

# Interpreter

**A Journal of Latter-day Saint  
Faith and Scholarship**

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Temple”: Receiving  
Revelation and Becoming  
Holy in the House of the Lord**

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**Article Print**

**Pages vii–xxxii**

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ISSN 2372-1227 (print)  
ISSN 2372-126X (online)

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# “Get Thou Up into the Temple”: Receiving Revelation and Becoming Holy in the House of the Lord

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Matthew L. Bowen

**Abstract:** *Psalms 15:1–5, 24:2–3, and 48:1 [MT 2], as temple hymns of the Jerusalem Temple, are consistent with other texts such as Isaiah 2:2–3 and Genesis 22:14, which envision the holy temple as the “mountain of the Lord” into which one must ritually ascend. The examples of Moses, Nephi, Jacob, and others who ascended into this “mountain” demonstrate that this ascent facilitates the reception of divine revelation necessary in our mortal journey to become holy through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. This sacred ascent is necessary for our eventual, individual, and collective “perfection” in Christ, and it is one that he himself consistently made. Recently, President Russell M. Nelson and other Church leaders have emphasized the wealth of spiritual blessings that result from increased, meaningful service in the temple. If we, as Latter-day Saints, will more frequently and diligently ascend and worship in the temple, we will receive the personal revelation, instruction, and divine correction that we need to help us more fully come unto Christ. He will also console us there, endow us with the strength to endure, and make us more holy.*

**I**n the April 2025 General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Russell M. Nelson stated:

Regular worship in the house of the Lord increases our capacity for both virtue and charity. Thus, time in the temple increases our confidence before the Lord. Increased time in the temple will help us prepare for the Second Coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We do not know the day or the

hour of His coming. But I do know that the Lord is prompting me to urge us to get ready for that “great and dreadful day.”<sup>1</sup>

An increased capacity for charity and virtue reflect an increase in the personal and collective sanctification of the Latter-day Saints. (*Saints* means *holy ones* or *sanctified ones*.) In an earlier session of the same General Conference, Elder Ronald K. Rasband emphasized:

Today the Church has 367 temples in various stages of design, construction, or operation. And for what purpose? The answer is proclaimed on each temple: “Holiness to the Lord.” The temple opens the way to the highest blessings our Father in Heaven has for each one of us. Brothers and sisters, we are hastening our holiness as we live temple worthy, as we worship in the house of the Lord, and as we make covenants with God for ourselves and on behalf of our ancestors on the other side of the veil.<sup>2</sup>

In this essay, I will illustrate how ascending into the temple—the mountain of the Lord—facilitates the reception of divine revelation necessary in our mortal journey to become holy through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and why doing so is necessary for our eventual, individual and collective “perfection.”

### **“Who Shall Ascend into the Mountain of the Lord”? True Temple Worthiness**

The biblical psalms were “the hymns of the temple.”<sup>3</sup> In ancient Israel and Judah, individual worthiness to enter the temple precincts and participate in worship there was self-assessed in the recitation of two particular psalms, Psalm 15 and Psalm 24, which have been described

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1. Russell M. Nelson, “Confidence in the Presence of God,” General Conference address, April 2025, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/57nelson](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/57nelson).

2. Ronald A. Rasband, “Right Before Our Eyes,” General Conference address, April 2025, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/15rasband](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/15rasband).

3. Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008), 45. See further Gary A. Rendsburg, “The Psalms as Hymns in the Temple of Jerusalem,” in *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations*, ed. James A. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 95–122, [jewishstudies.rutgers.edu/images/documents/faculty/Rendsburg/psalms-hymns-temple.pdf](https://www.jewishstudies.rutgers.edu/images/documents/faculty/Rendsburg/psalms-hymns-temple.pdf).

as "temple entrance hymns"<sup>4</sup> or "entrance liturgy."<sup>5</sup> These two psalms prepose similarly formatted worthiness questions, answered in enumerations of qualifications. The first entrance hymn seems to have been composed exclusively for the purpose of self-evaluation:

Lord, who shall abide [*mî-yāgûr*, sojourn] in thy tabernacle [*bě'ohōlekā*]? who shall dwell [*yīškōn*] in thy holy hill [*bēhar qodšekā*, holy mountain]? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned [or, in whose eyes the wicked are despised (NRSV)]; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved. (Psalm 15:1–5)

John S. Kesselman and Michael L. Barré summarize the worthiness requirements of Psalm 15: "The person worthy to enter God's presence is one who does no wrong to the neighbor (cf. Rom[ans] 13:10)."<sup>6</sup> The qualifications for temple worthiness and temple entrance, then, align with what Jesus described as the "two commandments" upon which "hang all the law and the prophets" in Matthew 22:35–40. "The first and great commandment" is, of course, from the Shema, still one of Judaism's most important credal recitations: "Hear [*šēma*'], O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord [or, Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one]: **And thou shalt love the Lord thy God** with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:4–5). The first four commandments in the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) pertain to this principle. (See Exodus 20:2–11; Deuteronomy 5:6–15; Mosiah 13:12–19.) The "second . . . like unto it" is given in Leviticus 19:18: "**But thou shalt love thy neighbour** as thyself:

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4. Donald W. Parry, "Who Shall Ascend into the Mountain of the Lord?": Three Biblical Temple Entrance Hymns," in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS], 2014), 729–42, [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/mi/67/](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/mi/67/).

5. John S. Kselman and Michael L. Barré, "Psalms," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 529.

6. Kselman and Barré, "Psalms," 529.

I am the Lord.” Like the last six commandments of the Decalogue (see Exodus 20:12–17; Deuteronomy 5:16–21; Mosiah 13:20–24), the worthiness requirements of Psalm 15 are subsumed in “the second” great commandment. This commandment constitutes part of the “holiness” legislation of Leviticus, where the Lord also declares and commands, “For I *am* the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy” (Leviticus 11:44). Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that true worthiness to enter the ancient temple and real personal holiness demanded wholeheartedly loving God and loving one’s neighbor.

