

Rel A 304 Reading Questions for Tuesday, September 12

Kerry Muhlestein, “The Covenant: Blessings,” in *God Will Prevail: Ancient Covenants, Modern Blessings, and the Gathering of Israel* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2021), 43–60.

Muhlestein, “The Covenant: Obligations, Consequences, and Opportunities to Be Gathered,” in *God Will Prevail*, 61–74.

“I Told Myself I Would Never Become Depressed” [video], The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://youtu.be/NYdV4hiw00E>.

In his landmark 2020 address, “Let God Prevail,” President Russell M. Nelson invited members of the Church, “As you study your scriptures during the next six months, I encourage you to make a list of all the Lord has promised He will do for covenant Israel. I think you will be astounded! Ponder these promises. Talk about them with your family and friends. Then live and watch for these promises to be fulfilled in your own life.”

In our class this semester, we don’t have six months we can spend making our own list of all God’s promises to covenant Israel, so we’re going to fast track that process by reading these book chapters by Dr. Muhlestein, a BYU religion professor, in which he summarizes those promised blessings and the obligations that accompany them. Dr. Muhlestein’s book, *God Will Prevail*, was recommended by President Nelson in his article “The Everlasting Covenant” that we already read (see endnote #3).

Kerry Muhlestein, “The Covenant: Blessings,” in *God Will Prevail: Ancient Covenants, Modern Blessings, and the Gathering of Israel* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2021), 43–60.

1. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that “if we really want to succeed in our callings, if we want to have access to every help and every advantage and every blessing from the Father, if we want to have the door of heaven thrown open to us that we might receive the powers of godliness,” then what must we do?

Relationship with God

2. “The covenant ... welds a special _____ between covenanters and God, one in which they behave more like God and develop/receive a more godly nature as God aids them in this process. Covenants are about _____s, and the primary _____ is the one we make with God. This is one of the main reasons why the path God has chosen for us is the covenant path, because it has within it the ability to help us become what we

need to become by helping us create an exalting _____ with God.” (Every blank contains the same key word.)

Covenant Relationship and the Hand of God

3. The covenant contains several elements or aspects that are important, and numerous blessings come from the covenant. There is one aspect or blessing, however, that is most important—all other aspects of the covenant hinge on this one and flow from it. What element or aspect of the covenant is the most foundational?

Covenant Relationship and the Power of God

4. God revealed to Joseph Smith that “the power of godliness is manifest” through priesthood ordinances (Doctrine and Covenants 84:20). What is the primary way that we draw priesthood power into our lives?

Prosperity, Land, and Blessedness

5. As modern covenant-keepers, we can relate to ancient promises like priesthood or posterity, but sometimes the scriptural emphasis on having a *land of inheritance* is hard for us to understand. For the Israelites and others who lived earlier in history, why was the promise of land so important?

Protection

Posterity

Gathering

Latter-day Fulfillments

Exaltation

6. All who keep the covenant will receive in the hereafter “their exaltation” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:19). In the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, how has God explained what that means?

Muhlestein, “The Covenant: Obligations, Consequences, and Opportunities to Be Gathered,” in *God Will Prevail*, 61–74.

The previous chapter on blessings is printed in the course packet, but this chapter on obligations is not—you can find a PDF scan on Learning Suite in the same folder where you got these reading questions.

Relationship with God

7. The most important obligation of covenant keepers has to do with their relationship with God. Prophets have taught that covenant keepers should love God above anything or anyone else, let God prevail in their lives, and not worship any other gods. In the ancient world, worshipping other gods primarily took the form of idol worship. In the modern world, what are some other ways people might be lured into idolatry?

Obedience

8. Dr. Muhlestein writes, “‘Keeping’ [the commandments] isn’t just something we do, it is something we feel; it is part of who we are. It comes not because of a determination to observe a tedious list of dos and don’ts, but because we desire with all our heart to please God and to want the same things He wants. Keeping covenant, or obedience, is a labor of love that happens naturally when our hearts are truly full of love for God, and we fully make Him our God.” In your own life, have you ever thought of the commandments as a tedious list of dos and don’ts? (I know I have!) How do you think you can switch from a checklist mentality to instead being obedient as an expression of love for Heavenly Father?

Relationship with Fellow Man

9. Loving God and obeying Him are obviously crucial for covenant keepers, but in the Old Testament, God repeatedly taught that having a proper relationship with our fellow humans is also extremely important. In the version of the covenant revealed at Sinai (the

“law of Moses”), what were the Israelites instructed to do for the poor, orphans, widows, foreigners, and anyone else in society who was struggling or marginalized?

Sharing the Covenant

Covenant Loss and the Opportunity to Return, or the Gathering of Israel

10. The terms of the covenant have built within them a mechanism to help covenant breakers return to being covenant keepers. That mechanism is the covenantal penalties. These penalties do not suggest that God “punishes” covenant keepers, at least in the sense of punishment simply for the sake of punishment. Explain how allowing these natural consequences for bad choices fits into God’s purposes for His covenant children.

Covenant Summary

“I Told Myself I Would Never Become Depressed” [video], The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://youtu.be/NYdV4hiw00E>.

When we see the covenant blessings and obligations laid out in a chart, it can make life seem more simple, more black and white than it actually is. But part of our growth is seeing life in all it’s colorful, messy, beautiful complexity. This video explores that journey.