

**Does "Mormon Royalty" receive special treatment? Surely you jest. Hell yes!**

Posted by: **steve benson** ( )  
Date: October 24, 2016 02:10AM

In an other thread, RfM contributor "poopstone" asked the following:

"Do Mormon royalty live under different expectations than the rank and file?

". . . I was listening to this Mormon stories podcast and thinking about Abby Huntsman and comparing her to some of the children of prominent Utah families in the past.

"She was from the wealthiest family in Utah, Great-grandfather was an apostle, grandfather a billionaire, father the governor, she has 70 first cousins. no diversity. Quite a romantic Mormon upbringing! Couldn't find a Mormon boy quite good enough and fell in love with a no-mo and married outside the church.

"I recall Brigham Young preaching to build up the "old ship Zion", tame the wilderness. Immigrate to Utah. Attend Mormon schools, where teachers had no qualifications except a testimonies. And at the same time he sent his own children to the east for 'real educations.' The same is true in the Cannon family. Frank was excused from a mission, polygamy, and instead had a mission to go politicking in Washington. George Albert Smith (and a few other Smiths who were well connected with money etc) were excused from missions under the impression that not all young men needed to go? (Monson and Eyring as well). J Reuban Clark never went to church until he was called as an apostle in the 1930's, if I recall correctly.

"All these men, and many others, seem to be well connected to Mormon Exaltation, But if a rank and file member were to live as they lived would they be as honored and held in as high of esteem by the Brethren?"

<http://exmormon.org/phorum/read.php?2,1894955>

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The following is taken from my own experience, prompted by an email I received from one of the uber Mormon faithful (which I filed under the title, "From the "Mormon

Mantra Mailbag: Heavenly Father Is Displeased With Your Resistance to General Conference. Please Watch It."

I received this cut-out, conveyor belt, blank-stare auto-response email today from a wind-up Mormon believer (edited as the devout believer does, and may continue to respond back):

"Dear Brother Benson,

"As sad as it has made me from reading your posting regarding President Benson, I'm wondering if you remain a member of the church. For those of us who are converts to the church and admire those men who served as apostles, besides being prophets of the church, and to know that their family members could possibly be writing something that could have some sort of negative affect on their family or action that they took seems to show irreverence to our Lord, Jesus Christ, since one of the ten commandments tells us to Honor our Fathers and our Mothers. the fact that those members of the twelve do honor our Heavenly Father by serving diligently in their callings as apostles or prophets is something that if I were you, I would be happy about.

"Perhaps one might forget that it is possible that former family members of those apostles or prophets in the early days might have not been able to get inside the tabernacle to hear their husband's or parents' speeches, and that is maybe why children were issued passes.

"No, it might have not been right for you or other children to have that chance to have such a pass, but maybe your family should have had all of you inside the tabernacle very early so that you would not have the guilty feeling about which you have written.

"I am glad that you were able to hold President Benson's hand when you were all together during the latter session of the conference. I admired him so much, and that admiration stemmed from the time I first saw him on television when President Eisenhower was sworn in as president.

"As a young girl who was not yet a Mormon, I was curious about all those people who were called to help the President of our country who happened to have his swearing in be the first to be shown on television.

"That was quite something for me to see, since my family did not own a television and

got only to see it on the next door neighbor's set, and at that it seemed we were lucky to be able to do that since school had been let out for the day just so everyone could see it.

"Reading negative things about conference does not make me happy, nor do I think that our Lord, Jesus Christ, nor our Heavenly Father would be happy to see something posted as that.

"I sincerely hope that you will be able to enjoy seeing this October's conference and enjoy it. The fact that there are many more members in our church today than was during President Benson's time is something that makes me happy.

"The fat [sic] that we have so many more temples makes me happy.

"The fact that there is more information for those of us who are trying to find our ancestors so that we can take their names to the temples makes me happy.

"I wish your family well, and do smile, dear Brother Benson.

"Sincerely,

"Sister [name deleted]"

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My reply to this Mormon "sister's" inquiry about whether I was still a member of the LDS Church was as follows:

"Nope. Left voluntarily in 1993. Thanks for asking.

"I will not be watching Conference.

"I am not into cults."

The Mormon "sister" answered back:

"Thank you for your reply."

I responded:

"Dear [name deleted]:

"You have private doubts about your faith, otherwise you wouldn't be so intently attempting to drive them away by invoking your memorized testimony.

"Robotic recitation in response to those inner demons of yours will not help you.

"Using your noggin will.

"Good luck."

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Below is a narrative of mine about which the dear auto-piloted Mormon "sister" was blindly complaining:

--Back way Passages, Teleprompters, Food Fests and Church Security: "Insider" Memories of General Conference--

--Introduction

As we all bask in the baloney (or other appropriate word inserted here) of General Conference, I'd like to share a few recollections on having experienced the charade "from the inside," so to speak (with apologies to those who have heard these before).

