

**TEMPLES**  
Ezekiel 11:23, Hebrews 9:8-11  
By Raymond White

I have a theory, which I think reasonable, that there are three kinds of Christians:

- [1] *Peter Christians*: Catholics and such who track their authority to Peter;
- [2] *Paul Christians*: Protestants who need grace and faith and nothing more; and,
- [3] *James Christians*: Mormons whose religion is centered around temple.

Most people count that the Jews had two temples: the first temple, Solomon's, and the second temple, Herod's. But we could as well count that they had four temples: Solomon's and Herod's for sure, but also Moses' tabernacle, which, although it was portable, was certainly a temple, and Zerubbabel's which was built by the post-Diaspora Jews (*Ezra 5:2*) and stood for 300 years before it was remodeled by Herod and became Herod's temple. Most scholars, when they talk about the "second temple," they mean that temple which was first Zerubbabel's then later Herod's.

I only make this distinction because by "second" temple we normally mean Herod's temple, and Zerubbabel somehow gets lost in the historic shuffle, and that just somehow doesn't seem fair. I'm just trying to give the man his due.

The first temple, Solomon's, (I guess that makes Moses' tabernacle temple zero), was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. The second, Herod's, (or third by my counting) was destroyed in 70 CE by General Titus and the 10<sup>th</sup> Roman legion.

For a blitz lesson on temple history, here are some of the pertinent verses.

**[1] MOLTEN SEA**

*1 Kings 7:23* And [Solomon] made a molten sea [baptismal font?] :25 It stood upon twelve oxen...

The molten sea sounds much like something that is in every Mormon temple: a baptismal font resting on twelve oxen. What the Jewish priests used the molten sea for, the Bible does not say. Perhaps a mikveh bath. If so, then the Mormons have it right on.

Mormons use that font in their temples to do baptisms for the dead, an ordinance practiced only by Mormons. To justify it biblically, Mormons point to one verse —

*1 Corinthians 15:29* Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

That's compelling. To that, I'll add my own argument, which is this: Mormons believe that theirs is the only legitimate baptism. Is that just religious snobbery or could the claim be valid? I claim it is very valid for the reason that if you believe that you have some door to heaven (baptism, faith, whatever), you'd better also believe that that door is open to *everyone* or it is *you* who are the snob, (we can go to heaven but you can't). Mormon baptism is literally available to *everyone*, including and in particular the dead,

which is the point. No one loses out just because they lived in the wrong place or at the wrong time, and that gives Mormon baptism a legitimacy that all others lack.

Mormons, then, have it both ways. They really do believe theirs is the only true church, but at the same time they can never be accused of believing they are the only ones going to heaven because it is their tireless duty to insure that everyone else gets there too by their baptisms for the dead. How generous is that? That “us and you” message of Mormonism is certainly different than the historic Christian message of “us and not you.”

When I was younger I used to worry that some other church might copy us (baptisms for the dead and celestial marriage) and by doing so, obfuscate our uniqueness and therefore also our legitimacy. Now that I’m older I have come to realize that I needn’t have worried. Why not? Because no one would be so foolish as to try to baptize everyone who has ever lived. No one that is except someone to whom God has said, “You *must* do this.” No one would dare imitate us. It’s too daunting, too foolish. But we do it because God told us we must. And we trust God that this foolish effort will result in a great thing. Think Noah who foolishly built an ark. It saved him, his family, and the human race. Think Christ who foolishly went to his cross —

*1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

Now you can think about Mormons foolishly going to their temples and trying to baptize everyone who ever lived. Maybe it’s not so foolish after all.

## [2] WORSHIP TOWARDS

*1 Kings 8:30 When they shall pray toward this place and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place...*

When you pray in the temple or towards the temple, God hears you in heaven.

## [3] FOREVER

*1 Kings 9:3 ... I have hollowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*

God never gives up on his temple. Christians generally say that the temple is done, that we no longer need it now that we have the church. Not according to this verse. This verse puts temple building Mormons on strong ground theologically. In God’s mind, there will always be temples.

