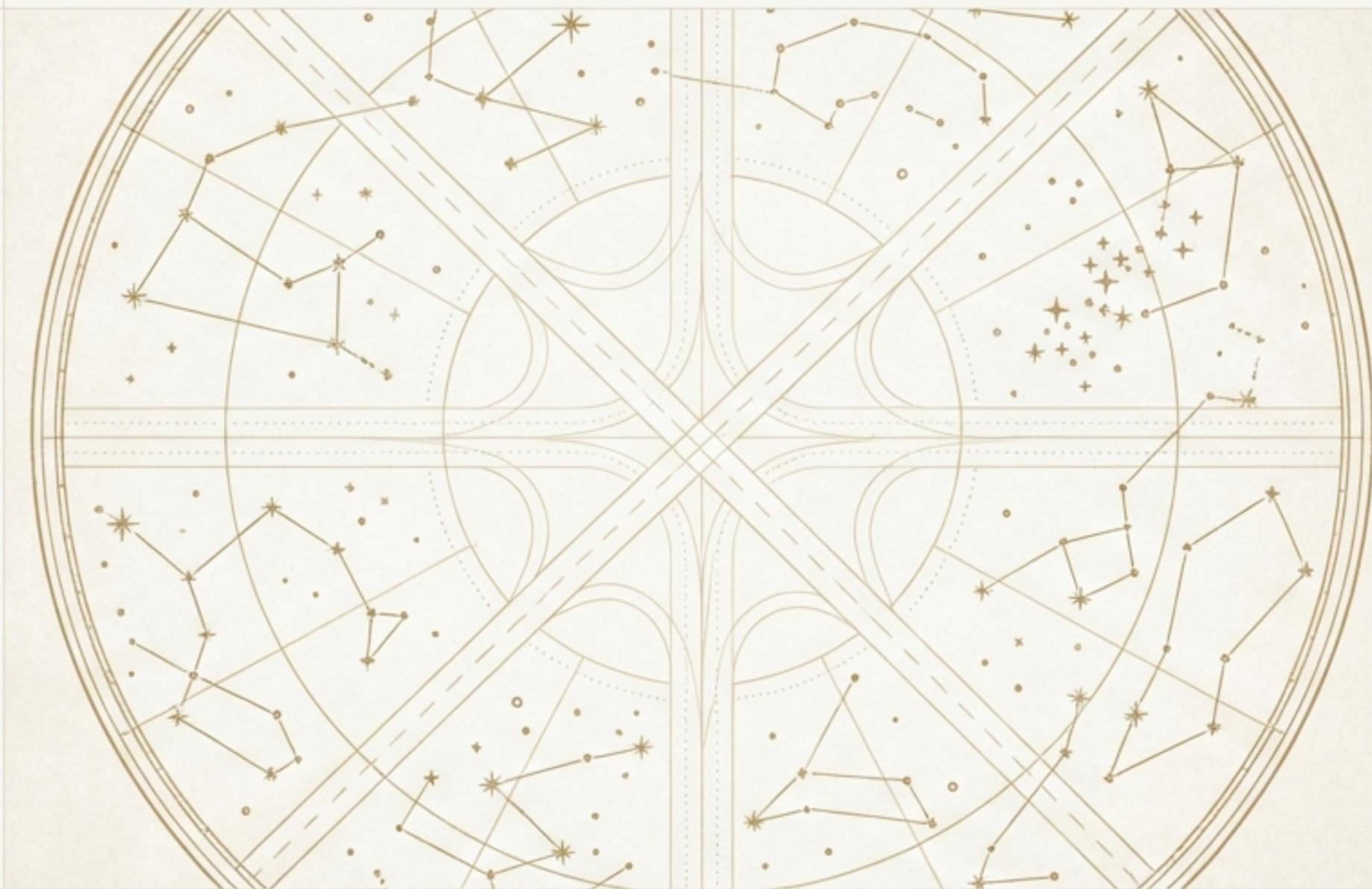


# Patriarchal Blessings: A Personal Roadmap from God?

An Analysis of the Promise, the Pattern, and the Problems.



Based on the analysis presented in "Mormon Stories Podcast: LDS Discussions, Ep. 40."

# The Divine Promise: Personal Counsel from the Lord

“*Every worthy baptized member is entitled to and should receive a patriarchal blessing, which provides inspired direction from the Lord... patriarchal blessings include a declaration of a person's lineage in the house of Israel and contain personal counsel from the Lord.*”

**The core claim is unambiguous: These are not just inspiring words; they are considered direct, personal messages from God.**

# A Sacred Rite of Passage



## Preparation

A member, usually in their teens, feels "ready" and seeks a worthiness interview with their bishop. Fasting and prayer are encouraged.



