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## Sacred Temples Ancient and Modern

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CHAPTER 5

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## SACRED TEMPLES ANCIENT AND MODERN

*Richard O. Cowan*

Latter-day Saints affirm the antiquity of temples and temple ordinances. From the beginning, mortals have felt the need to establish sacred sanctuaries where they can get away from worldly concerns and receive instruction pertaining to the eternities. John A. Widtsoe believed that “all people of all ages have had temples in one form or another.”<sup>1</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith likewise explained that the Lord taught the fulness of the gospel to Adam and his posterity. However, lamented Elder Smith, as men spread over the earth, they began to depart from the truth and to pervert the ordinances originally revealed to Adam. Nevertheless, he concluded, “heathen temples” and their ceremonies “grew out of,” and to some extent reflected, the true concepts the Lord had revealed earlier.<sup>2</sup> Thus even a study of these temples may provide some valuable insights into the true nature of temples and temple worship.

Most Latter-day Saints think of temples primarily as buildings where sacred ordinances or ceremonies take place. Yet not all temples, even in the restored church, fit

this particular definition. There is another and perhaps more basic function. Hugh Nibley has spent years researching what various ancient religions understood temples to be. That which makes a temple different from other buildings is not just its sacredness, he concluded, but rather its unique form and function. The earliest temples were regarded as “meeting places at which men at specific times attempted to make contact with the powers above.”<sup>3</sup> These ancient peoples thought of the temple as being the highest point in their world, the best place from which to observe and learn the ways of the heavens. Consequently many ancient temples were built atop mountains, but even if they were physically in the valley they were still regarded as spiritual peaks where one could be closest to God. In a very real sense, the temple represented a halfway place between heaven and earth.<sup>4</sup>

### **Ancient Temples as Places of Revelation**

The physical design of ancient temples often reflected their role as places of contact between heaven and earth. Ziggurats in Mesopotamia provided a platform on which temples were constructed, bringing the people who worshiped in them closer to heaven. Consequently, the prominent stairways up their sides symbolized the pathway leading from the human to the divine world. Perhaps the best known of the Mesopotamian ziggurats was the Tower of Babel (see Genesis 11:1–9). Although the builder’s motives were materialistic and selfish, the name of this tower does reflect a true function of temples: In the ancient Babylonian language (as well as in modern Arabic) the first syllable *Bab-* meant gate, while the suffix *-el* was a widely recognized reference to deity. Hence the name *Babel* literally means “gate of God.”

Similarly, when Jacob saw his dream of the ladder (or stairway) reaching into heaven and received great promises from the Lord, he named the place *Bethel* (which in Hebrew literally means “the house of God”) and referred to it as “the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:10–19).

The first biblical reference to a temple comes from the time of Moses (see Exodus 25:1–7). While the children of Israel were still in the wilderness of Sinai, Jehovah directed that they should construct a sanctuary where they might worship him. Because of their migratory status, this structure had to be portable. Nevertheless, it was to be made of the finest materials and workmanship available. It was to be the house of the Lord.

The tabernacle that the Lord commanded Moses to build was to serve both purposes mentioned above. First, the Lord directed his people to “make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.” He promised to reveal himself there and give instructions to them (see Exodus 25:8, 22). He subsequently kept this promise: “And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle. . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Exodus 33:9–11). Second, the Lord intended to reveal sacred ordinances to his people in that tabernacle (see D&C 124:38).

In all ages the Savior has revealed the patterns according to which his sacred houses were to be built.<sup>5</sup> Exodus chapters 25–30 contain the divine revelation of the tabernacle’s design and functions.