## [4] ABUSE

*2 Kings 16:17 King Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and too, down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it*

King Ahaz, along with his many other misbehaviors, decided that he wanted to move things around in the temple. He removed the laver from off the oxen and set it on a stone foundation. Why? Perhaps because he wanted the gold and other stuff..

#### [5] GOD'S PRESENCE

*2 Kings 19:15 ...O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims...*

After centuries, God was still in the temple above the ark between the cherubim. .

#### [6] DEDICATION

*2 Chronicles 7:1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.*

Now that's a dedication! God accepts Solomon's prayer and offering and the temple in a very conspicuous way. Fire from heaven consumed the offering, and God's glory filled the temple. There can be no doubt that this really was the house of God.

Did any such thing ever happen at a Mormon temple? The best documented incidences were the open visions at the Kirkland temple (*Doctrine and Covenants 76*), but there may have been others.

#### [7] ARK

*2 Chronicles 35:3 ...Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders.*

Where had it been all this time? David moved it from Gibeah (*2 Samuel 6:2-4*), but where he took it to, is not said. Wherever it has been, it's been sitting there a long while, waiting for Solomon to build the temple, its intended final destination.

But then it was lost before the Babylonian conquest. Where the ark is now, nobody knows. Or maybe someone does know but it's a great secret.

#### [8] HOLY PLACE

*2 Chronicles 35:5 And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of your families of the fathers of your brethren the people and after the division of the families of the Levites.*

The Doctrine and Covenants also says "stand in holy places." But exactly what that means is a bit mysterious. Maybe this verse sheds light on it. The temple certainly is in view, but that doesn't seem to be all there is to it. It has as much to do with family assignments. It's family and temple. My family's holy place may be different than yours.

## [9] DESTRUCTION OF THE FIRST TEMPLE

**2 Chronicles 36:19** *And they [Babylonians] burnt the house of God.*

How could God have let that happen? Because they abused it, and so God abandoned it. Does that make it no longer God's house? That I can't say, he did say "forever." But I will say this: when it was destroyed, God wasn't home.

## [10] GOD LEAVES

**Ezekiel 8:4** *And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain. :5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. :6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? Even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? But turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations. :10 ... portrayed upon the wall round about [graffiti in the temple] :14 ... women weeping for Tammuz [Akkadian god of rain]. :16 ... they worshipped the sun toward the east. :17 ... Is it a light thing?*

God had plenty to be mad about. The question is, what did he do about it? The answer is, he left, he vacated the premises.

**Ezekiel 9:3** *And the glory of the god of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. 10:3 Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court. :4 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled of the brightness of the LORD's glory :18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. :19 And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight ... and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. 11:23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.*

And so, God was gone. They had driven him out of his own house. And when God was gone, they were unprotected. The Babylonians could do whatever they pleased and the Jewish God would not stop them because he was no longer there.

## [11] DIASPORA

**Nehemiah 10:39** *We will not forsake the house of our God.*

When the Jews were in exile, they longed for their homeland and their temple. That was and still is the passion of every serious Jew, and, may I add, of every serious Mormon. More than a place of worship, the temple is the house of God where his presence is sensed.

## [12] HEAVENLY TEMPLE

*Psalms 18:6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple...*

This is interesting. There are two possible meanings: I was in his temple speaking, or God was in his temple listening. The language seems to indicate the second. And if that is so, then what temple could be meant? Does this mean the temple at Jerusalem or some other temple? Possibly a temple in heaven? Well, there is this —

*Hebrews 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; :2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.:5 Who serve [earthly priests] unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 9:8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. :11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.*

Here is what I think this means, and you may accuse me of stretching it and that's okay. I won't be upset with you for disagreeing with me as long as you're not upset with me for voicing my opinion.