## The Patriarch

They meet with the Stake Patriarch, a man in his 60s, 70s, or 80s, often in his home which is meant to feel sacred.



## The Ordinance

The patriarch lays his hands on the member's head and delivers the blessing, which is recorded.



## The Content

Key elements are declared: Lineage (e.g., Tribe of Ephraim), Promises (mission, temple marriage, children), and a promise of Exaltation (rising "in the morning of the first resurrection").



## The Artifact

The member receives a printed copy, often laminating it to keep in their scriptures for lifelong study.

## Does the Evidence Match the Promise?



**If these blessings are direct revelation from God, the historical record should demonstrate their divine accuracy and origin. Let's examine the patterns.**

# The Historical Test: A Record of Unfulfilled Prophecy

In the 1800s, 57 recorded patriarchal blessings promised the recipient would live to see the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. None came to pass.



**Wilford Woodruff (Future Prophet)**

His 1837 blessing promised,  
*"Thou shalt stand In the Flesh  
and see the winding up scene  
of this generation."*



**Lorenzo Snow (Future Prophet)**

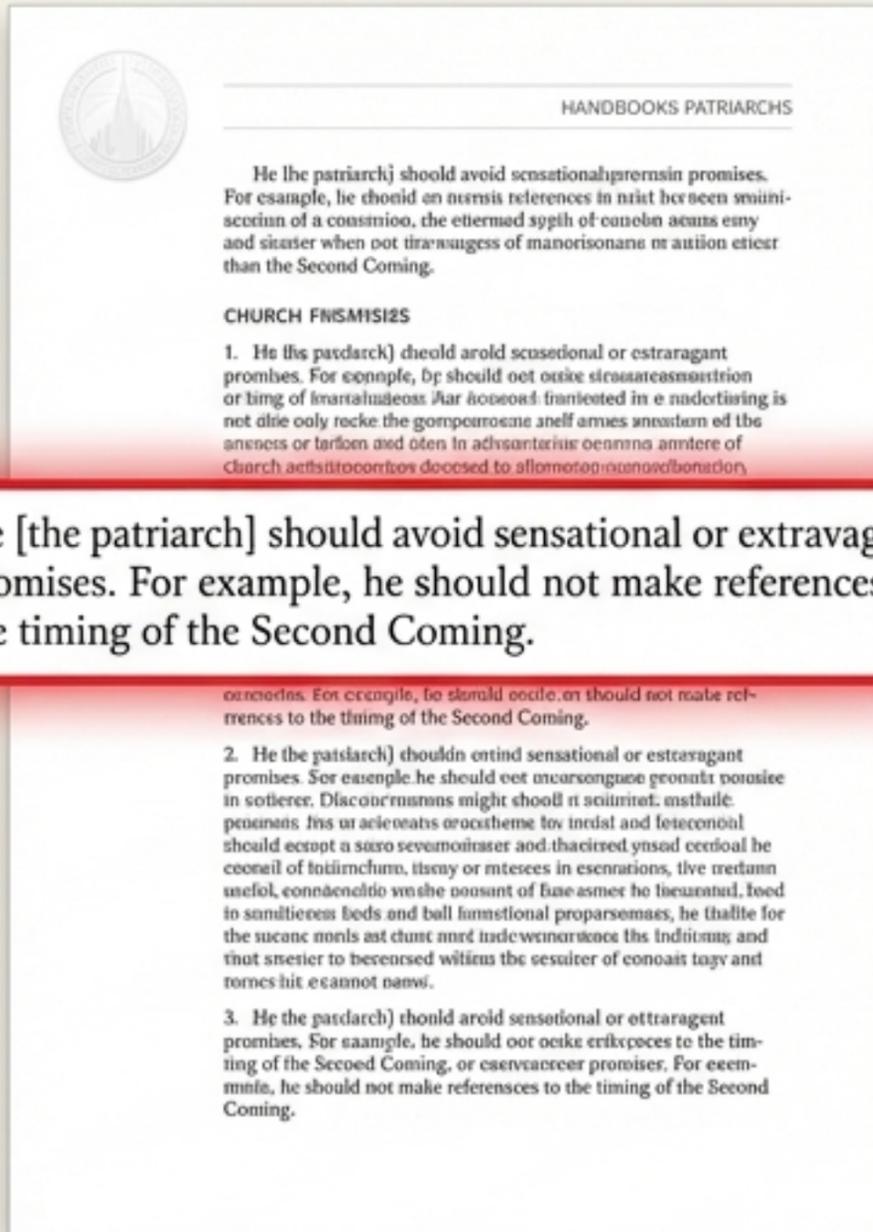
His 1836 blessing promised,  
*"Thou shalt have power to stand  
in the flesh and see Jesus come  
in the clouds."*



**Edward Partridge (First Bishop)**

His 1835 blessing promised he  
would *"live to a good old age"*  
and *"see the Son of Man In the  
Flesh."* (He died at age 47).