In the second temple entrance hymn or entrance liturgy, the enumeration of qualifications becomes much more concise: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord [*běhar yhw̄h*, mountain of the Lord]? or who shall stand in his holy place [*bimqôm qodšô*]? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully” (Psalm 24:3–4). In other words, individual worthiness to enter and remain in the Lord’s presence also required both ritual purity and ethical purity.

Alma the Younger used an inverted quotation<sup>7</sup> of Psalm 24:4 when he asked the church members in Zarahemla, “Can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands? I say unto you, can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances?” (Alma 5:19). For individuals to have “received his image in [their] countenances” (Alma 5:14), is for them to become “like” and “purified even as he is pure” (Moroni 7:48; see also 1 John 3:2–3). The privilege of ascending into the mountain of the Lord and standing in his holy place constitutes a powerful incentive to achieve and maintain personal worthiness precisely because it anticipates the time of return to the “presence of the Lord” to be judged — looking up to God.

Both temple entrance Psalms describe the Jerusalem temple as the Lord’s *har*, “mountain” (*har qodšekā*, *har yhw̄h*). Psalm 48:1 [MT 2] describes it this way: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in **the mountain of his holiness** [*har-qodšô*].” Psalm 24:3 conceptualizes procession into the temple as an ascent (“who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?”). This is consistent with the etiology for the Jerusalem temple’s future location on Mount

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7. Donald W. Perry, “Inverted Quotations,” in *Preserved in Translation: Hebrew and Other Ancient Literary Forms in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2020), 89–92.





**Figure 1.** The Southern Stairs or Rabbi's Stairs on the south side of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, over which the lead-sheeted dome of Al-Aqsa Mosque rises. These stairs were evidently used during the time of Jesus to ascend into and descend from the temple complex on the south side. Photo by the author.

Moriah — or **Jehovah-jireh** — the mount where Abraham ascended with Isaac as a type, “similitude” (Jacob 4:5), or “figure” (Hebrews 11:17–19) of the Father and the Son: “And Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovah-jireh** [*yhw̄h yir'eh*]: as it is said to this day, **In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen** [*bēhar yhw̄h yērā'eh*]” (Genesis 22:14). The last part of that sentence could also be translated, “In the mount of Jehovah, it shall be provided.” The same words could also be understood as “in the mount, Jehovah shall be seen” or “in the mount, Jehovah shall be provided.” Indeed, the animal sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple afforded those offering them a kind of theophany or vision of God. In these sacrifices, they could see a preenacting of their own redemption — the supreme sacrifice of the Son of God and the sacrifice of their animal natures,<sup>8</sup> both enabling them to “become holy, without spot” (Moroni 10:33).

8. Elder Maxwell stated, “So it is that real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed! Such is the ‘sacrifice unto the Lord . . . of

## **“Arise, and Get Thee into the Mount”: Obtaining Personal Revelation in the Temple**

As preserved in the Book of Moses, the Lord commanded Enoch to ascend into the mountain to receive divine revelation: “There came a voice out of heaven, saying—Turn ye, and get ye upon the mount Simeon” (Moses 7:2). Enoch reports that a theophany immediately ensued:

And it came to pass that I turned and went up on the mount; and as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory; and I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face, and he talked with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face; and he said unto me: Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations. (Moses 7:3–4)

At this sacred vantage point, the Lord sanctified Enoch (he “was clothed upon with glory”) and gave Enoch a vision of how things would unfold for “many generations.” This magnificent vision was only a precursor for the greater vision Enoch would have within the divine embrace,<sup>9</sup> “high and lifted up in the bosom of the Father”—arguably the greatest “temple” vision of which we have any record.

The divine commandment to ascend into the mountain also constituted a salient aspect of Moses’s divine tutoring. On one occasion, Moses was sanctified through transfiguration and taught: “Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain, and he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence” (Moses 1:1–2). Like Enoch prior to his own translation into heaven, Moses received the commandment “get thee up” into the mountain so the Lord could reveal his plans for the children of Israel. “Get thee up into this mount

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a broken heart and a contrite spirit,’ (D&C 59:8), a prerequisite to taking up the cross, while giving ‘away all [our] sins’ in order to ‘know God’ (Alma 22:18); for the denial of self precedes the full acceptance of Him.” Neal A. Maxwell, “Deny Yourselves of All Ungodliness,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 68, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1995/05/deny-yourselves-of-all-ungodliness](http://churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1995/05/deny-yourselves-of-all-ungodliness).

9. Matthew L. Bowen, “‘Encircled About Eternally in the Arms of His Love’: The Divine Embrace as a Thematic Symbol of Jesus Christ and His Atonement in the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 59 (2023): 109–34, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/encircled-about-eternally-in-the-arms-of-his-love-the-divine-embrace-as-a-thematic-symbol-of-jesus-christ-and-his-atonement-in-the-book-of-mormon/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/encircled-about-eternally-in-the-arms-of-his-love-the-divine-embrace-as-a-thematic-symbol-of-jesus-christ-and-his-atonement-in-the-book-of-mormon/).