I think this is saying that before Moses built his tabernacle, there was already a tabernacle, a more perfect tabernacle. And, as instructed by God, Moses modeled his tabernacle after that one.

Where is this more perfect tabernacle? It's in heaven. What's it for? Well, since Christ administers there, and priests administer here, and the Holy Ghost is involved, then maybe the heavenly and the earthly temples (tabernacles) communicate with each other. Communicate what? Maybe who is saved and who is not. Could you imagine some dead person keeping a close eye on the Book of Life to see if his or her name shows up? And how might that happen? Mormons might relate to that.

*Revelation 15:5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: :6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. :8 And the temple was filled with smoke*

*from the glory of God. And from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.*

Clearly then, there is a temple in heaven. And God resides there just as he did in Solomon's temple and the Moses' tabernacle.

Now this question: why? What purpose could such a temple possibly serve?

There is no answer to this question in any scriptures, but we can speculate and guess as to what use a heavenly temple might have.

To make a reasonable guess, we should consider what temples are for. So, what are they for? They're for saving souls; that is, they're for bringing souls (*Hebrews 4:16*) into the presence of God. And that is what priesthood is all about. The Latin "pontifex," which translates to "priest," means "bridge builder" and that is the correct idea.

So, how does it happen? In ancient temples priests performed animal sacrifices to cover sin. Also, Jesus said, "I am the way" and he was a priest. And in modern temples (that is, Mormon temples), priests perform rituals that connect patrons to Christ.

Also, there are near-death experiences. Many such "travelers" tell of a tunnel and a bright light, starting here and arriving there, and returning because they survived to tell us. I don't doubt these stories — why should I doubt such a preponderance of witnesses? So there is a path, a road to heaven. Angels travel and sometimes get delayed mid-journey (*Daniel 10:13*). So, things are not so snap-your-fingers instant as we commonly imagine. Angels are real people traveling real distances subjected to real travel problems. And so, too, is that temple in heaven a real place, and real work goes on there.

What real work? The same as here. Since earthly temples change the salvation status of people, living and dead, (if you doubt that, see *1 Corinthians 15:29*) then somehow that heavenly temple is connected to the same effort.

Here's what I think is happening (it's not a doctrine, so it's not false doctrine):

Spirits are anxiously waiting for their temple ordinances to be done and so spend time in the heavenly temple waiting for the news of their baptism or other ordinance. It could be that the records in the heavenly temple are the *real* records of the universe, and when we perform an ordinance, it's like uploading data to a common server. Or maybe being present in the heavenly temple, makes them co-present in an earthly temple, or somewhere else.

Sounds pretty Sci-Fi, doesn't it? — very "Beam me up, Scotty." Perhaps, but that doesn't make it not true. And the heavenly temple *does* exist and therefore must exist for *some* purpose. I am merely asserting that my guess is at least as good as anyone else's. And that has to be fair enough.

One of my sons told me that on his mission he had an open vision of spirits waiting for their baptism. I believe him.

### [13] TEMPLE WORK

*Psalms 27:4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

Many Mormons, including myself, cannot imagine a better way to finish out our lives than to spend as much of it as we can in the temple, being as close to God as we possibly can. That, I believe, is the sentiment of the psalmist here.

***Psalms 65:4** ...we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of the holy temple.*

☛ ***Psalms 84:10** ...I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

A doorkeeper? That must be the one who checks passes to see who has a right to be there. How about a cook, or a dishwasher, or a laundry person? Everything that's done in a temple, big or small, is done by someone who is glad to be there.

***Psalms 92:13** Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

#### [14] DESCRIPTION

***Ezekiel 40-42*** These chapters are about the angel measuring the dimensions of the temple, recording them for posterity. The text is too long to include it here.

What is the purpose? Possibly the angel recorded this information because the temple was soon to be destroyed and he (or she?) wanted this information preserved. For what reason? Because maybe one day the temple would be rebuilt, and the builders would need that information.