The location of the tabernacle emphasized its sacredness and separation from the world. As the Israelites pitched their camps in the wilderness, the twelve tribes were arranged around the tabernacle like a protective shield from the outside world. Innermost was the tribe of

Levi, which included those with priestly authority (see Numbers 2–3). The 75' x 150' court of the tabernacle represented an additional protection. Note how admission was progressively more restricted as one approached the holiest precincts: While anybody could be out in the world, only Israelites were to be in the camp. Only the worthy could enter the courtyard, and only priests were permitted in the tabernacle's outer room or "holy place." Only one individual, the high priest, was to enter the "most holy place" or "holy of holies," and then only once each year—on the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur (see Leviticus 16:29–34).

The tabernacle's furnishings and ordinances further taught the children of Israel how they must prepare in order to return to the presence of God. The altar of sacrifice was the most prominent object in the tabernacle's courtyard. Here the people complied with the Lord's commands to make animal and other sacrifices, which served as a reminder of his great future atoning sacrifice and reemphasized the vital principles of obedience and sacrifice. Between the altar and the tabernacle was the laver, or large bronze water basin, in which the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle or before officiating at the altar (see Exodus 30:18–21). The laver was thus a reminder of the principle that becoming clean is a key step on our path back to God's presence.

The tabernacle itself was a tent measuring about 15' x 45'. Its framework was of the most precious wood available, overlaid with gold, and covered by fine linens and costly skins. Like many other ancient temples, the tabernacle's entrance faced east—toward the rising sun (see Exodus 27:13–16). The main room was separated from the "holy of holies" by a beautiful veil of pure white, "fine

twined linen” adorned with cherubim and other figures embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet (see Exodus 26:31). A latter-day revelation speaks of angels as guardians along the way to exaltation in the kingdom of God (see D&C 132:19). Hence the veil may have symbolized the division between God and man.

Like the portable tabernacle in the wilderness, the permanent temple in the promised land was made of the finest possible materials and craftsmanship. The temple was set apart from the outside world by “great,” “middle,” and “inner” courts (1 Kings 7:12; 2 Kings 20:4).

The temple was related to the special covenant that existed between God and his people. In the midst of construction, the Lord reminded Solomon that if he would keep the commandments, the Lord would dwell among the people and never forsake them (see 1 Kings 6:11–13; compare Exodus 25:8). After seven and one-half years, the temple was completed. Its dedication was a milestone in the history of Israel and a spiritual feast for the people. “I have surely built thee a house to dwell in,” King Solomon prayed, “a settled place for thee to abide in forever.” He concluded his dedicatory prayer by petitioning: “The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments” (1 Kings 8:13, 57–58).

Features of other ancient temples were similar. For example, the noted Egyptian temple at Karnak (commenced a thousand years before Solomon’s) was also entered through a large, walled court; one then needed to pass through the many-columned “hypostyle hall” (corresponding to the outer “holy place”) before reaching the sacred shrine of the god Amun (paralleling the holy of holies).

Greek temples, such as the world-famed Parthenon built several centuries later, were similarly divided into two rooms.

Like its predecessors, Herod's Temple featured a series of courts to which admittance was increasingly restricted as one approached the holy sanctuary.<sup>6</sup> All nationalities were permitted in the Court of the Gentiles, but within it was a balustrade containing warnings to non-Israelites to go no farther. The Court of the Women was so named because both sexes were permitted there, while only men were allowed in the next area. Finally, the temple was immediately surrounded by a court open only to the priests. Ascending stairs from one court to another heightened the sense of the temple's sacredness.

Temples among the Lord's people were not limited to the Old World. The Book of Mormon contains the history of a righteous colony that left Jerusalem just before the Babylonians captured the city and destroyed the temple there. Within a few years of arriving in their new promised land in the Western Hemisphere, these people erected a temple in the land of Nephi. This edifice was constructed "after the manner of the temple of Solomon, save it were not built of so many precious things," which were not available in that land. Nevertheless, "the workmanship thereof was exceeding fine" (2 Nephi 5:16). The temple was the gathering place for religious worship and instruction (see Jacob 1:17; 2:2, 11). Some four centuries later, another temple in the land of Zarahemla filled a similar function (see Mosiah 1:18). Then, following the three days of terrible destruction at the time of the Savior's crucifixion, "a large multitude" of the righteous survivors gathered around yet another temple in the land Bountiful (see 3 Nephi 1:18). Here the resurrected Lord instructed and blessed them.

