

Rel A 304 Reading Questions for Thursday, September 7

“God the Father,” Gospel Topics, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/god-the-father>.

Jenet Jacob Erickson, “Designed for Covenant Relationships,” BYU devotional, 8 November 2022, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/jenet-erickson/designed-for-covenant-relationships/>.

Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” *Liahona*, October 2022, 4–11, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2022/10/04-the-everlasting-covenant>.

Welcome to your first batch of reading questions! For each assigned reading you will answer a set of questions as you read. You do not need to turn in your answers, but since these exact questions will appear on quizzes and exams, it’s worth your time to keep up with them.

After you complete the reading and finish answering all the questions, you will go to Learning Suite and take a reading quiz (located under the Exams tab). The quiz will have five questions that will be copied and pasted directly from the reading questions below, so no question should ever come as a surprise. However, the quiz is closed book, closed note, so be sure to do any studying and memorizing *before* you start the quiz. The idea is that small, regular doses of memorization and testing will help you be ready later when exams come. The quiz needs to be submitted on Learning Suite before 9:00 a.m. on the due date in order to receive full credit.

You’ll notice for the first few weeks of class that we’re not reading directly from the book of Isaiah. Instead, we’re going to review the history and concepts that Isaiah *assumes* you will *already know* before you even start reading. We’ll begin today with the basics: who God is and what kind of relationship He wants to have with us.

“God the Father,” Gospel Topics, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/god-the-father>.

1. This article is brief but contains several basic and important ideas about what Latter-day Saints believe about God. Which of these ideas is the most meaningful to you and why?

Jenet Jacob Erickson, “Designed for Covenant Relationships,” BYU devotional, 8 November 2022, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/jenet-erickson/designed-for-covenant-relationships/>.

I suggest that the ideal way to experience Dr. Erickson’s devotional is to open it in two parallel screens, one with the text and one playing the video recording. The video shows images and

allows her to express her emotions as she speaks, while the text makes it easier to follow the logic of her message. Use both side by side and you get the best of each experience.

Social Science Evidence for Our Relational Nature

We Are Relational Beings

2. Dr. Erickson explains that “we are not designed to be autonomous, self-actualized individuals.” Instead, we are built and wired in what way?

The Plan of Salvation Is to Enable Us to Become Beings of Love

How Do We Become Beings of Divine Love?

3. Given that we are defined by relationships—relationships with our heavenly parents and with each other—how do Dr. Erickson and the authors she quotes define and explain the concept of “sin”?

Covenants Create the Relationship Through Which We Become At-One with Him

4. Dr. Erickson says that “if there is anything studying family has taught me, it is that development emerges from within strong relationships.” One example of this is the physical, mental, and emotional development that is spurred in infants as they establish a bond with their caregivers. In a parallel yet infinitely more profound way, our eternal souls can grow and become like God as we experience relationship with Him. This kind of developmental relationship is offered to us through what means?

His Covenant Relationship with Us Is the Truest Intimacy

5. In mortal life we experience weakness and sin, pain and loss. Both as we sin and as we suffer, people may feel that God’s law exists to accuse and condemn them for falling short, for not being enough. But God’s law isn’t there to judge what punishment you deserve; it’s there to judge what healing you need. As Dr. Erickson explains, God “answers the pain and loss that is woven into the fabric of our mortal experience with the purest form of love—covenant love—entering into it with us. In doing so, He changes its quality, carving out caverns for His healing love.” God draws closer to us, “sharing our

pain in the most profound form of intimacy and, in the process,” does what with our pain?

We Are an Eternal Family

Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” *Liahona*, October 2022, 4–11,
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2022/10/04-the-everlasting-covenant>.

6. In endnote #2 of President Nelson’s article “The Everlasting Covenant,” he defines the new and everlasting covenant as “the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ” and teaches that it “includes all ordinances and covenants necessary for our salvation.” In what sense is this covenant “new”? Why is it called “everlasting”?
7. Latter-day Saints often speak of two covenants: the new and everlasting covenant and the Abrahamic covenant. President Nelson teaches that these two concepts “are essentially the _____ [one word].”
8. Adam and Eve entered the everlasting covenant and begin their journey on the covenant path by participating in what ordinance?
9. President Nelson teaches that when we enter the covenant path, we “create a relationship with God that allows Him to bless and change us.” There is a special *love*, *mercy*, and *loyalty* that we can experience with God in the bonds of this covenant relationship. English, unfortunately, has no word to describe this doctrinal idea—but the ancient Israelites had a word for it in Hebrew! What is the Hebrew term for this special covenantal love, mercy, and loyalty?
10. “Once you and I have made a covenant with God,” President Nelson teaches, “our relationship with Him becomes much closer than before our covenant. Now we are bound together.” Because of that covenant, what will we “never exhaust”?

11. “The Book of Mormon,” President Nelson points out, “begins and ends with reference to” what?

Now that you’ve finished answering all the reading questions, go to Learning Suite, click on the Exams tab, and take the reading quiz before 9:00 a.m. on Thursday! Remember that you can’t look at books or notes during the quiz, so before you start taking it, review the answers you came up with above and do a mini-memorization session. If you memorize what you have learned in little chunks like this, it will make it a lot easier when you get to Exam 1 on September 21, because you will be *reviewing* material you mastered once already instead of *learning* material for the first time.