***Ezekiel 40:39** And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering.*

Three offerings — burnt offering, sin offering, trespass offering — give us an idea of what the temple is for.

#### [15] PLURAL

***Hosea 8:14** For Israel...buildeth temples...*

Temples is plural. Did the Jews build temples anywhere other than in Jerusalem? Apparently, a few. Archeologists have found three Jewish temples in other places, one on an island called Elephantine. Mormons, of course, build temples everywhere.

#### [16] RESPECT

***Habakkuk 2:20** But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.*

When God is speaking, shut up and listen. All other human conversation and thought should acquiesce to God.

### [17] GET ON WITH IT

*Haggai 1:8 Go up to the maintain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. :9 Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? Saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.*

God said it was time to build the second temple. They had expended so much effort building their own houses, but so far they had done nothing to build God's house.

Why not do something great? Something beyond yourselves? Something lasting? Instead of just :6 *...earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.*

### [18] GOD RETURNS

*Haggai 2:7 ...the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory...*

If we are to take this literally (and I do) this can only mean Christ coming to the temple bodily and the parting of the veil at his crucifixion.

### [19] CLOTHING

*Isaiah 61:10 ...he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness...*

Is this just figurative, this robe of righteousness? Or is he talking about some actual clothing?

*Ezekiel 42:14 ...they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they are holy, and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people.*

This is literal clothing that is worn in the temple. The directive is: do not wear this special temple clothes outside the temple. They are special clothing for a special place and not to be publically displayed.

*Ezekiel 44:17 ...they shall be clothed with linen garments... :18 They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads...*

*Ezekiel 44:19 ...they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.*

## **[20] ORDINANCES**

*Ezekiel 43:11 ...and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.*

## **[21] MARRIAGE CONUNDRUM**

Everything so far has been pro-Mormon. Now I offer a comment that will annoy some Mormons. But I offer no apologies because it's something I feel strongly about.

I understand temples, temple marriage, the new and everlasting covenant, families are forever, and all that. But I do have one problem with the way we go about it, and I'm going to dump this on you now. So brace yourselves, or stop reading.

Here's the problem: A girl joins the church. Her mom and dad are not Mormons. The girl falls in love with a good Mormon boy, probably a return missionary, she accepts his marriage proposal and agrees to be married in the temple.

Just what could possibly be wrong with that? As I said: mom and dad are not Mormons and are therefore not allowed to participate in or even witness their daughter's wedding. And we audaciously say that's fine, and it's beautiful and wonderful.

Well, it's not beautiful and wonderful, and it's not fine! Mothers want to see their children, especially their daughters, married. When we deprive them of that, that insult creates a bitter resentment and lifelong hostility towards the church. Further, that resentment festers not only in the parents but often in the girl herself. I know. I have spoken with just such people who continue venting their anger even decades later about having been forced to exclude their own parents from their wedding.

And we think this is good for families? How? If families are first, as we claim, why do we start new families in such a cold, heartless manner? If there is anything that we do that brands us as a "cult," this is it — refusing to allow parents to attend their own daughter's wedding. That does sound cultish, even to me and I'm a lifelong, temple attending member.

Further, when the engaged couple asks their bishop the reasonable question, "Can we get married civilly first so our parents can attend, then get sealed?", they are told, no. When asked why not, the bishop contrives an answer something like, a celestial marriage is spiritually superior.

Actually, that answer is bull, because if it were true, then every convert who was married before joining the church should be offended to find out that their sealing is somehow inferior to a celestial wedding that they could not and can never have. The whole point of a sealing is that it puts late coming couples on an equal footing with those couples that have a celestial wedding. If that is not true, then we need to know.

But it is true. A civil marriage plus a sealing is equal in every way to a temple marriage. Therefore young convert couples are within their reasonable right to ask for and press for a civil marriage ceremony which permits their non-member parents to attend, then follow that wedding quickly by a sealing that excludes those parents.