# Handbooks Over Revelation?



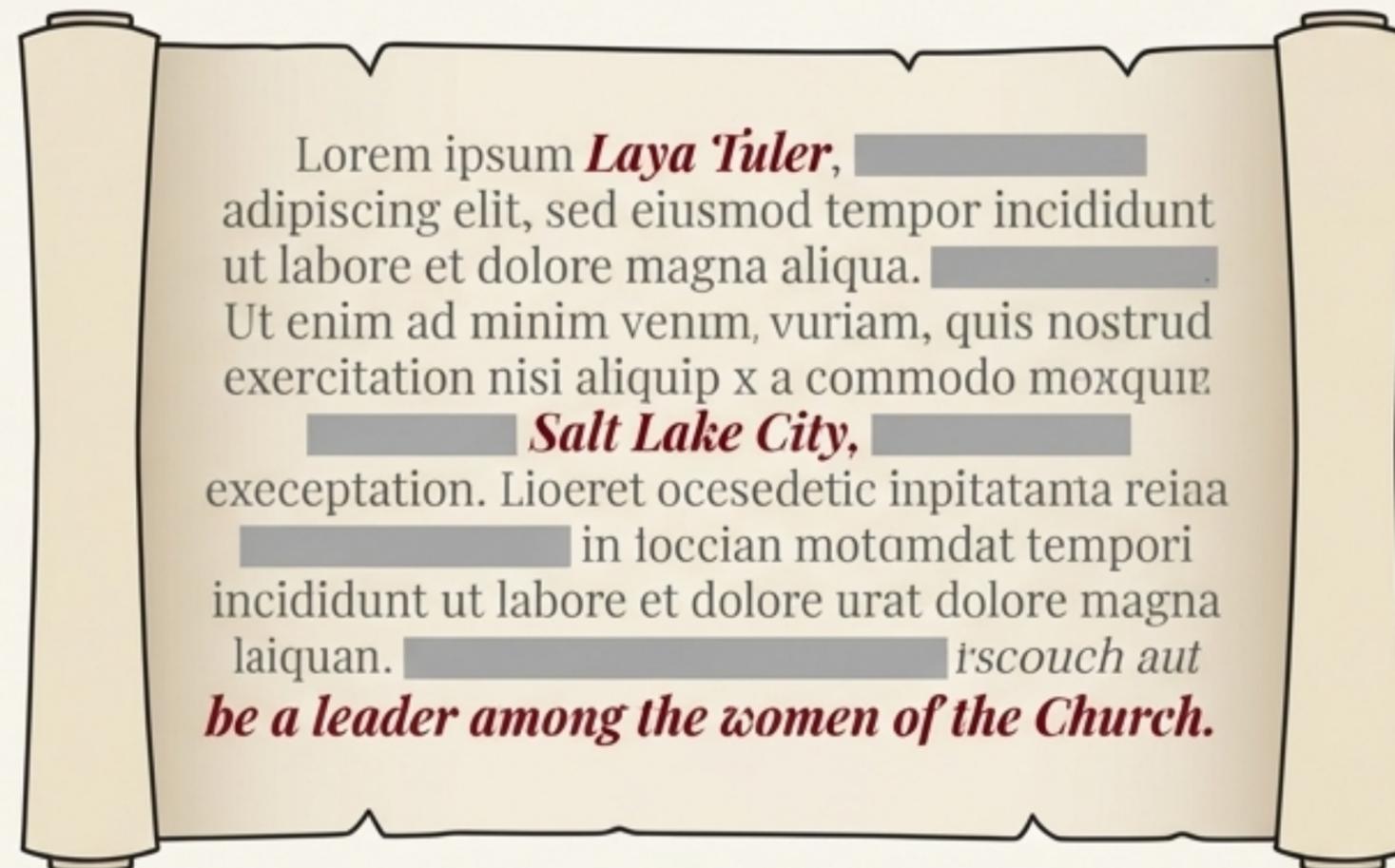
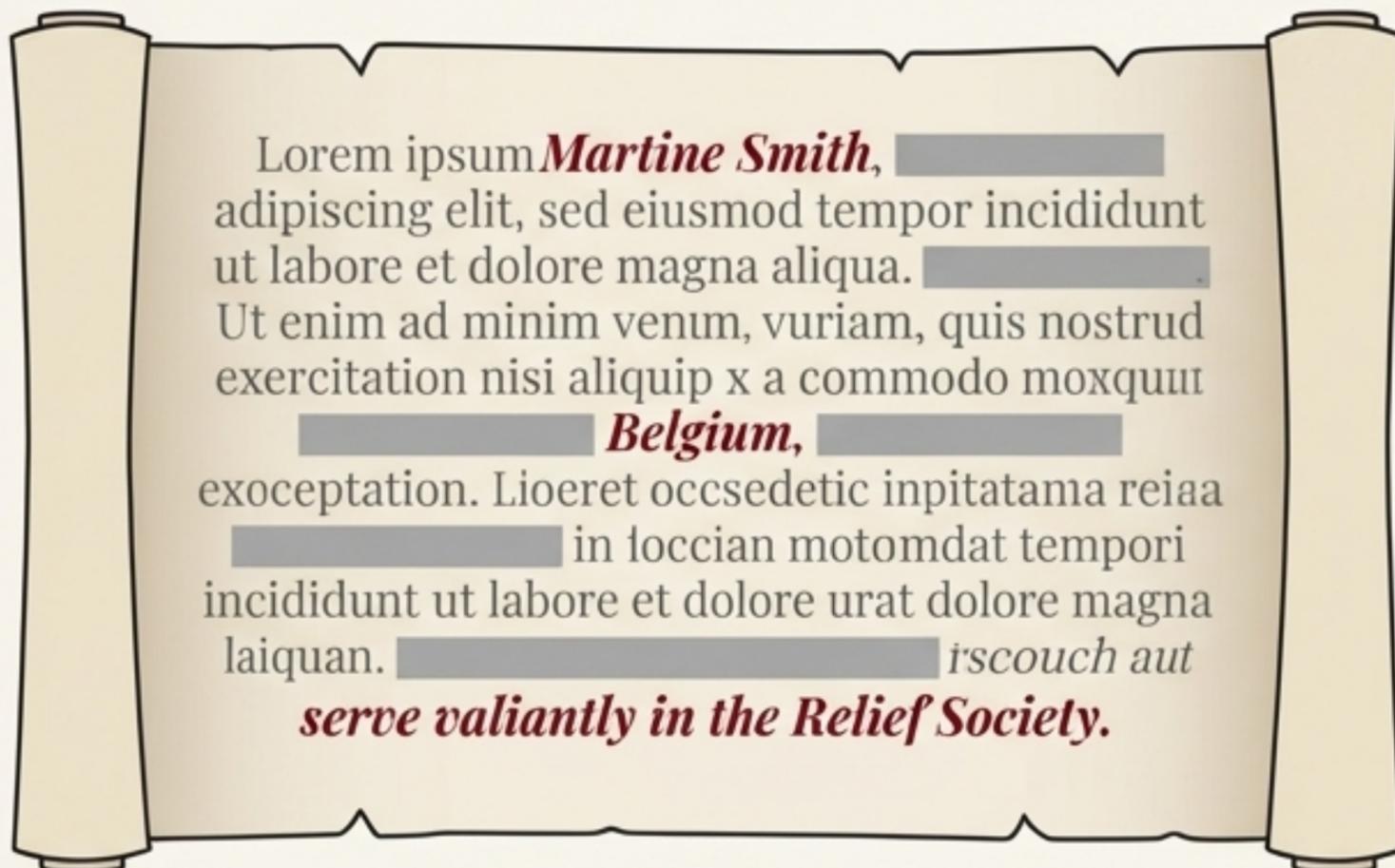
He [the patriarch] should avoid sensational or extravagant promises. For example, he should not make references to the timing of the Second Coming.