These Book of Mormon temples may have set the pattern for temples built by later inhabitants of ancient America. Maya temples, for example, were located at the center of their cities. Like Mesopotamian ziggurats, these early American structures provided elevated platforms that drew the people closer to heaven in sacred places of worship.

### **Ordinances in Ancient Temples**

Modern revelation affirms that both the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon were built so that “those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was” (D&C 124:38). Hence the Lord’s people in these Old Testament times had access to at least some of the temple ordinances that would be restored in the latter days. Sidney B. Sperry reasoned that the Lord’s requirements for exaltation, and therefore the need for temples, were the same then as they are now.<sup>7</sup>

Joseph Fielding Smith was convinced that Old Testament “washings” included baptisms.<sup>8</sup> Although vicarious service for the dead was not inaugurated until New Testament times, ordinances for the living were available during earlier dispensations. Furthermore, the explanations of Facsimile 2 in the Book of Abraham suggest that elements of what we now call the temple endowment were known anciently (see Fac. 2, figs. 3 and 8). Finally, a revelation given through Joseph Smith affirms that the ancient patriarchs and prophets held the sealing power (see D&C 132:39).

The nature and extent of these ancient ordinances and the exact location in the temple buildings where they were performed have been the subjects of much fruitless speculation. The Old Testament describes in detail the sacrifices



and other performances associated with the lesser priesthood and the Mosaic law but says almost nothing about any higher ordinances. "Because such ordinances are sacred and not for the world," Joseph Fielding Smith explained, no detailed account of them has been made available. "There are, however, in the Old Testament references to covenants and obligations under which the members of the Church in those days were placed, although the meaning is generally obscure."<sup>9</sup>

The scriptures do emphasize, however, that those who participated in temple worship needed to be prepared. Specifically, the priests who officiated had to be ordained or consecrated. Each time they entered the temple, they were washed with water and then anointed with olive oil. This oil was used not only in cooking but also in lamps as a source of light and warmth; many ancient peoples associated the olive tree with the "tree of life."<sup>10</sup> The priests were also clothed in "holy garments" of white linen, including a cap, robe, sash, and trousers (see Exodus 28–29).<sup>11</sup>

The *Temple Scroll*, which dated from just before the time of Christ, also emphasized the importance of personal purity for those entering the temple. Elaborate laws of purification governed the temple and its surroundings. Even the whole city where the temple was located was to be kept holy and pure.<sup>12</sup> This was consistent with the Lord's desire that his people should be "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19:6).

Nibley has presented evidence from ancient papyri showing that sacred ceremonies were also an essential feature of Egyptian temple worship. Following the traditional initiation of washing, clothing, and anointing,<sup>13</sup> an individual would enter the temple itself. Here he would receive instructions on returning to the presence of God. Moving

from room to room symbolized his increasing understanding and progress.<sup>14</sup>

Members of the New Testament church did not receive their sacred ordinances in Herod's Temple, since, as the Master lamented, this holy house had been defiled by money changers and others (see John 2:14–16; Matthew 21:12–13). Heber C. Kimball affirmed that the early apostles received their blessings at the hands of the Savior himself.<sup>15</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith believed that Peter, James, and John received the endowment on the Mount of Transfiguration.<sup>16</sup> The New Testament confirms that some sacred truths taught to the faithful disciples were not appropriate for the world to have. Jesus specifically charged the three apostles to speak to no one concerning the events on the mount (see Matthew 17:9).