The church will say, “Well, you *can* do that, but you’ll have to wait a year for the sealing.” To which I respond, why? Why is the church so heard hearted in this matter that it insists on excluding non-member parents? There is no doctrinal reason for it and no common sense reason for it. Instead, it is hurtful and is the cause of much apostasy.

The church does at times change its temple ceremonies, in wording and attire. I am calling for a simple procedural change: allow civil weddings on temple grounds to allow non-members to attend, then follow that immediately by a sealing that excludes non-members. This would give the church an opportunity to explain to non-member parents why there is a second half of the ceremony, to make the marriage eternal.

Let’s consider some Biblical history. That’s always a good thing to do.

It is true that non-Jews were excluded from temple worship just as non-Mormons.

*Ezekiel 44:9 This saith the Lord GOD: No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.*

But they weren’t excluded absolutely.

*Isaiah 56:7 Even them [gentiles] will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.*

God wants people of all nations (and presumably of all religions) to come to him at his temple and worship him. The Jewish temple was not intended for Jews alone.

*Ezekiel 28:14 Thou [Tyre] art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou was upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. :16 ... I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God. :15 ...till iniquity was found in thee. :16 ...they...filled the midst of thee with violence...*

These non-Jews, in this case people of Tyre, had access, some sort of access anyway, to the Jewish God on the temple mount. But God cast them out, not because they were not Jewish but because of iniquity and violence.

My point is that the Jewish God blessed more than just the Jewish people.

*Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee [Abraham], and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

If the Jewish temple blessed more than just Jews, shouldn’t we Mormons enlarge our view of the Mormon temple to bless more than just Mormons? Well, of course. That is, after all, what sealings are all about.

By blessing non-Mormons, I do not mean we should admit non-Mormons into our temples. What I do mean is this: Consider that in the second temple, there were four

courts: the court of the priests, the court of Israel, the court of the women (where the widow gave her two mites), and the court of the gentiles.

***Revelation 11:2** But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not for it is given unto the gentiles.*

Yes, Herod's temple had a court for gentiles. It was the courtyard within the outer most wall which surrounded the entire temple. It was where the animals were sold and where Jesus cleansed the temple. Gentiles were allowed there.

Why gentiles? Because even gentiles had to have some access to the true God and that access amounted to that outermost court.

We Mormons have no such thing as a court of the gentiles, or maybe we do *if* we allow ourselves to think of all the temple grounds other than the temple itself to be a sort of court of the gentiles. And that would include our Visitor's Centers, genealogical centers, and any chapels on the grounds. Visitor's Centers are built for just that purpose, to invite non-members.

Back to the point: Since it is so hurtful for a recently baptized girl who gets married in the temple to deny her parents access to her wedding, we could and should allow an alternative.

What alternative? Just this: What would be the harm — (now really, think about this with me) — in allowing just such couples to have a civil ceremony somewhere on the temple grounds, our “court of the gentiles”? That could be in a chapel on the grounds (behind the Los Angeles temple there is a chapel), in the visitor's center, on the open grounds in some garden area, or in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Then immediately following the wedding, hustle the couple into the temple for a members-only sealing. There would be no harm done, it would instead do a great deal of good giving the parents a new insight into the difference between marriage for this life and sealing for eternity.

This would be positive in so many ways. Not only would the parents be a part of the wedding, but while the bride and groom are in the temple being sealed, the parents could receive an instruction about what is going on and why.

Now, wouldn't that be better? And what a golden missionary opportunity that would be, which we are now squandering.

Many will argue, “But a temple marriage is a higher experience, more spiritual, more superior somehow to a civil marriage and a sealing.” I argue back: Oh? How so? It is a higher experience to force a girl to break her mother's heart, abandoning her to tour the grounds, telling her that she'll enjoy the reception anyway? Is it a higher experience for a girl to kneel at an altar in that frame of mind and crying her eyes out because she had to say to her parents, “no, you can't come to my wedding because now I'm a Mormon and the Mormon church forbids it”? Why should her wedding day, which is supposed to be the happiest day of her life, now be her saddest? What is so “higher” about that?