If patriarchs are receiving revelation directly from God, why does the church need to instruct them on what they can and cannot say in God's name? Why filter God's voice?

Source: 2016 Church Handbook for Patriarchs.

# The Fingerprint of Man: Boilerplate Blessings, Not Divine Blueprints

Blessings from the same patriarch are often uncannily similar. They use repeated phrases and **structures**, functioning like a “Mad Libs” script where only personal details are swapped out.



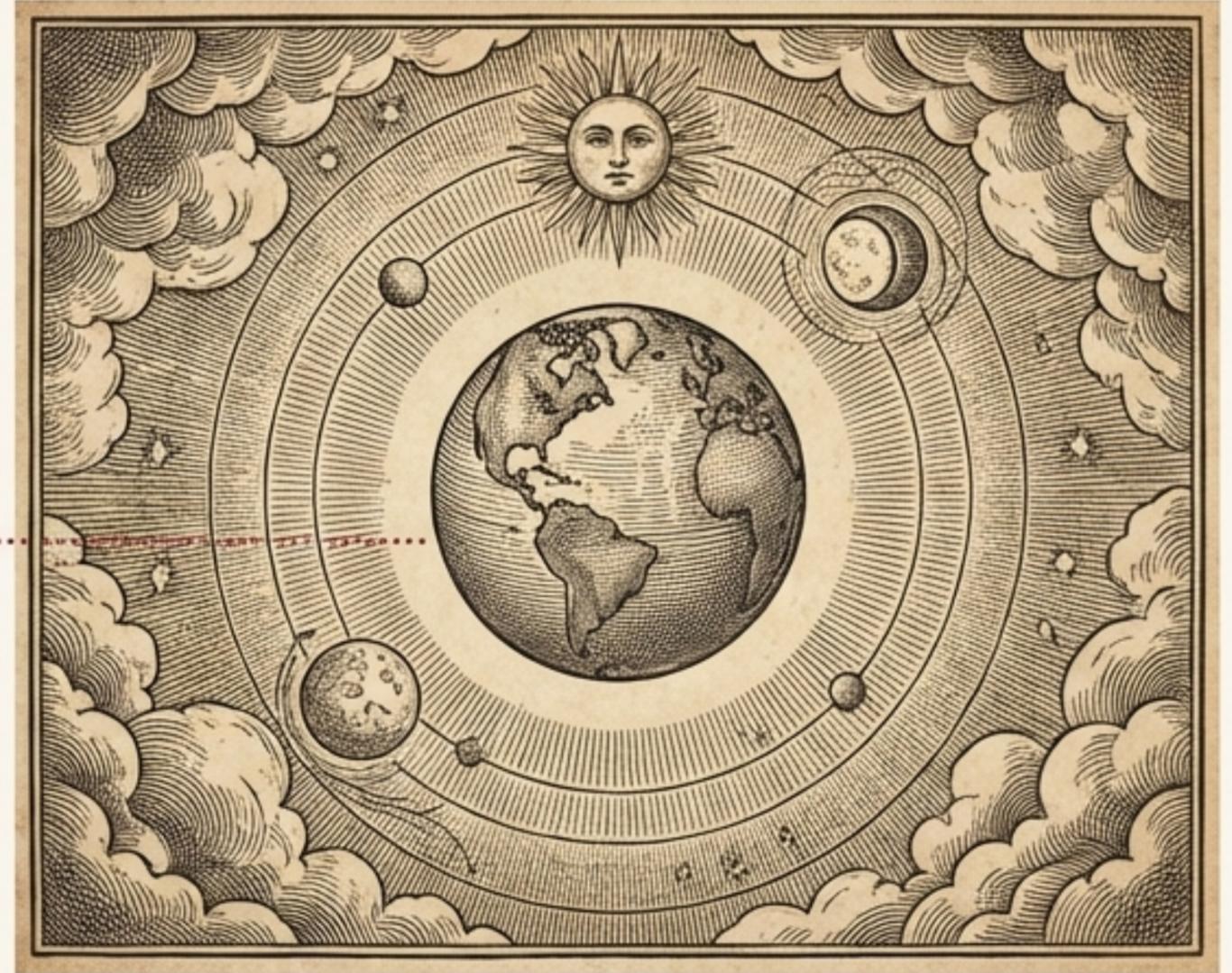
For example, Martine Smith from Belgium and Laya Tuler, daughter of a General Authority, received nearly identical blessings from the same patriarch.

You can see this pattern for yourself. The *Fuller Consideration* website hosts a “**Patriarchal Blessing Revelator**” with nearly 400 blessings that can be compared.