Abarim” (Numbers 27:12; Deuteronomy 32:49); “Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan” (Deuteronomy 3:27). When Moses first approached “the mountain of God” (Exodus 3:1), it was revealed to him that Israel would “serve God [*ta’abdûn*] upon this mountain,” an allusion to their future priestly “service” (*‘ăbōdâ*) within the temple.<sup>10</sup>

Like Enoch’s and Moses’s “temple” tutoring, Nephi’s divine tutoring involved visions on high mountains.<sup>11</sup> One of the coastal mountains in the land Bountiful, almost certainly in modern-day Oman,<sup>12</sup> served as a temple for Nephi during the Lehites’ sojourn in the land Bountiful. Nephi records that the Lord directed him to ascend into this mountain, to which Nephi responded promptly and affirmatively: “And it came to pass that after I, Nephi, had been in the land of Bountiful for the space of many days, the voice of the Lord came unto me, saying: **Arise, and get thee into the mountain.** And it came to pass that **I arose and went up into the mountain,** and cried unto the Lord” (1 Nephi 17:7). It is quickly evident that this mountain constituted a place of divine revelation:

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: **Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner** [compare Hebrew *tabnîṭ*] **which I shall show thee,** that I may carry thy people across these waters. And I said: Lord, **whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner** [*tabnîṭ*] **which thou hast shown unto me?** And it came to pass

10. On “service” [*‘ăbōdâ*] as a temple term, see Donald W. Parry, “Service and Temple in King Benjamin’s Speech,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16, no. 2 (2007): 42–47, [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1428&context=jbms](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1428&context=jbms).

11. 1 Nephi 11:1; 2 Nephi 4:25. See further Matthew L. Bowen, “Upon the Wings of His Spirit: A Note on Hebrew *rûaḥ* and 2 Nephi 4:25,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 58 (2023): 19–32, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/upon-the-wings-of-his-spirit-a-note-on-hebrew-rua%E1%B8%A5-and-2-nephi-425/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/upon-the-wings-of-his-spirit-a-note-on-hebrew-rua%E1%B8%A5-and-2-nephi-425/).

12. Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi’s Journey Across Arabia to Bountiful* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994); Warren P. Aston, “The Arabian Bountiful Discovered? Evidence for Nephi’s Bountiful,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1997): 4–11, 70, [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1184&context=jbms](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1184&context=jbms).

that the Lord told me whither I should go to find ore, that I might make tools. (1 Nephi 17:8–10)

During the wilderness period, the Lord had commanded Moses to ensure that the tabernacle (portable temple) and its appurtenances were made “after their pattern [*bětabnîtām*], which was shewed thee in the mount” (Exodus 25:40; compare 25:8–9).

Nephi’s revelatory experiences in the wilderness, especially at Bountiful, were extraordinarily like Moses’s wilderness revelations. Nephi subsequently states that he made a regular practice of going up into this mountain and that it remained for him a place of prayer and revelation for the duration of the family’s stay in Bountiful: “And I, Nephi, **did go into the mount oft**, and **I did pray oft unto the Lord; wherefore the Lord showed unto me great things**” (1 Nephi 18:3).

The young Nephi in the land Bountiful with its mountain-temple can be seen as a *tabnît*, a pattern or type. For many university-aged Latter-day Saints from Oceania, the Asian rim, and elsewhere in the world, Laie, Hawaii, and its temple represent a divinely prepared “Bountiful”—a place of spiritual recharging and divine tutoring, a place where “patterns” of holiness for future lives are often revealed, a place where men and women acquire more Christlike holiness in preparation “to be lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ and leaders in their families, communities, chosen fields, and in building the kingdom of God”<sup>13</sup> and “to be an example to the world of intercultural peace and unity through living the teachings of Jesus Christ.”<sup>14</sup>

Living in Laie and worshiping in the temple uncounted times, not every visit has culminated with a Moses- or Nephi-like vision. Nevertheless, many of the experiences I have had in this temple have been too sacred to record. Here I will hazard sharing one instance of needed revelation that came to me while praying and pondering in the temple.

I first came to BYU–Hawai‘i as a visiting professor in July 2012 with no promise or expectation of employment beyond one academic year. I was still working on my doctoral dissertation. Toward the end of that academic year, to our great joy, our daughter Adele was born (our second son, Nathan, had died on 1 March 2011 after thirty-three days of life). Living in Hawai‘i on less than a visiting professor’s salary with

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13. BYU Hawai‘i Mission Statement, [about.byuh.edu/about-byuh/mission-and-vision](http://about.byuh.edu/about-byuh/mission-and-vision).

14. BYU Hawai‘i Vision, [about.byuh.edu/about-byuh/mission-and-vision](http://about.byuh.edu/about-byuh/mission-and-vision).



**Figure 2.** Laie Temple, 2025. The most visited temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been the Salt Lake Temple. The second most-visited temple is in Laie, Hawaii. Photo by the author.

a newborn left our family’s finances stretched to the breaking point. Having a newborn at home, teaching fulltime, and advancing the work on my doctoral dissertation evenings and weekends left little opportunity to bring in any extra money.

The one-year visiting professorship was unexpectedly renewed for a second year and then for a third. Toward the latter end of the second year, I was in the temple one evening pondering what I might do to earn enough extra money within the parameters of our family's circumstances to enable us to make our financial ends meet during that third year. The impression came to my mind very clearly: approach university administration about teaching an evening, overload course (i.e., a course that exceeded the normal full-time allotment of courses), which was not normally allocated to visiting faculty. Following the divine prompting, the administration granted the course overload, and we had just enough to meet our family's needs. At the end of the visiting professorship, I was hired into a vacated permanent full-time employment faculty slot. Our family has happily thrived in Laie ever since.