And then there is also this: If a temple marriage is superior to a temple sealing, then we ought to inform the millions of married couples that joined the church in good faith who will be or have been sealed, and tell them that their unions are somehow

inferior because they were merely sealed and not married in the temple. How stupid would that be? Particularly since it is simply not true.

And how about all our dead ancestors we work so hard to get sealed? Are their unions somehow inferior? Of course not. A sealing is a sealing. If an after-marriage sealing was good enough for Joseph and Emma it should be good enough for our young brides and grooms coming into the church from non-member families.

A civil marriage plus a sealing is in every way equal to a celestial marriage. So then, why do we deprive non-Mormon parents the privilege of seeing their Mormon children married? This is hurtful, ludicrous, and I'll add, pointless. There is no benefit at all, but only harm.

So let's stop it. On our temple grounds outside our temples are visitor's centers, churches, gardens, all kinds of places where non-Mormons are free to wander and enjoy. Then why not use some of that as a "Court of the Gentiles" outside the temple for civil weddings, immediately followed by a temple sealing inside the temple? Honestly, what's the harm?

Thousands of young couples are told by their bishops that they have two choices: (1) a temple wedding where their non-Mormon parents *must* be excluded, or (2) a civil wedding where they would then have to wait a year to be sealed. I'd wager that many people are appalled by the lack of a third choice and choose the second, and then they never come back, and we wonder why they left the church.

Why do we do this? There is no good reason. There is no commandment that disallows a civil marriage immediately followed by a temple sealing, it is simply a church rule and a problem of the church's own making.

Some will simply say, "It is standard church procedure." Yes. Of course it is. That's the problem. It shouldn't be.

The Jews had enough sensitivity toward the gentiles that they at least had a court of the gentiles. We should be that sensitive anyway, and be a lot more accommodating.

Now finally, this — I'll paraphrase Jesus just a bit. He didn't say it this way but he could have: **Mark 2:27** *And he said unto them, The ~~sabbath~~ [temple] was made for man, and not man for the ~~sabbath~~ [temple].* Does it not make sense then to alter our temple worship to serve us better when the need occasions? Well, we have just such a need now. We have made accommodating changes in the past, we ought to make this accommodating change now. Let's permit non-member parents to attend their child's wedding. It's the right thing to do.

## [22] THE CHILD SEALING PROBLEM

I'll present the problem than offer my solution.

And adult, who is a full-faith practicing Mormon, wishes to her her deceased parents sealed to each other and herself sealed to them as their child. That's a righteous thing to want to do, but the lady has a problem; namely, her parents had divorced, and had each remarried, and were each sealed to other people.

That's one version of the problem, another is that her mother had already been sealed to another man, was widowed young, then remarried and conceived her.

Either way, our lady's problem is that while she wants to be child-sealed to her mother, she has no desire to be child-sealed to a man who is not her father. She wants to be child-sealed to her own father whom she had known and loved. But she is blocked because, although a man may have two wives, a woman may not have two husbands. And thus our lady must make an agonizing choice: be sealed to her mother and her mother's husband, or be sealed to her father and his wife. Neither is what she wants. What can she do?

Here is my suggestion: Ignore the rules, the temple was made for man and not man for the temple, she should have her parents sealed together and herself child-sealed to them, or not bother to have them sealed but have herself child-sealed to them anyway.

But isn't that heretical? Would the church allow it? If not, could she even get away with it? My answers are no, no, and maybe.

It is not heretical for this reason: The church never cancels a child-sealing. Sealed couples divorce all the time, and their marriage sealings are cancelled whenever the church permits. Which leaves a conundrum: what happens to that couple's children who are sealed to them? Answer: They remain sealed to them even though the man and woman are no longer sealed to each other. That being true, and it is, that necessarily means that there are children in the Celestial kingdom who are sealed to two parents who are not sealed to each other. There is no possible alternate interpretation.