In recent decades a large body of apocryphal literature dating from early Christian times has been discovered and published. Particularly significant was the uncovering of a library of books written by fifth-century Christians at Nag Hammadi, a settlement on the Nile River in central Egypt.<sup>17</sup> Much of this material focuses on Christ's "forty-day ministry," especially in Galilee. According to these nonscriptural texts, the Lord performed sacred ordinances and gave his disciples teachings that Latter-day Saints associate with the temple endowment. In the middle of the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem described how the faithful had "entered the Annex of the baptistry, . . . [and] removed [their] street clothes," which act represented "putting off the old man and his works." They were then washed in a "tank of holy running water," anointed, and received a new garment.<sup>18</sup>

The early Christians came together in a circle to pray.<sup>19</sup> References in the New Testament itself describe how even

in public worship the disciples prayed in the spirit of unity with uplifted hands (see 1 Timothy 2:8)<sup>20</sup> and how women prayed with their heads covered or veiled (see 1 Corinthians 11:5 RSV).

The writer of the *Gospel of Philip*, one of the apocryphal documents in the Nag Hammadi library, believed that the most sacred part of the temple was what he called the “bridal chamber,” where a “woman is united to her husband” and “will no longer be separated.” If a person does not receive these blessings in this world, he asserted, they cannot be received elsewhere (compare D&C 132:15–18).<sup>21</sup>

A significant development during the New Testament period was the introduction of temple ordinances for the dead. “The inauguration of this work among the dead,” declared James E. Talmage, “was wrought by Christ in the interval between His death and resurrection.”<sup>22</sup>

During the three days his body lay in the tomb, the Lord went to the spirit world and organized the work of preaching the gospel there (see 1 Peter 3:18–20; 4:6). During his brief stay, the Savior did not preach to everyone personally; rather, from among the righteous spirits he authorized messengers to carry the gospel truth to all (see D&C 138:28–30).

Even though it thus became possible to hear and accept the gospel in the spirit world, such essential ordinances as baptism could not be received there. It was necessary for living proxies to receive them on earth in behalf of those who had died without the opportunity. Just as the Savior atoned vicariously for the sins of mankind, early Christians, in the same spirit of love, performed saving ordinances in behalf of the dead. Paul used the accepted practice of baptizing in behalf of the dead as an argument in favor of there being a resurrection. Why do you baptize for

the dead, he asked, if the dead will not live again? (see 1 Corinthians 15:29).<sup>23</sup> Sperry suggested that these Saints must have had temples where such ordinances could be properly performed, but these “sacred structures” may have been small and nothing is known about them.<sup>24</sup>

Hence in ancient times temples were places of contact between heaven and earth as well as places where sacred ordinances were performed. Both of these functions would need to be restored as part of “the dispensation of the fulness of times” (Ephesians 1:10).

### **The Restoration of Temple Worship**

As the nineteenth century entered its fourth decade, the early Latter-day Saints eagerly proclaimed their faith that the long-anticipated “times of restitution of all things” (see Acts 3:21) had finally arrived. At this time the Saints were gathering at Kirtland in northeastern Ohio, where they built the first latter-day temple. Even though the fulness of temple ordinances was not restored until later on, the Lord’s house in Kirtland nevertheless provided the setting for remarkable spiritual experiences and for the conferring of vital priesthood keys. Like ancient temples, it truly was a place of contact between heaven and earth.

In the weeks preceding the Kirtland Temple’s dedication in 1836, the Saints witnessed remarkable spiritual manifestations to an unusual degree. They reported seeing heavenly messengers in at least ten different meetings. At five of these meetings, participants testified that they had beheld the Savior himself. Many received visions, prophesied, or spoke in tongues.<sup>25</sup>

On Thursday afternoon, 21 January 1836, the First Presidency were washed “in pure water.” That evening they met with others in the west room of the temple attic

where they anointed one another with consecrated oil and pronounced blessings and prophecies. Then, “the heavens were opened,” the Prophet recorded, and he “beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof.” The Lord declared: “All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God” (D&C 137:1–4, 7).