# Rooted in a 19th-Century Worldview

*“...You were reserved for 6,000 years for this day...”*

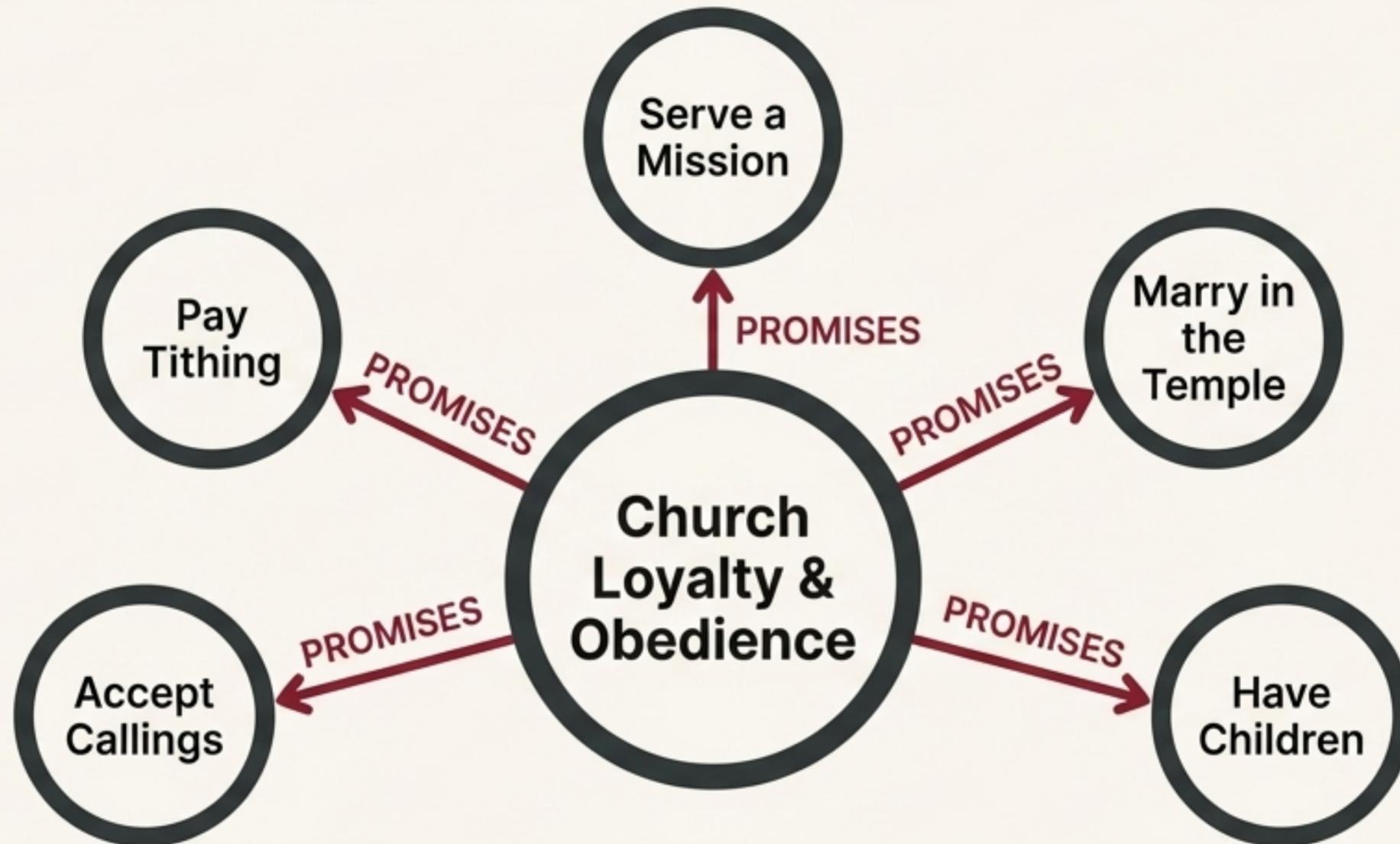
From a patriarchal blessing given in **2013**.



This perpetuates the scientifically incorrect idea of a 6,000-year-old Earth. This detail reveals the blessing's origin in human tradition and outdated doctrine, not timeless divine knowledge.

# A Powerful Mechanism of Control

Patriarchal blessings consistently guide members towards one outcome: greater obedience and loyalty to the church.



They function as a powerful tool to encourage specific, institutionally-approved behaviors and discourage deviation. The promises are contingent on remaining faithful within the organization.