## **“Come Ye, Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob”:**

### **The House of the Lord as a House of Learning**

Nephi's experiences as a youth with the temple in Jerusalem, divine revelation, and perhaps a text akin to 1 Kings 6–7 on the brass plates, enabled him to build a temple “after the manner of the temple of Solomon.” He writes:

And I, Nephi, did build a temple; and I did construct it **after the manner** [cf. Heb. *tabnîṭ*] **of the temple of Solomon** save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land, wherefore it could not be built like unto Solomon's temple. But the **manner** [*tabnîṭ*] of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine. (2 Nephi 5:16)

As in 1 Nephi 17, the term *manner* is probably to be understood in terms of Hebrew *tabnîṭ*, the term used to describe the revealed *pattern*, *manner*, or *type* after which Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness was constructed. The building of this temple must have been one of Nephi's first and most important acts of state. He needed to build a temple to build a covenant people.<sup>15</sup> A similar purpose underlies the

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15. Psalm 144:12, “[T]hat our sons [*bānênû*] may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters [*bēnôtênû*] may be as corner stones [corner pillars], polished after the similitude of a palace [*tabnîṭ hēkāl*, or, pattern of a temple].

urgency of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem as the exiles began to return (see, e.g., Haggai 1:7–15).

Nephi and his people evidently “likened”<sup>16</sup> Nephi’s temple, constructed after the divinely revealed “manner” or “pattern” of Solomon’s temple and built in the highlands of the land of Nephi, to the latter-day temple—the “mountain of the Lord’s house”—that would be firmly fixed in “the tops of the mountains”:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, when **the mountain of the Lord’s house** shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and **let us go up to the mountain of the Lord**, to the house of the God of Jacob; **and he will teach us [wěyōrēnû] of his ways**, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth **the law [tôrâ]** and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (2 Nephi 12:2–3; cf. Isaiah 2:2–3)

Like Psalms 15, 24, and 48, Isaiah’s text envisions the temple and temple entrance in terms of ascending a sacred mountain. He also envisioned it as a place of divine instruction, as beautifully emphasized by the polyptotonic wordplay of “teach us” [wěyōrēnû] and “law” [tôrâ]. More than “law,” *tôrâ* means “teaching” or “instruction,” especially to “teach” by “pointing.”<sup>17</sup> Like the Jerusalem temple and its sacrificial system under the “law of Moses” (compare Jacob 4:5; Alma 34:5), the latter-day temple “points” us to Christ. In other words, in the “house of the God of Jacob,” the God of Jacob teaches us about himself.

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16. See 1 Nephi 19:23; 2 Nephi 11:2. On early Nephite polity and the associated practice of “likening” of the words of Isaiah to themselves in their circumstances, see Brant Gardner, “A Social History of the Early Nephites” (paper delivered at the third annual FairMormon Conference, Provo, UT, 2001), [fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference/august-2001/a-social-history-of-the-early-nephites](http://fairlatterdaysaints.org/conference/august-2001/a-social-history-of-the-early-nephites); John Gee and Matthew Roper, “I Did Liken All Scriptures unto Us’: Early Nephite Understandings of Isaiah and Implications for ‘Others’ in the Land,” in *The Fulness of the Gospel: Foundational Teachings from the Book of Mormon*, ed. Camille Fronk Olson, et al. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 2003), 51–65; see especially the discussion on pp. 55–58, [contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/rsc/id/30504](http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/rsc/id/30504).

17. Matthew L. Bowen, “Scripture Note: ‘Pointing Our Souls to Him,’” *Religious Educator* 20, no. 1 (2019): 165–71, [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re/vol20/iss1/11/](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re/vol20/iss1/11/). The Hebrew verb *yry/yrh* denotes both to “teach” and the idea of “stretching out the finger, or the hand, to point out a route.” See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2001), 710.

To this end, the Lord commanded the early members of his restored church to build a temple — a “house” — for the instruction of his people: “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, **a house of learning**, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:119; cf. 109:8). In the same revelation, paraphrasing Psalm 24:4, the Lord also stated:

And I give unto you, who are the first laborers in this last kingdom, a commandment that you assemble yourselves together, and organize yourselves, and prepare yourselves, and sanctify yourselves; yea, **purify your hearts, and cleanse your hands and your feet before me, that I may make you clean; that I may testify unto your Father, and your God, and my God, that you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation**; that I may fulfil this promise, this great and last promise, which I have made unto you, when I will. Also, I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth. (Doctrine and Covenants 88:74–76)

The Lord’s words in this revelation have been associated with ritual washings and anointings since their latter-day inception. They have also long been associated with the temple endowment. As in Psalm 24:4, the concern is for both ritual and ethical purity. However, this revelation also looks ahead to eschatological purity and holiness necessary to remain eternally in the presence of God the Father. The ordinances and covenants of the temple all have our eventual eternal sanctification and perfection in view.

The Lord further commanded in the same revelation that the early saints were to instruct each other:

And I give unto you a commandment that you shall **teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God**, that are expedient for you to understand; of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities



of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms— **that ye may be prepared in all things** when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you. (Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–80)

This type of teaching still occurs, of course, daily in Latter-day Saint homes, weekly in Latter-day Saint meetinghouses, and semester-by-semester in Latter-day Saint high schools and universities throughout the world. However, such teaching is also administered through the endowment and other ordinances of the house of the Lord. As Elder David A. Bednar has taught, “An ordinance is a holy act performed in the authority of the priesthood that teaches us about the associated covenant.”<sup>18</sup> For all that is revealed and taught in the temple as pertaining to God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ, the divine council and the associated plan of salvation (compare Hebrew *sôd*), and to life and salvation, it is the “house of learning” par excellence.

### “Get Thou Up into the Temple”: The House of the Lord as a Place of Divine Correction

Jacob, the son of Lehi and brother of Nephi, had his career as a temple priest foretold to him by his father: “Wherefore, thy soul shall be blessed, and thou shalt dwell safely with thy brother, Nephi; and thy days shall be spent in the service of thy God” (2 Nephi 2:3). Nephi confirms that after the death of Lehi, “it came to pass that I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land of my people” (2 Nephi 5:26). Jacob’s personal record on the small plates also highlights the fulfillment of Lehi’s promise: “For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi” (Jacob 1:18).