In his history Joseph Smith declared that “this was a time of rejoicing long to be remembered.”<sup>26</sup> Elder Orson Pratt later added:

God was there, his angels were there, the Holy Ghost was in the midst of the people, the visions of the Almighty were opened to the minds of the servants of the living God; the vail [*sic*] was taken off the minds of many; they saw the heavens opened; they beheld the angels of God; they heard the voice of the Lord; and they were filled from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet with the power and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.<sup>27</sup>

Some of the most memorable spiritual experiences occurred on Sunday, 27 March 1836, the day the temple was dedicated. The climax of the day was the dedicatory prayer, which had been given to the Prophet by revelation. After expressing gratitude for God’s blessing, the Prophet, with hands raised to heaven and tears flowing freely, prayed that the Lord would accept the temple that had been built “through great tribulation . . . that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people” (D&C 109:5). The dedication concluded with the entire congregation standing and shouting: “Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna, to God and the Lamb, Amen, Amen, and Amen,” repeated three times.<sup>28</sup>

A transcendently important spiritual manifestation occurred on Sunday, 3 April 1836, just one week after the dedication. At the close of the afternoon worship service, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery retired to the Melchizedek Priesthood pulpits in the west end of the lower room of the temple. Joseph Smith testified that “the veil was taken from our minds” (D&C 110:1) and that he and Oliver beheld a series of remarkable visions.

The Lord Jesus Christ appeared, accepted the temple, and promised to manifest himself therein “if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house.” Moses then appeared and bestowed “the keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.” Elias next conferred “the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham.” Finally, in fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy (see Malachi 4:5–6), Elijah committed “the keys of this dispensation” in preparation for the “great and dreadful day of the Lord” (D&C 110:16). Through the sealing keys restored by Elijah, priesthood ordinances performed on earth can be “bound” or “sealed” in heaven.

Though accompanied by marvelous spiritual experiences, the ordinances as administered in the Kirtland Temple were not as complete as they would be in later times. Speaking in 1853 at the cornerstone-laying ceremonies for the Salt Lake Temple, President Brigham Young declared that in Kirtland the “first Elders” received only a “portion of their first endowments, or we might say more clearly, some of the first, or introductory, or initiatory ordinances, preparatory to an endowment.”<sup>29</sup> “The prime purpose in having such a temple,” Elder Harold B. Lee believed, “seems to have been that there could be restored the keys, the effective keys necessary for the carrying on of the Lord’s work.” He therefore concluded that the events of

3 April 1836 (as recorded in D&C 110) were “sufficient justification for the building of [this] temple.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Plans for Temples in the City of Zion**

While the temple at Kirtland was under construction, the Latter-day Saints were also looking forward to building another in Missouri. A revelation during the summer of 1831 identified Independence in Jackson County as the place for the future temple (see D&C 57:1–3). Almost from the beginning, the Saints were fired with the vision of establishing Zion on earth. Enthusiasm for building the temple increased in June 1833 when the Prophet Joseph Smith drafted his plan for the future City of Zion (see fig. 6). This plan set forth the pattern of wide streets crossing at right angles, which would in later decades become a familiar and welcome characteristic of Mormon settlements. Just seven weeks before, Joseph had received a revelation specifying that the temple, together with buildings for the Presidency and for printing, were to be located at the center of Kirtland (see D&C 94). Each structure in this complex was to have the same dimensions and was to be preserved as holy and undefiled.

The envisioned plan for Zion expanded this concept from three to twenty-four buildings. These “temples” were to be assigned to the various priesthood quorums and were to serve a variety of functions.<sup>31</sup> Hence, as had been the case with the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon, the Lord’s house would once again be at the heart of the latter-day holy city. Because all its inhabitants were expected to be living on a celestial level (see D&C 105:5), all these buildings could be regarded as “temples”—places of communication between heaven and earth. Unfortunately, another outbreak of persecution prevented these plans from being carried out.