And that drives us to this question: since there are such children in heaven, why can't our lady just have herself sealed to her parents without sealing parents? Answer: Because the church says no. That's the only reason. But why? We've just seen that there are children of divorce in heaven, and like earth-loife, although it's not ideal, this "joint-custody" arrangement is good because it is lovingly the best arrangement possible. Why should a child be deprived of her parents just because her parents no longer love each other? Joint-custody works on earth, why not in heaven? We just saw that it does.

But if the church doesn't permit it, how do you do it? Answer: You don't ask, you just do it. Mistakes are made in the church's grand family-tree all the time so we needn't worry that we might screw things up for God. People are sealed to the wrong people, people are sealed to unknown people (intentionally, I might add), women are resealed to alternate husbands (a pile of Joseph Smith's post-mortem wives for example), and nobody bats an eye. Why? Because it doesn't matter how many times we do it wrong, mistakes don't matter anyway, it only matters how many times we do it right. When it's right, it sticks. So, what does one more mistake matter anyway? It doesn't matter, so what's the harm? There is no harm, but there may result a whole bunch of good. Remember, there are children in heaven who are sealed to unsealed parents, that we know, *for certain*. So we're adding one more joint-custody child to heaven's family tree; so what? And what does it matter that she was back-ended into this arrangement (child-sealed to unsealed parents) rather than front-ended (divorce and cancellation)? The result is the same. So who's to say that this is heretical? I'm just going about it from the opposite direction. And I am pretty sure that God and his angels will let it stand; after all, it is the priesthood sealing covenant we're talking about, and it has real power. God has given us the right and responsibility to use it as our conscience sees fit.

**Matthew 16:19** ... *whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven*

So, those of you who are children in this situation, go ahead and bind yourself to the parents you love, and let them complain to God all they want, if they've a mind to. But you can just remind them that they had you, and that gives you a child's right to bind yourself to them by any means available. It's kind of like divine child-support.

But don't ask for permission. Don't give someone the chance to tell you no. It is easier to get forgiveness than permission. Just do it. Do what God puts in your heart and let him sort it out later.

Now, a confession. My motive for writing this has been entirely selfish.

I have fifteen grandchildren, one of whom is in exactly this situation: Kaelynn. With unsealed parents who are estranged and will likely divorce, and have little chance of a reconciliation. Kaelynn, if you are reading this (and if any of you know her, please give this to her), if you want to be my granddaughter in heaven, you must, by some means, be sealed to your father, I mean your biological father, not some later stepfather. I expect that at some point in your life, your mother will be sealed to some man other than your father and she will ask you to be sealed to herself and that man. *Don't do it.* If you do, you may be lost to me forever and that will break my heart. You have told me many times and in many ways that you love me as I love you. You must be in my family and I have taken a desperate means to achieve that: I have written this article for you to read and act on.

I love you, and I believe that you still love me and your grandmother and your daddy and your mommy. So, I have shown you the way. Now, it is left for you to do it. Do not be "sealed away from me," do not be sealed to the wrong father, however kind he is to you and your mommy, and I hope he is kind to her and that she is happy. But he is not your father. Wait. Survive. Outlast us all. And when you are an old woman and the rest of us have gone to heaven, *then* go to the temple and be sealed to your mommy and daddy. Seal them together if you can, but if not, seal yourself to them anyway. And by that means you will be sealed to me, your eternal grandfather.

You are my luck child, my 13<sup>th</sup>, and born on my birthday. All of that, my sweetheart, is what I want you to do for me.

Having said that, I will now share with you King David's last words. He spoke these words to his son Solomon. They are about the temple and Solomon's duty to build it. David said —

*1 Chronicles 28:20 ... Be brave, be strong, and Do It ...*

Dear Kaelynn, your temple work will not be completed until you are sealed to me. Love you much, love you always, Grandpa.