Jacob mentions the temple as the locus of his priestly teaching at least three times (Jacob 1:17; 2:2, 11). Jacob’s recorded sermon’s,<sup>19</sup> writ-

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18. Jon Ryan Jensen, “Elder Bednar Says ‘Power of Godliness’ in Covenants, Ordinances,” reporting on an address given to missionaries at the Missionary Training Center (Provo, UT) on 24 August 2021, [newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/elder-bednar-says-power-of-godliness-in-covenants-ordinances](https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/elder-bednar-says-power-of-godliness-in-covenants-ordinances).

19. See David E. Bokovoy, “Ancient Temple Imagery in the Sermons of Jacob,” in *Temple Insights: Proceedings of the Interpreter Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference*, “The Temple on Mount Zion,” 22 September 2012, ed. William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely (Orem, UT: Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake



ings, and scriptural quotations<sup>20</sup> are filled with temple images and language. Jacob understood that his own holiness and standing before God would be determined by how faithfully he discharged his priestly responsibilities:

And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day. (Jacob 1:19)

Jacob's primary concern, however, seems to have been the holiness of his own people:

But behold, my brethren, is it expedient that I should awake you to an awful reality of these things? Would I harrow up your souls if your minds were pure? Would I be plain unto you according to the plainness of the truth if ye were freed from sin? Behold, **if ye were holy I would speak unto you of holiness; but as ye are not holy**, and ye look upon me as a teacher, it must needs be expedient that I teach you the consequences of sin. (2 Nephi 9:47–48)

Accordingly, Jacob uses the temple in the land of Nephi, his people's central sanctuary, as a place of dispensing divine correction:

And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices, such as like unto David of old desiring many wives and concubines, and also Solomon, his son. Yea, and they also began to search much gold and silver, and began to be lifted up somewhat in pride. Wherefore **I, Jacob, gave unto**

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City: Eborn Books, 2014), 171–186, reprinted at [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/ancient-temple-imagery-in-the-sermons-of-jacob/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/ancient-temple-imagery-in-the-sermons-of-jacob/).

20. See Matthew L. Bowen, "I Have Done According to My Will": Reading Jacob 5 as Temple Text," in *The Temple Ancient and Restored: Proceedings of the 2014 Temple on Mount Zion Symposium*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry; Temple on Mount Zion Series 3; (Salt Lake City: Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2016), 235–72, reprinted at [interpreterfoundation.org/reprint-i-have-done-according-to-my-will-reading-jacob-5-as-a-temple-text/](http://interpreterfoundation.org/reprint-i-have-done-according-to-my-will-reading-jacob-5-as-a-temple-text/).

**them these words as I taught them in the temple**, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord. (Jacob 1:15–17)

As Jacob begins his temple sermon, he states that his own holiness and his eternal standing before God were on the line in calling his people to repentance: "Now, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine office with soberness, and **that I might rid my garments of your sins, I come up into the temple this day** that I might declare unto you the word of God" (Jacob 2:2). Jacob further reports that his errand to give them divine correction came directly from the Lord: "Wherefore, I must tell you the truth according to the plainness of the word of God. For behold, as I inquired of the Lord, thus came the word unto me, saying: **Jacob, get thou up into the temple** on the morrow, and declare the word which I shall give thee unto this people" (Jacob 2:11). Jacob received the divine message of correction to teach his people and then made the ascent into the temple and his people made the ascent to hear him.

Here we again recall the worthiness requirements of Psalm 24:3–4: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Many of those who had "a pure heart" had ascended with Jacob into the temple (those who had "come up hither to hear the pleasing word of God, yea, the word which healeth the wounded soul," Jacob 2:8) and that made his task more difficult: "But, notwithstanding the greatness of the task, I must do according to the strict commands of God, and tell you concerning your wickedness and abominations, **in the presence of the pure in heart, and the broken heart**, and under the glance of the piercing eye of the Almighty God." (Jacob 2:10). As Jacob's sermon progressed, he interrupted himself to offer the "pure in heart" encouragement and consolation:

But behold, I, Jacob, would speak unto you that are pure in heart. Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause, and send down justice upon those who seek your destruction. O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever. (Jacob 3:1–2)

As Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai has recently highlighted, those who have been wounded by the choices of others can find relief by sincerely seeking to have burdens of bitterness and resentment removed through prayer and ascending into the temple to worship the Lord.<sup>21</sup>

But Jacob knew there were also those who had ascended into the temple that day who were unworthy to stand there, according to the self-assessment of Psalm 24:3–4. For them, Jacob reserved an emphatic woe oracle: “But, wo, wo, unto you that are not pure in heart, that are filthy this day before God; for except ye repent the land is cursed for your sakes” (Jacob 3:3). He prophesied that they would lose their promised land, which included the temple in which they were then standing: “And the time speedily cometh, that except ye repent they [the Lamanites] shall possess the land of your inheritance, and the Lord God will lead away the righteous out from among you” (Jacob 3:4). Amaleki, the son of Abinadom, records that this is exactly what happened (see Omni 1:12–19).