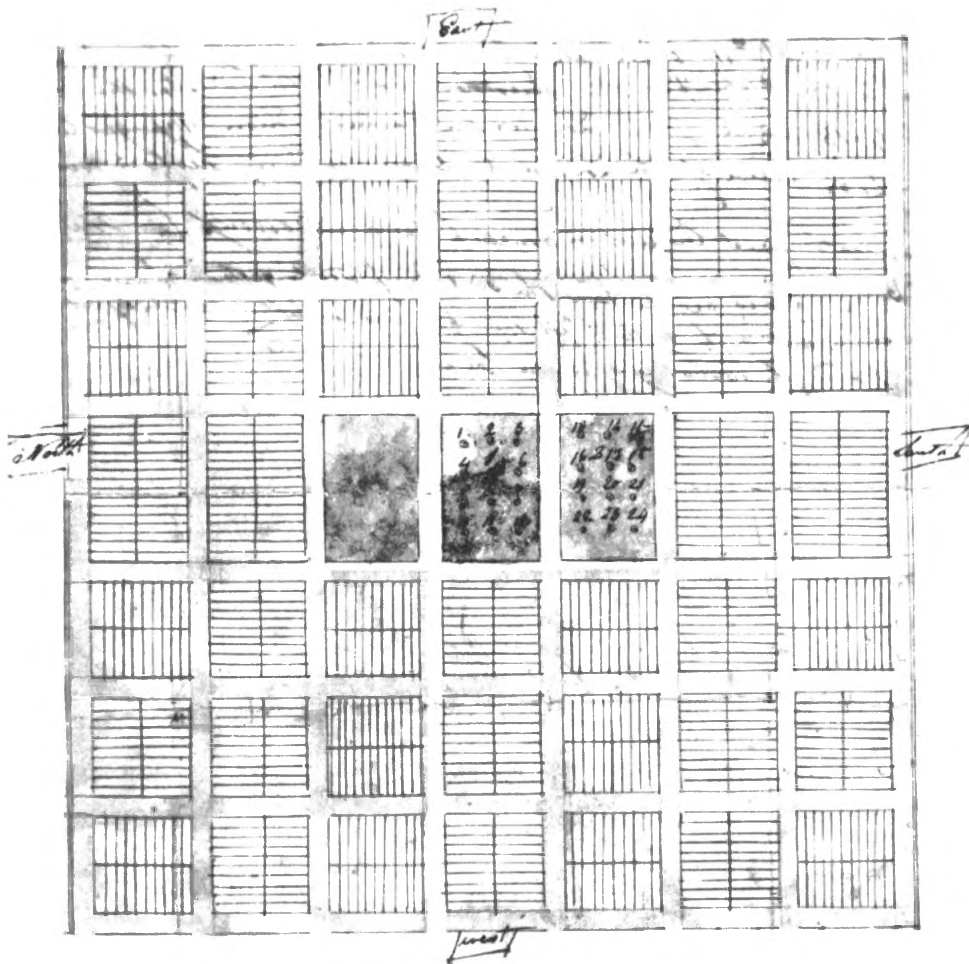


Figure 6. In this 1833 plat of the City of Zion, the two central blocks contain the twenty-four temples that were assigned to various priesthood quorums. These temples, like the ancient Israelite temples, were oriented to the rising sun in the east, designated at the top of the map.

### The Restoration of Temple Ordinances

As the Latter-day Saints fled from their persecutors in Missouri, they turned eastward to Illinois, where in 1839 they established a new community named Nauvoo, from a Hebrew word meaning “beautiful.” Within two years they would begin construction there on yet another temple. Before this sacred structure was completed, the restoration of holy ordinances would have far-reaching significance.

The practice of vicarious baptisms for the dead was



taught for the first time in the present dispensation on 15 August 1840.<sup>32</sup> Until November 1841, when a font was dedicated in the partially completed temple, church members participated in this ordinance in the Mississippi River. The Saints eagerly took advantage of the opportunity to make gospel ordinances and blessings available to their departed loved ones. By 1844, the year of the Prophet's martyrdom, 15,722 baptisms had been performed in behalf of the dead.