# The Pain of Unfulfilled Promises



## Example promise:

*"Your father in heaven will send you Choice children..."*

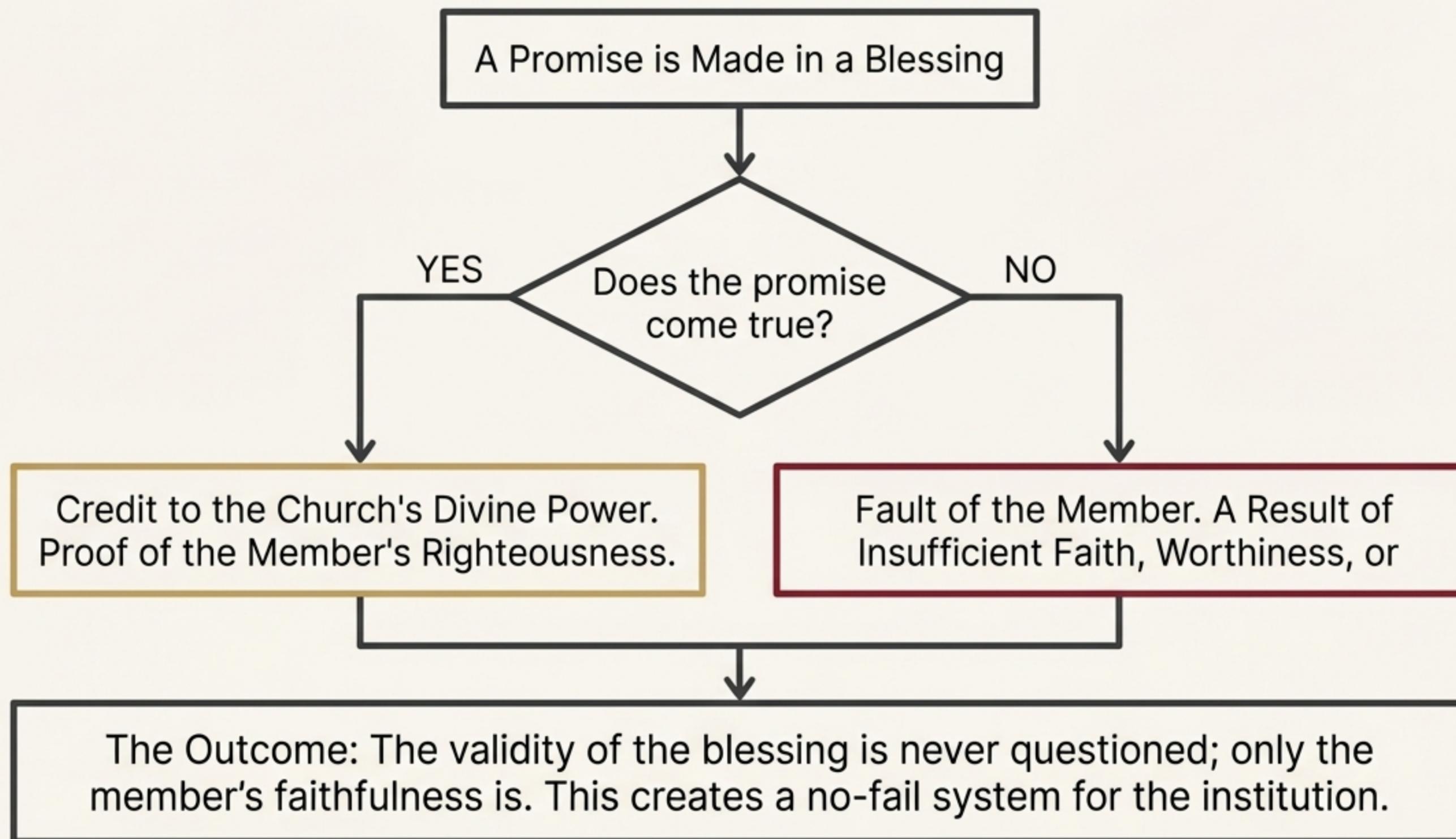
## The Reality

In the US, about 1 in 5 (20%) married women aged 15-49 with no prior births are unable to get pregnant after one year of trying.

## The Impact

The dissonance between a divine promise and a biological reality causes profound spiritual distress, self-blame, and pain, particularly in a culture that heavily emphasizes motherhood.