### **“He Went Up into a Mountain”: Jesus’s Temple Teachings**

Like Jacob, Jesus ascended into the temple to worship and teach or used mountains as suitable substitutes. And like Jacob, he offered consolation to the “pure in heart.” According to Luke, Jesus’s temple teaching began long before his mortal ministry: “Now his parents went

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21. Benjamin M. Z. Tai, “The Love of God,” General Conference address, April 2025, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/56tai](https://churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/56tai). Elder Tai relates the experience of a friend who had a great burden of resentment and bitterness removed while worshipping in the temple:

I have a friend who was blessed with a beautiful family and a promising career. This changed when an illness left him unable to work, which was followed by a divorce. The years since have been difficult, but his love for his children and the covenants he has made with God have sustained him. One day he learned that his former spouse had remarried and had requested a cancellation of their temple sealing. He was troubled and confused. He sought peace and understanding in the house of the Lord. The day after his visit, I received the following message from him:

“I had an amazing experience in the temple last night. I think it was obvious that I still held quite a bit of resentment. . . . I knew that I must change, and I have been praying all week to do so. . . . Last night in the temple I literally felt the Spirit remove the resentment from my heart. . . . It was such a relief to be freed from it. . . . An ominous physical burden bearing down on me has been lifted.”

to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast” (Luke 2:41–42). The pilgrimage to “go up” to the temple from Nazareth was typically a family affair. Mary and Joseph assumed he was with other family members in the caravan before realizing he was missing, whereupon they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. Then Luke records, “And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers” (Luke 2:46–47). The Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 2:46 reverses the detail of who was teaching and who was being taught: “And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, and they were hearing him, and asking him questions.” In other words, on this occasion, Jesus was doing the teaching.

Twenty-one years later, in some of the closing scenes of his mortal life, Jesus is again teaching in the temple: “And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him” (Luke 21:37–38).

In no less than three monographs,<sup>22</sup> John W. Welch has shown how the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) and its encore rendition, the Sermon at the Temple (3 Nephi 12–14), represent *summa res* of Jesus’s “temple” teaching. In the Beatitudes, Jesus echoed Psalm 24 when he averred, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8; 3 Nephi 12:8). In a revelation given to the prophet Joseph Smith on 2 August 1833 as early Church members were being driven from Jackson County, Missouri, and in which he defined Zion as the “pure in heart,” the Lord promised:

And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon

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22. See John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-Day Saint Approach* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/mi/89/](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/mi/89/); John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount: An Approach to 3 Nephi 11–18 and Matthew 5–7* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1041&context=mi](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1041&context=mi); John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), [scripturecentral.org/archive/books/book/sermon-mountain-light-temple](http://scripturecentral.org/archive/books/book/sermon-mountain-light-temple).

it; yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it,  
**and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see  
 God.** (Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–16)

We can still claim that promise in the house of the Lord today, but we have to become pure in heart and we have to become more holy.

### **“Holiness unto the Lord, the House of the Lord”: Becoming Holy and Eventually “Perfect”**

The phrase “holiness unto the Lord” or “holiness unto the Lord” that adorns Latter-day Saint temples today derives from the Hebrew expression *qōdeš lyhwh*, which originally marked, designated, or “sealed” the Aaronic high priest as uniquely belonging to the Lord: “And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet [*ḥōtām*], HOLINESS TO THE LORD [*qōdeš lyhwh*]” (Exodus 28:36); “And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet [*ḥōtām*, seal], HOLINESS TO THE LORD [*qōdeš lyhwh*]” (Exodus 39:30). This plate with its seal-like engraving was worn on the forehead of the high priest and symbolized the holiness intended for all Israel.

From the wilderness period onward, the Lord had intended Israel to be holy. Jeremiah states, “Israel was holiness unto the LORD [*qōdeš yiśrā’ēl lyhwh*], and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 2:3). The prophet Zechariah envisioned that Israel and Judah would once again be sanctified and elevated to this holy state:

In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses,  
 HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD [*qōdeš lyhwh*]; and the pots  
 in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar.  
 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness  
 unto the LORD [*qōdeš lyhwh*] of hosts: and all they that sac-  
 rifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and  
 in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house  
 of the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 14:20–21)

The telos (or end purpose) of all divine commandments, ordinances, restrictions, and so forth, is to become holy as God is holy:

Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. For

I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore **sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy**: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: **ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy**. (Leviticus 11:43–45)

The creation of humankind in the divine likeness and image ("And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them") is not complete until it includes divine holiness.

In Genesis 17, the Lord charged Abram to "walk before me, and be thou perfect [*tāmīm*]" (Genesis 17:1). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seems to have been paraphrasing both Leviticus 11:45 and Genesis 17:1, when he commanded, "Be ye therefore perfect [*teleioi*], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect [*teleios*]" (Matthew 5:48). The temple dimension of this commandment is comprehended in the use of *teleios* as a technical term "of the mystery religions" of the Greco-Roman world, wherein it "refer[red] to one initiated into mystic rites" and thus connoted a "cult initiate," or one "initiated."<sup>23</sup> However, this term meant much more. It could mean "perfect" in the sense of "being fully developed in a moral sense,"<sup>24</sup> and this is certainly one of the senses intended by Matthew's use of the term. The cognate verb *teleioō* could mean "bring to full measure, fill the measure of" something.<sup>25</sup> The term *teleios* in this sense would mean *someone who has been brought to full measure or someone who has filled the measure of his or her creation*.

This understanding of the concept of "perfect" helps us understand why Jesus adjusted the wording of the "perfection" commandment slightly in his Sermon at the Temple to include himself, when he exhorted, "Therefore I would that ye should **be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect**" (3 Nephi 12:48). When he gave the Sermon on the Mount, he had not filled the measure of his creation as a resurrected, glorified, and fully divinized being. But when

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23. Walter Bauer, Fredrick William Danker, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Fredrick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 995. Hereafter cited as *BDAG*.

24. *BDAG*, 996.

25. *BDAG*, 996.

he gave the Sermon at the Temple, he had been resurrected, glorified, and fully divinized: he had filled the measure of his creation, just as the Father had and he enabled those who follow him do likewise (compare Philippians 2:5–11).