Meanwhile, the Saints had already turned their attention to building the temple. Early in August 1840 the First Presidency declared that "the time has now come, when it is necessary to erect a house of prayer, a house of order, a house for the worship of our God, where the ordinances can be attended to agreeably to His divine will."<sup>33</sup>

A revelation, received 19 January 1841, specifically pointed out the need for the temple: Echoing instructions given to Moses concerning the ancient tabernacle, the Lord now commanded his Latter-day Saints to gather precious materials from afar and build a house "for the Most High to dwell therein. For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood" (D&C 124:27–28; compare Exodus 25:8, 22). Specifically, the Lord declared that the ordinance of baptism for the dead "belongeth to my house." He therefore commanded them to provide an appropriate font in the temple. He would grant them "a sufficient time" (D&C 124:31) to accomplish this, during which period he would continue to accept their baptisms performed in the river (see D&C 124:29–33). Hence the Nauvoo Temple, like holy sanctuaries in former dispensations, was to serve the dual purpose of being a place of contact between God and man where sacred priesthood ordinances are also performed.

While the Saints had received a preliminary or partial endowment in Kirtland, the time had now come to unfold these blessings more fully. Elder James E. Talmage described the temple endowment as a “course of instruction,”<sup>34</sup> reviewing key events in the history of mankind—the creation, fall of Adam, apostasy, restoration, and our eventual reunion with God—giving emphasis to the plan of redemption and to our living according to the high standards of the gospel. Hence these instructions outlined the way back to the presence of God—the path that had been symbolized by the prominent stairway up the sides of ancient pyramids and outlined in early Egyptian temple ceremonies.

On 4 May 1842, the first endowments were given in the large assembly room on the second floor of the Red Brick Store because the temple was not yet completed.<sup>35</sup> The brethren were washed, anointed, and given other initiatory ordinances, and then the instructions of the endowment were unfolded as the group moved from one area to another. Concerning this significant event, Joseph Smith recorded:

I spent the day . . . in council with [seven brethren] instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds. . . . The communications I made to this council were of things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritual minded: and there was nothing made known to these

men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them, even to the weakest of the Saints; therefore let the Saints be diligent in building the Temple.<sup>36</sup>

By the time of the Prophet's martyrdom, over fifty individuals had received the blessings of the endowment.

Among the other blessings unfolded during these years was eternal marriage. During his earthly ministry, the Master had stressed the sanctity of the family. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mark 10:9; see also 10:6–8). The apostle Paul similarly insisted: "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11). During the present dispensation a revelation had affirmed that "marriage is ordained of God" as the means of providing earthly tabernacles for the spirits that had lived before the world was made (see D&C 49:15–17).

In May 1843 Joseph Smith instructed the Saints that in order to attain the highest degree of the celestial kingdom, one must enter "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage" (D&C 131:2). Two months later he recorded a revelation which, among other things, declared: "If a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world" (D&C 132:15). Following these instructions, which echoed the ancient apocryphal *Gospel of Philip*, the number of marriages for eternity increased.

In September 1842 the Prophet instructed that there must be "a welding link" established from generation to generation (see D&C 128:18). To this end ordinances began to be performed to seal children to their parents.

Even following Joseph Smith's martyrdom on 27 June 1844, the Saints pressed forward in building the temple. By December of the following year, the attic story was completed, furnished, and dedicated for presenting the endowment instructions. Even though during the next several weeks the Saints were making feverish preparations for their forced exodus, more than five thousand eagerly took the time to receive their temple blessings.

### **Temple Worship Today**

Latter-day Saint temples have many of the qualities of those built in ancient times. For example, emblematic stones on the Salt Lake Temple and some other temples depict gospel teachings, as did the arrangement and furnishings at the Tabernacle of Moses. Also, many Latter-day Saint temples face east, perhaps in anticipation of the second coming of the Savior. Prophecies describe Christ's future coming as being like the dawning of a new day in the east (see Matthew 24:27; D&C 45:36–39).