--Teleprompted by the Spirit

At General Conference time, members of ETB's family (along with the relations of other GAs) were provided special, nontransferable passes--identified as such--for admission into the sessions. They were issued to us through ETB's office manager and used to access the Tabernacle at a designated portal. We'd cut in line, flash the ticket, and be escorted to our seats. It wasn't fair or right, but neither concept operates in Mormonism.

One of the more interesting vantage points for viewing Conference was sitting high up in the dome, behind the Tabernacle Choir, next to the white plastered walls and massive organ pipes. To get there, the ushers would lead us through a low-ceiling wood-paneled carpeted area behind the dais, to a back passageway and up a narrow stairwell to the crow's nest. From there, I could look down over the bald spots of the fellows in the men's section, directly on to the pulpit.

While it provided a unique view, it was also as hot as hell. There were big, colored lights up where we sat, used for shining on the smooth, blank walls behind us for special effect. Sitting there in our Sunday best, we did a slow cook--but it wasn't due to any burning in the bosom. During the last few times I sat up there, I would read anti-Mormon literature that I had been handed at the gates of Temple Square a few minutes earlier, since it was often more interesting than the GA sermons.

From high atop the Choir lair, I could see the GAs reading from their teleprompted scripts. The texts would scroll across a screen embedded in the top of the pulpit and then reflect up on panes of glass strategically positioned in front of the speakers.

Not only were the sermons teleprompted, I witnessed the Lord's anointed getting cues on their prepared prayers by artificial means. Everything was tightly timed, with the GAs supposed heartfelt petitions to heaven, as well as their ostensibly Holy Ghost-inspired sermons, precisely orchestrated and slotted into the overall script, so that the camera operators could, on cue, cut to commercial breaks, or to warm and fuzzy Red Square (er, Temple Square) vignettes, or to the chime of the Nauvoo Bell.

--We Thank Thee, Oh, God, We're Related to the Prophet--and Can be Seen at General Conference in These Latter Days

When Benson family members weren't perched up behind the Tabernacle Choir, we could sit in specially roped-off benches, front and center, on the main floor of the Tabernacle, along with the other family and friends of the "we're-oh-so-special" GA crowd.

We became increasingly uncomfortable with what we considered to be an arrogant arrangement and so decided that we would remain behind and simply watch Conference on TV at the Salt Lake home of my parents.

My mother became quite upset when we told her of our decision. She said that ETB wanted his family to be with him--in the Tabernacle--during Conference so that he could look down from the dais and see us all there on those hard, fake wood-stained benches as a sign of our love and support.

I told my mother that if this was what my grandfather wanted, then we would sit there in the Tabernacle until ETB got up and left. That meant that because he was now pretty old and frail, his assistants would often escort him out of the Conference session at the hour break--during the rest song, when everyone would stand up, stretch and sing a hymn before dropping back on their faithful posteriors for the second half of indoctrination.

So that's what we did. ETB would be escorted out during the break, waving weakly, and we would likewise exit (without waving, by the way). We would meet up with him in the back area, out of sight behind the dais, where we would join him and his handlers in escorting him through an underground tunnel over to his Eagle Gate condo that was across the street from Temple Square.

Or, if his assistants got ETB out ahead of us, we would simply make our own way out of the Tabernacle and go over to his apartment. By then, ETB's staff had wheel chaired him into his small, private study, where they would place him in a soft, leather reclining chair. They would then either turn on the TV for the second half of Conference or merely play soft music for him to listen to.

I, and other members of the family, would join ETB here for the duration of the Conference session. I would sit by his side, holding his hand and occasionally speaking to him softly. He would smile, squeeze my hand and sometimes say a word or two. But most of the time, he would not say or do much of anything, but just sit there.

--Inside the Tabernacle, Trying to Talk to Church Security

When we did sit in the Tabernacle's seating area set aside for GA family members and Church-designated dignitaries (like Senator Orrin Hatch), I would often spot a friend of mine, with whom I had grown up and played as a boy in Salt Lake City.

His name was Doyle. Doyle (now known as "Duff") had morphed into a buff, jut-jawed dude with a microphone screwed into his ear. Doyle, you see, had landed a job working the Church security Conference detail.

I would sit there on the benches and observe him standing silently down in front of the plush seats for the GAs, intently scanning the audience. Prior to the kick-off of the Conference sessions, as we made our way to our seats, I would say hi to Doyle. He would respond with a tight-lipped smile, nod briefly and not say much more.

--GA Gluttony

It used to be a tradition among the "perkified" that between breaks of the Conference morning and afternoon sessions, GAs and their families were treated to a sumptuous lunch, high atop the Church Office building.

The GAs relations (as well as friends and dates brought along by, say, their grandchildren) would gather at large tables, where they would be served heaping plates full of hot food, brought to them by young, crisply dressed girls. It was a place to eat, to be seen and to impress.

Meanwhile, during this GA gorge fest, we could look out the windows of this Great and Spacious Building, down at the lawn directly outside the Tabernacle, where the "great unwashed"--those LDS "little people"--were clustered on blankets brought from home, eating cheap box lunches which they had bought or food they had packed themselves--waiting and hoping to get into the afternoon session.