Moroni appears to have had this commandment in mind as he brought the Book of Mormon to a close:

Yea, **come unto Christ, and be perfected in him**, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, **that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.** And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, **that ye become holy, without spot.** (Moroni 10:32–33)

The temple, by architectural and ritual design, helps us “come unto Christ and be perfected in him.” It gives us motivation to “deny [our] selves of all ungodliness” and to “love God with all [our] might, mind, and strength” (compare Deuteronomy 6:5). It helps us keep our baptismal covenant renewed through the sacrament to “always remember him” (3 Nephi 18:7, 11; Moroni 4:3; 5:2; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79). As Elder Sergio R. Vargas has noted, “We also remember Him when we go to the temple—the house of the Lord. Temples give us a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ as the center of the covenant that leads us to eternal life, ‘the greatest of . . . the gifts of God [Doctrine and Covenants 14:7].’”<sup>26</sup> By the “grace of God” we become “perfect in Christ” and eventually “holy, without spot.”

None of this, however, is possible apart from our kindred dead. Joseph Smith introduced baptism and vicarious ordinances on behalf of the dead “as principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. For,” said he, “their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation.” He then paraphrased Hebrews 11:40 in Doctrine and Covenants 128:15, “They

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26. Sergio R. Vargas, “Our Heavenly Guidance System,” General Conference address, April 2025, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/34vargas](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/34vargas).



without us cannot be made perfect — neither can we without our dead be made perfect,” in connection with 1 Corinthians 15:29, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?” (Doctrine and Covenants 128:16), as the scriptural and doctrinal basis for the work for the dead.

A passive form of the Greek verb, *teleiōō*, is the key word in Hebrews: “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not **be made perfect** [*teleiōthōsin*]” (Hebrews 11:39–40). Regarding the mutual dependency of the dead and the living in “be[ing] made perfect,” Joseph Smith further taught:

**For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also;** for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that **a whole and complete and perfect union**, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time. And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven; and a voice of truth out of the earth; **glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great joy. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that bring glad tidings of good things, and that say unto Zion: Behold, thy God reigneth!** As the dews of Carmel, so shall the knowledge of God descend upon them! (Doctrine and Covenants 128:18–19)

These words, dated 6 September 1842 in Nauvoo, offer an additional, profound, and *beautiful* way in which to understand Isaiah’s prophecy about the messenger(s) of glad tidings in Isaiah 52:7–10 and its “mountain”—a prophecy that in Hebrew begins with the words *mah-nā’wû* (“how beautiful”), the source of the name *Nauvoo*. The

greatest doctrinal and theological contributions of the Nauvoo period to the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ all pertain to the inter-related concepts of eternal marriage, eternal families and sealings (further clarified through Wilford Woodruff),<sup>27</sup> and vicarious baptisms and ordinance work for the dead to be carried out in temples. Joseph Smith further taught and testified that these would be the “offering in righteousness” that would fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 3:2–3:

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27. President Woodruff declared:

When I went before the Lord to know who I should be adopted to (we were then being adopted to prophets and apostles,) the Spirit of God said to me, “Have you not a father, who begot you?” “Yes, I have.” “Then why not honor him? Why not be adopted to him?” “Yes,” says I, “that is right.” I was adopted to my father, and should have had my father sealed to his father, and so on back; and the duty that I want every man who presides over a Temple to see performed from this day henceforth and forever, unless the Lord Almighty commands otherwise, is, let every man be adopted to his father. When a man receives the endowments, adopt him to his father; not to Wilford Woodruff, nor to any other man outside the lineage of his fathers. That is the will of God to this people. I want all men who preside over these temples in these mountains of Israel to bear this in mind. What business have I to take away the rights of the lineage of any man? What right has any man to do this? No; I say let every man be adopted to his father; and then you will do exactly what God said when he declared He would send Elijah the prophet in the last days [Malachi 4:5]. Elijah the prophet appeared unto Joseph Smith and told him that the day had come when this principle must be carried out [Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16]. Joseph Smith did not live long enough to enter any further upon these things. His soul was wound up with this work before he was martyred for the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ. He told us that there must be a welding link of all dispensations and of the work of God from one generation to another. This was upon his mind more than most any other subject that was given to him. In my prayers the Lord revealed to me, that it was my duty to say to all Israel to carry this principle out, and in fulfillment of that revelation I lay it before this people. I say to all men who are laboring in these temples, carry out this principle, and then we will make one step in advance of what we have had before.

Wilford Woodruff, “Discourse 1894–04–08,” *The Wilford Woodruff Papers* (p.3), [wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/documents/f2fe250d-7f7a-493c-a191-fc02c233ea95/page/757b7959-4172-4556-916a-c370b91806f2](http://wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/documents/f2fe250d-7f7a-493c-a191-fc02c233ea95/page/757b7959-4172-4556-916a-c370b91806f2). On the gradual unfolding understanding of the eternal family, see R. Devan Jensen, Michael A. Goodman, and Barbara Morgan Gardner, “‘Line Upon Line’: Joseph Smith’s Growing Understanding of the Eternal Family,” *Religious Educator* 20, no. 1 (2019): 34–59, [rsc.byu.edu/vol-20-no-1-2019/line-upon-line-joseph-smiths-growing-understanding-eternal-family](http://rsc.byu.edu/vol-20-no-1-2019/line-upon-line-joseph-smiths-growing-understanding-eternal-family).

Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand; and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance. (Doctrine and Covenants 128:24)

Bishop Gérald Caussé helps us see the value of this “offering”: “The loving service we offer in holy temples reminds us that the Savior’s grace extends beyond this life. In the life to come, we may be given new opportunities to accomplish what we could not do in this mortal life.”<sup>28</sup>

All of this underscores the reality that the latter-day temple, perhaps even more than the ancient temple, is especially designed “for the perfecting [*ton katartismōn*] of the saints . . . [*tōn hagiōn*, “holy ones”]: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man** [*andra teleion*], **unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**” (Ephesians 4:12–13).