Just as the ancients looked to the temple as a place to get out of the world and come closer to God, likewise we find temple worship to be a source of enriched spirituality. "In the temple we can receive spiritual perspective," affirmed Elder Boyd K. Packer.

There, during the time of the temple service, we are out of the world.

A large part of the value of these occasions is the fact that we are doing something for someone that they cannot do for themselves. As we perform the endowment for someone who is dead, somehow we feel a little less hesitant to pray fervently to the Lord to assist us. . . . There is something cleansing and clarifying about the spiritual atmosphere of the temple.<sup>37</sup>

## Notes

1. John A. Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 12 (April 1921): 52.
2. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 2:237.
3. Hugh W. Nibley, "What Is a Temple?" in *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), 359.
4. See Hugh W. Nibley, "The Idea of the Temple in History," *Millennial Star* 120 (August 1958): 228–37, 247–49; this article was republished in pamphlet form by BYU Press in 1963 under the title "What Is a Temple?" and under the same title in *The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984), 19–37; and in *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), 355–90.
5. See Stephen D. Ricks and Michael A. Carter, "Temple-Building Motifs: Mesopotamia, Ancient Israel, Ugarit, and Kirtland," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 152–76.
6. For an illustration, see Donald W. Parry, "Demarcation between Sacred Space and Profane Space: The Temple of Herod Model," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 418–19, fig. 41.
7. See Sidney B. Sperry, "Some Thoughts concerning Ancient Temples and Their Functions," *Improvement Era*, November 1955, 814.
8. See Joseph Fielding Smith, "Was Temple Work Done in the Days of the Old Prophets?" *Improvement Era*, November 1955, 794.
9. *Ibid.*
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11. John A. Tvedtnes, "Priestly Clothing in Bible Times," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 649–704.

12. See Yigael Yadin, "The Temple Scroll," in *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, ed. David Noel Freedman and Jonas C. Greenfield (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), 156–66; and Jacob Milgrom, "The Temple Scroll," *Biblical Archaeologist* 41 (September 1978): 105–20.

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14. See Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 118–19.

15. See Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:241 (27 June 1863).

16. See Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:165.

17. See James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), and Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (New York: Doubleday, 1987).

18. Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Ordinances, in Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 280.

19. See, for example, Hugh W. Nibley, "The Early Christian Prayer Circle," *BYU Studies* 19/1 (1978): 41–78.

20. See John A. Tvedtnes, "Temple Prayer in Ancient Times," in this volume, pages 79–98.

21. *Gospel of Philip* 69:14–25; 70:17–20; 86:3–7; see R. McL. Wilson, trans., *The Gospel of Philip* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 45–46, 62.

22. James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962), 91 (1974 ed., 77).

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24. Sperry, "Ancient Temples," 827.

25. See Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 285.

26. *History of the Church*, 2:392.

27. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 18:132 (9 October 1875).

28. On the hosanna shout, see Lael J. Woodbury, "The Origin and Uses of the Sacred Hosanna Shout," in *Sperry Lecture Series* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1975), 18; and Lael J. Woodbury, "Hosanna Shout," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:659.

29. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:31 (6 April 1853).

30. Harold B. Lee, "Correlation and Priesthood Genealogy," address at Priesthood Genealogical Research Seminar, 1968 (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1969), 60.

31. See *History of the Church*, 1:358–59.

32. See *History of the Church*, 4:179; see also Doctrine and Covenants 124:132.

33. *History of the Church*, 4:186.

34. Talmage, *House of the Lord*, 99 (1974 ed., 83).

35. See Lucius N. Scovil letter in *Deseret News Semi-Weekly*, 15 February 1884, 2, quoted in *BYU Studies* 19/2 (1979): 159 n. 77.

36. *History of the Church*, 5:1–2.

37. Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 180–81.