With our bellies full and burping pleasantly, Benson family members would eventually make their way down to the Tabernacle where we would again flash our passes, cut into line at the last minute ahead of people who had been waiting for hours, and make our way into "our" special seating.

One year, after returning home to Arizona from Conference, a member of our ward mentioned that she had seen us at Temple Square as we maneuvered our way into the Tabernacle, where she and her family had long been waiting, trying to get in by standing in line. It was an uncomfortable encounter --and we knew the arrangement was not right.

We finally had enough of this kind of undeserved treatment, so decided in the future to wait in line with everyone else. If we couldn't make it in to the Tabernacle because seating ran out, we would go over to the Assembly Hall and listen to Conference being piped in from across the way.

--Conclusion

Some time later (by that time having jettisoned the Mormon faith), I was glancing at the TV as General Conference was broadcasting its prophets, seers and teleprompted revelators imparting their words of wisdom to those who were managing to sit through it all. It reminded me of my former days as a Mormon and I knew what had to be done:

I went and got a flat tire on my truck fixed.

**Re: Does "Mormon Royalty" receive special treatment? Surely you jest. Hell yes!**

Posted by: qanae ( )

Date: October 24, 2016 10:45AM

A very cool to read. Thanks for sharing. I remember going to very expensive buffet in the JS Building during conference one year. I felt a tinge of guilt – that staff working so hard in prepare and serve such a wide variety and extravagance of fine food on the sabbath. When I realized the lord's most elect were partaking in their Sunday best – I questioned what "singleness of heart meant? I imagined the GA friends and family Gluttony was something like that.

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 10/24/2016 10:46AM by qanae.

**"All animals are equal -- but some animals are more equal than others"**

Posted by: anybody ( )

Date: October 24, 2016 01:52PM

Pick any closed group and you will find an inner circle that is allowed to skirt or flaunt the rules of the group to show their superiority or dominance over the others in the group.

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 10/24/2016 01:53PM by anybody.



Thanks for reposting. (n/t)

Posted by: cl2 ( )  
Date: October 24, 2016 01:55PM

**Re: Does "Mormon Royalty" receive special treatment? Surely you jest. Hell yes!**

Posted by: poopstone ( )  
Date: October 24, 2016 09:54PM

thanks for posting! A few of us on the other thread were debating whether "mormon royalty" actually exists. I think you've laid the reality out pretty plainly :)

**Re: Does "Mormon Royalty" receive special treatment? Surely you jest. Hell yes!**

Posted by: madalice ( )  
Date: October 25, 2016 01:52AM

The comment about the "fake stained wood benches" made me laugh.

I recall about 1993 when my family trekked from Ohio to Nauvoo to see the place where the saints had built a city.

We went into Briggy's house. There we were shown a ton of woodwork over the doorways, the cabinets, floors, furnishings, etc. that were painted with fake wood grain. I had to ask why? There was plenty of oak during that time to build and finish homes with. I don't recall the exact reason, but was told that Briggy had become quite good at faux finishes and made a living doing the painted finishes for many homes. I thought that was interesting as I had never thought of him as doing much of anything besides bullying people and gathering women for his own pleasure and use. I had to wonder if Briggy had done some of the faux finishes on those benches. We will probably never know.

**Re: Does "Mormon Royalty" receive special treatment? Surely you jest. Hell yes!**

Posted by: poopstone ( )  
Date: October 25, 2016 03:02PM

I'm thinking of the Wasatch and it's mostly scrub oak though, very twisted and not large. There is certainly much more abundance of pine though. And lots of scrubby cedar that can be used for fence posts and out door stuff.

Good soft woods would have to come from the east though. That's why they made so much furniture out of crate boxes.

**Re: Does "Mormon Royalty" receive special treatment? Surely you jest. Hell yes!**

Posted by: **lr2014** ( )  
Date: October 25, 2016 01:54AM

It is true—On a smaller scale when I was a missionary, more than 25 years ago—Our new Mission President arrived on July 1st and began the tour of the mission with his wife (she was the granddaughter of an Apostle and very knowledgeable in genealogy) and with selective missionaries she would inquire who their grandparents were etc. based on their last name. My apartment-mate who was in a different companionship was named Bennion and she spent like 10 minutes questioning him on who his father grandfather etc. was and not even a month later he skipped DL and was made a ZL.

**Re: Does "Mormon Royalty" receive special treatment? Surely you jest. Hell yes!**

Posted by: **lr2014** ( )  
Date: October 25, 2016 02:06AM

Just to FYI—My Mission President's wife never said more than just hello to me—Of course I'm not descended from any of the prominent families.

**Re: Does "Mormon Royalty" receive special treatment? Surely you jest. Hell yes!**

Posted by: **Trails end** ( )  
Date: October 25, 2016 01:46PM

J Golden said it best....their are three ways to get ahead in the church...inspiration revelation and relation...i wouldnt be anything without my last name...loose quote...still not sure how such a level headed down to earth guy came thru heber c brownoser...musta been his mothers genes

Recovery from Mormonism

[www.exmormon.org](http://www.exmormon.org)

Dec. 2016

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