Ascending into the mountain-temples of the Lord enables the Latter-day Saints to unite families in increasingly sanctified and “perfect union[s]” until the time comes that the whole human family becomes “a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories” in Christ. The day of the Lord’s Second Coming — the day that will “leave” the wicked “neither root nor branch” is nearer with each passing second (Malachi 4:1; 3 Nephi 25:1; Doctrine and Covenants 133:64; Joseph Smith — History 1:37). We must be prepared to “abide the day” (Malachi 3:2; 3 Nephi 24:2; Doctrine and Covenants 35:21; 38:8; 45:57; 61:39; 128:24).

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28. Gérald Caussé, “Compensating Blessings,” General Conference address, April 2025, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/44causse](https://churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/44causse).

## Conclusion

If we feel unworthy to ascend into the mountain of the Lord and worship in his house, we need to remember that Jesus Christ “hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12). None of us have any worthiness *of ourselves*—only in him. Sister Tamara W. Runia related what she has learned through experience: “I’ve learned that if you wait until you’re clean enough or perfect enough to go to the Savior, you’ve missed the whole point!”<sup>29</sup> If we will ascend and worship in the temple, we will receive the personal revelation, personal instruction, and divine correction that we need to help us more fully come unto Christ. He will also console us there and endow us with the strength to endure, and we will become more holy.

Citing the rescues of the Willie and Martin handcart companies, whose harrowing and hallowing overland journeys are commemorated in the art of the Casper Wyoming Temple, Quentin L. Cook declared, “The temple provides a continuing remembrance of the Savior’s Atonement and what it overcomes. And, even more important, temple attendance allows us to provide a spiritual rescue for our deceased loved ones and more distant ancestors.”<sup>30</sup> (Thinking of five direct ancestors<sup>31</sup> who were in the Martin handcart company made Elder Cook’s message even more personal and poignant.)

Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37 records that Jesus forewarned, “And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived, for the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the

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29. Tamara W. Runia, “Your Repentance Doesn’t Burden Christ; It Brightens His Joy,” General Conference address, April 2025, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/43runia](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/43runia).

30. Quentin L. Cook, “The Atonement of Jesus Christ Provides the Ultimate Rescue,” General Conference address, April 2025, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/16cook](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/16cook).

31. Mary (“Wee Granny”) Murray (Murdoch), John Briggs, Ruth Butterworth (Briggs), Eliza Briggs (Stratton), and George Peden Waugh. Murdoch died at Chimney Rock in Nebraska, only a few days short of age 72. Briggs died at age 44 at Devil’s Gate in Wyoming (two of his children also died due to the conditions there). John’s wife, Ruth, died nearly four years later. Their daughter, Eliza, despite having part of a foot frozen off, lived to marry and have a large family before dying due to complications from childbirth in 1871. Waugh, who had previously settled his daughter and granddaughter in Utah after an earlier overland journey to Utah, joined the Martin handcart company and assisted it on its westward journey upon his return from a mission to Canada and the British Isles. He died near the mouth of Emigration Canyon on 29 November 1856, at age 65.

great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Certainly, this refers to meaningful scripture study and heeding the words of living prophets. Nevertheless, an important additional element in treasuring up the Lord’s “word,” is by going to the temple to be taught in his ways and to receive personal revelation that will enable us to walk in his paths (see Isaiah 2:2–3; 2 Nephi 12:2–3). We can do as Moses, Isaiah, Nephi, Jacob, and the Savior himself did. As Elder Dale G. Renlund recently taught, “We can also avoid deception by worshipping regularly in the temple. This helps us maintain an eternal perspective and protects us from influences that might distract or divert us from the covenant path.”<sup>32</sup>

At the conclusion of the October 2018 General Conference, President Russell M. Nelson pleaded with the Latter-day Saints to make temple worship a priority:

My dear brothers and sisters, the assaults of the adversary are increasing exponentially, in intensity and in variety. Our need to be in the temple on a regular basis has never been greater. I plead with you to take a prayerful look at how you spend your time. Invest time in your future and in that of your family. If you have reasonable access to a temple, I urge you to find a way to make an appointment regularly with the Lord—to be in His holy house—then keep that appointment with exactness and joy. I promise you that the Lord will bring the miracles He knows you need as you make sacrifices to serve and worship in His temples.<sup>33</sup>

Many of us—the present writer most certainly included—will do well to respond more often, more promptly, and more affirmatively to the Lord’s summons, “Arise, and get thee into the mountain” (1 Nephi 17:7) or “Get thou up into the temple” (Jacob 2:11). We should do so remembering, as Sister Runia recently reminded us, that “heaven isn’t for people who’ve been perfect; it’s for people who’ve been forgiven, who choose Christ again and again.”<sup>34</sup> Worshipping in the temple will

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32. Dale G. Renlund, “Personal Preparation to Meet the Savior,” General Conference address, April 2025, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/25renlund](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2025/04/25renlund).

33. Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints,” General Conference address, October 2018, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/10/becoming-exemplary-latter-day-saints](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2018/10/becoming-exemplary-latter-day-saints).

34. Runia, “Your Repentance Doesn’t Burden Christ.”

keep us in remembrance of him and of that fact. The Lord, through his living prophet, has promised us miracles. The greatest miracle might be our individual and collective sanctification and eventual perfection in Christ and our being prepared to meet him when he comes. As Elder Vargas testified, “We will stand as temples — holy, firm, and constant. We will weather the storms, and we will make it home, enduring to the end and rejoicing to the end.”<sup>35</sup> As Jude testified, Jesus Christ is the one “that is able to keep [us] from falling, and to present [us] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24). May we trust this promise more perfectly.



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35. Vargas, “Our Heavenly Guidance Systems.”





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