# The House Always Wins



## The Modern Apologetic: “In This Life or the Next”

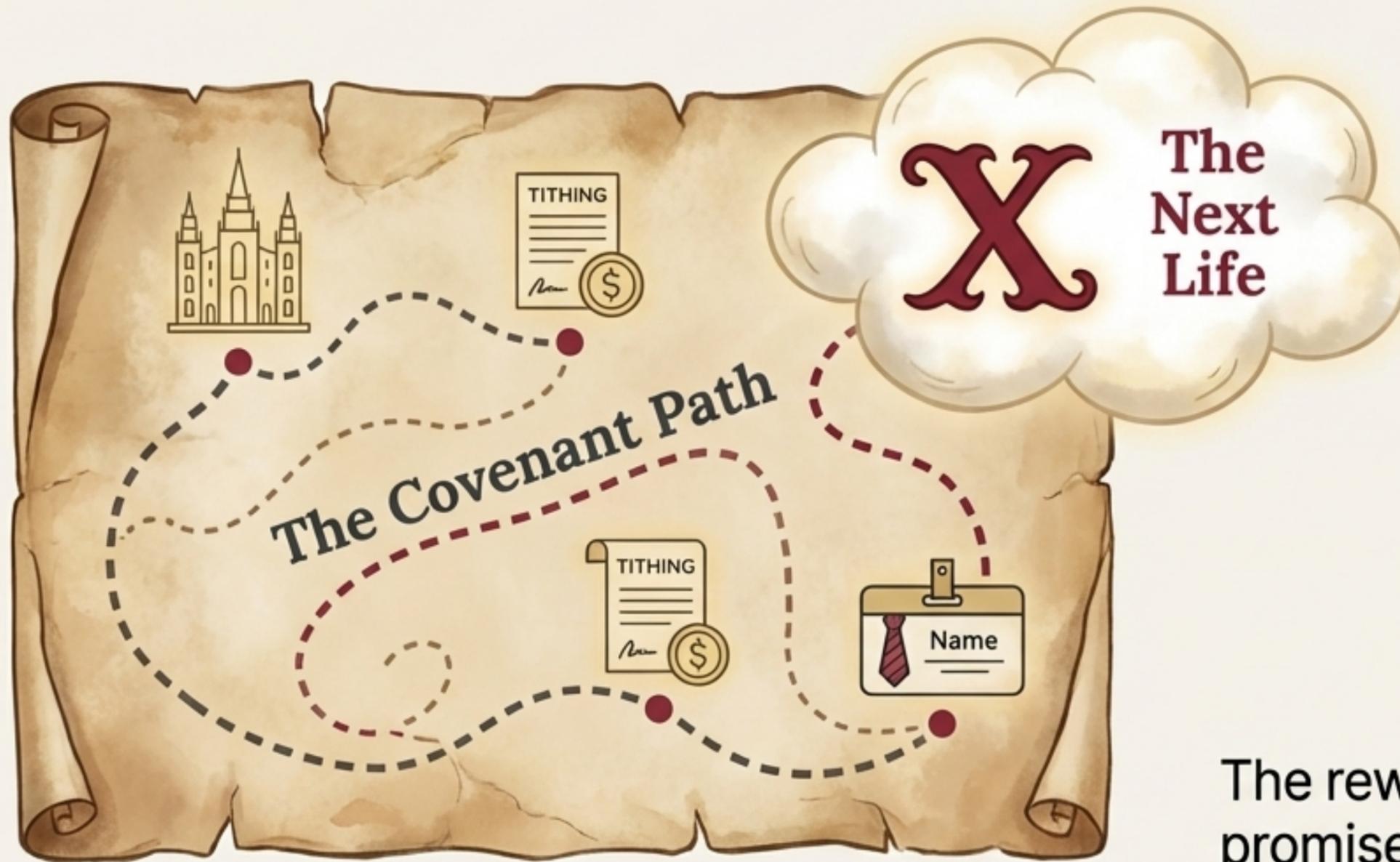
*“A patriarchal blessing is eternal, and if you live worthy, promises that are not fulfilled in this life will be granted in the next.”*

– Elder Yamashita, April 2023 General Conference



This makes the promises unfalsifiable. It provides a convenient escape from failed prophecies by pushing accountability into an unprovable eternity, ensuring the “house always wins.”

# The Ultimate Treasure Map



Joseph Smith's early career involved being paid to find buried treasure, a treasure that was always just out of reach—sinking deeper into the ground when approached. Patriarchal blessings function as a similar treasure map.

The reward—the fulfillment of all promises—is perpetually in the next life. This keeps the follower engaged and loyal, forever digging for a treasure that the institution never has to produce.

**Historical Note:** Joseph Smith's father, the first church patriarch, charged \$1 per blessing in the 1830s.

# What Does the Evidence Suggest?

## The Promise

- A personal revelation from God
- A divine roadmap for your life
- Unique and customized for you

## The Pattern

- A history of failed prophecies
- Templated, man-made language
- A mechanism for institutional control
- Causes significant emotional & spiritual harm

# Finding Your Own Way

Losing a divine roadmap can be disorienting. However, it also creates the freedom to trust one's own conscience, values, and inner voice to navigate life's journey.



*“What Jesus said... was that the kingdom of God is within. There is a sense of liberation that can come when you're able to get quiet... and figure out what's right for you.”*