for years and especially since becoming President of the Church. Learn from his teachings about the beautiful blessings and increased power and capacity that can be yours through making and keeping covenants with God.⁴³

The *General Handbook* states that it is not required to have a mission call or be engaged to be married to make temple covenants.⁴⁴ A person must be at least 18 years old, no longer be attending high school or the equivalent, and be a member of the Church for at least one year. There are also standards of personal holiness required.⁴⁵ If you have the desire to deepen your relationship with your Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ by making sacred covenants in the house of the Lord, I invite you to speak with your bishop or branch president and let him know of your desires. He will help you know how to prepare to receive and honor those covenants.

Through a covenant relationship with God, our own lives can become a living symbol of our commitment to and deep love for our Father in Heaven, our *hesed* for Him,⁴⁶ and our desire to progress and eventually become like our Savior, being prepared to one day enter Their presence. I testify that the great blessings of that covenant relationship are well worth the price. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See Mark 4:33–34.

2. See Matthew 17:20.
3. See Luke 15:3–7.
4. See Luke 15:11–32.
5. Matthew 13:9.
6. See Matthew 13:10–13.
7. See John 3:16–17.
8. See John 1:29; 1 Nephi 11:20–22; see also Russell M. Nelson, “The Atonement,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 34–35.
9. “By entering into a covenant with us, God not only binds us to Him, but it is as if He straps us on His back and takes us where only He can go” (Kerry Muhlestein, *God Will Prevail: Ancient Covenants, Modern Blessings, and the Gathering of Israel* [2021], 8). See Doctrine and Covenants 133:53.
10. “All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Gospel Library).
11. “*Hesed* is a ... term describing a covenant relationship in which both parties are bound to be loyal and faithful to each other. ... Because God has *hesed* for those who have covenanted with Him, ... He will continue to work with them and offer them opportunities to change. ... And should they stray, He will help them find their way back to Him,” just as He did time and time again with His covenant people in Old Testament times. “When we enter a covenant with God, we have made a covenant with Him who will always keep His word. He will do everything He can, without infringing on our agency, to help us keep ours” (Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2022, 6, 11; see also Muhlestein, *God Will Prevail*, 9–12; Deuteronomy 7:9).
12. God will never abandon His covenant relationships. “He will never tire in His efforts to help us, and we will never exhaust His merciful patience with us” (Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” 6). We are joyfully bound together through an everlasting covenant.
13. See Jeremiah 31:33; 1 Nephi 17:40; Russell M. Nelson, “Let God Prevail,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 92.
14. See James 4:8; Doctrine and Covenants 88:63.
15. See Russell M. Nelson, “Covenants,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 86.
16. See Mosiah 5:5; 18:8–10.

17. See Russell M. Nelson, “Spiritual Treasures,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 77; Russell M. Nelson, “The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2021, 94; Russell M. Nelson, “Overcome the World and Find Rest,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2022, 96; Camille N. Johnson, “Jesus Christ Is Relief,” *Liahona*, May 2023, 82; Dale G. Renlund, “Accessing God’s Power through Covenants,” *Liahona*, May 2023, 35–37; Jean B. Bingham, “Covenants with God Strengthen, Protect, and Prepare Us for Eternal Glory,” *Liahona*, May 2022, 66.
18. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” 7.
19. See Romans 6:3–4; Colossians 2:12.
20. See 2 Nephi 31:13; Moroni 6:3; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.
21. Galatians 3:27.
22. See Luke 22:19–20.
23. See John 6:56.
24. President Russell M. Nelson said: “Often, I hear the expression that we partake of the sacrament to renew covenants made at baptism. While that’s true, it’s much more than that. I’ve made a new covenant. You have made new covenants” (in Dale G. Renlund, “Unwavering Commitment to Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 25, footnote 18).
25. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” 10.
26. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation,” 93–94.
27. See 2 Nephi 28:30.
28. See “Sacred Temple Clothing,” [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org).
29. See Exodus 28; 40:12–13.
30. See “Sacred Temple Clothing,” [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org).
31. See Genesis 3:21.
32. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Atonement,” 34.
33. Romans 13:12, 14.
34. See Ephesians 6:10–18.
35. See Mosiah 24:13–15; David A. Bednar, “Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 88–89.
36. See Psalm 119:105; 1 Nephi 17:13.
37. Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught, “The submission of one’s will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God’s altar” (“Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 24).

38. Not because of personal preference, inconvenience, or style, but because of certain medical conditions, for some people, wearing the garment is much more difficult. The Lord knows our hearts and understands our desires to honor our commitments with Him. See, for example, Mosiah 4:24–25.
39. We should not seek to judge others' use of the temple garment. See Alma 41:14; see also Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Merciful Obtain Mercy," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 70, 75.
40. See Jeffrey R. Holland, "None Were with Him," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 86–88.
41. See John 3:16–17; 15:12–13; Doctrine and Covenants 34:3.
42. See Isaiah 49:14–16.
43. See Russell M. Nelson, "The Everlasting Covenant," 4–11; Russell M. Nelson, "Spiritual Treasures," 76–79; Russell M. Nelson, "Let God Prevail," 92–95; Russell M. Nelson, "The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation," 93–96; Russell M. Nelson, "Overcome the World and Find Rest," 95–98; Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 95–97.
44. See *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 26.5.1, 27.2.2, Gospel Library.
45. See Russell M. Nelson, "Closing Remarks," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 121.
46. See Russell M. Nelson, "The Everlasting Covenant," 11.