

THE TEMPLE IN ZION

“Whenever I have a people who are mine, I command them to build a house, a holy habitation, a sacred place where my presence can dwell, or where the Holy Spirit of Promise can minister, because it is in such a place that it has been ordained to recover you, establishing by my word and my oath your marriages, and endow people with knowledge from on high that will unfold to you the mysteries of godliness, instruct you in my ways, that you may walk in my path. And all the outcasts of Israel will I gather to my house, and the jealousy of Ephraim and Judah will end; Ephraim will not envy Judah and Judah will not provoke Ephraim.”¹

The Lord always intended the restoration to be a *full* return of the religion as practiced and taught by Adam; culminate in gathering a remnant of the tribes of Israel to the New Jerusalem in the everlasting hills² in order to be crowned with the fullness of the priesthood in a temple which God has personally accepted and where His presence dwells.³ The martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith left the restoration in an incomplete state that lacked the requirements to fully prepare for the return of the Savior in glory.⁴

On September 3, 2017, the Lord set his hand again and began the final stages of finishing the work that Joseph began. He offered an authorized covenant to anyone on earth willing to accept it (initially focused among the Gentiles) and thereby established again a group of people whom He could call His own.⁵ Having a “people who are mine” put in place a required precursor to receiving a command to build His house---a physical temple. As of this writing (October 2021), the covenant people of the Lord await that command but know that it is requisite to fulfill the Lord’s prophecies regarding Zion and therefore, imminent.

When the command comes, the completion of the temple to the capstone and the return of the seals of the Holy Order upon Israel will make all things ready for the Messiah to come to it.⁶ This will allow the Lord to bring about the fulsome restoration of the family of God. In other words, to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. God’s kingdom consists of His family; those whom He has personally claimed as His sons and daughters.⁷ The government of this kingdom is familial in nature, also. The temple provides the required sacred space to enable God to come to dwell with His people whenever He has a family on earth,⁸ and as such, will be the central feature of the New Jerusalem. Its existence is indispensable. Denver Snuffer has taught, “If we don’t have

¹ Answer to Prayer for Covenant T&C 157:41

² T&C 58:3

³ T&C 141:10

⁴ “Until a proper temple is built for the Lord to dwell within, the fulness of the priesthood has been restored, and a holy city is gathered, the restoration begun by Joseph is unfinished.” (Denver Snuffer, *Christian Restoration Continues: 3 Great Things Left Undone*, Transcript, p. 2)

⁵ T&C 156, 157, 158

⁶ Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith (TPJS) p. 340

⁷ “God alone establishes his house [family] and that, too, by acknowledging who his sons and daughters are.” (Denver Snuffer, *New Jerusalem*, Podcast, Episode 22, Transcript)

⁸ Denver Snuffer, *Temple*, Part 5, Podcast

the tabernacle of God where He comes to dwell with His people (which He does when He has a family on earth), then the prophecies are not going to be fulfilled.”⁹

Isaiah and Micah both prophesied:

“...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 and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”¹⁰

“Mountain of the Lord’s house” is a phrase used to signify the house of God, or a temple.

“The mountain is nature’s symbol of the ascent to God. The climb represents repentance and purification of the soul. When a person stands upon the top of the mountain, she appears to be part of heaven itself and no longer earthbound. Her profile is with the sky, symbolizing the completion of the ascent back to God.”¹¹

While an earthly mountain serves the Lord’s purposes for required sacred space, whenever there is a group of people under covenant with God, an actual physical temple or tabernacle is required to be built.

In this prophecy, the “nations that shall flow unto it” (this temple) are not speaking of earthly nations or countries as we commonly conclude. “Nations” has reference to the twelve tribes of Israel and righteous individuals throughout the world who possess the blood of Israel (though this may still be unknown to them) who will yet come to Ephraim in the “utmost bounds of the everlasting hills” to be grafted into the mother tree...or family of God.¹² This grafting requires an accepted temple and will be done by covenant, rite and ordinance.

Isaiah and Micah further elaborate that the tribes of Israel will come to Zion, to the temple, to be taught of the Lord’s ways and how to walk in His paths. Isaiah also declares the temple will be an “ensign” to which the house of Israel gathers.¹³ In elaborating upon this, Denver Snuffer explains the following:

“The ensign is godly, holy, edifying, instructive, revelatory, filled with light and redemptive.”¹⁴ It will allow those who enter to obtain knowledge and the promise of the right to ascend to God’s presence in eternity if they walk the path shown to them. The path is two-fold. First, because the paths of God lie in the heavens,¹⁵ the ensign instructs the initiate in the heavens, and

⁹ Denver Snuffer, Abraham, Part 4, Podcast

¹⁰ Old Covenants (OC) Genesis 12:19,29 OC Micah 1:9

¹¹ Denver Snuffer, “How Beautiful Upon the Mountains,” Blog Post, March 4, 2010

¹² Denver Snuffer, Zion’s Return, Par1, Podcast

¹³ OC Isaiah 5:5

¹⁴ Denver Snuffer, The Temple, Part 5, Podcast

¹⁵ Denver Snuffer, *ibid.*

bestows a knowledge of the stars and planets as understood by Abraham and the fathers.¹⁶ It is a zodiacal...or a depiction of the heavens themselves and endows the initiate with required knowledge to walk in the paths of God.¹⁷ This is a literal path through the cosmos to return to the throne of God.

The second manner in which the ensign will teach the initiate how to walk in the Lord's ways and paths is by learning to actually walk the path, or in "the way" that Christ walked. Snuffer explains some of what Joseph Smith was trying to do with the information he revealed and put together in a ceremony used on a few initiates before his death. Though Joseph never implemented this ceremony in a *completed temple*, we can learn more about what is meant by learning to 'walk in the paths of God' through Snuffer's insight into Joseph's intent.

*"Joseph Smith constructed in a ceremony, in a ritual form, the idea of beginning a walk back in which you encountered sentinels along the way, and you demonstrated by the life you have lived that you are in possession of certain standards of conduct, so that eventually you could arrive at the point where you were able to converse with the Lord through the veil. And then having proven yourself true and faithful in all things, you are permitted to enter into the presence of the Lord... What Joseph Smith did was he lived that journey. He accomplished that walk. He made that pathway back to conversing with the Lord through the veil and then entering into the Lord's presence. He encountered those that were opposed to the walk; he encountered those that were encouraging of the walk... That was what Joseph Smith lived. That was what he described the Restoration as having included. That was what he attempted to turn into a ritual to be housed in a temple, so that everyone in the ceremony could experience the same kind of angelic ministrants coming and talking to you and giving to you the obligation to live a higher life, and then a higher life still, and then yet another higher standard of conduct, until at last you're purified sufficiently to come and embrace the Lord through the veil, and upon embracing Him through the veil receive from Him not a name, but a seven-fold blessing that stretches from time into eternity."*¹⁸

Before his death Joseph Smith plainly taught through the King Follett Discourse that man could become gods. "Further, he asserted that God was once a man that had progressed to godhood."¹⁹ The progression to godhood consists of becoming a "saved being." Joseph revealed that Christ is the prototype of a saved being and became such by walking the precise path laid out by His Father in order to attain to "the resurrection" through a specific process of progression on Jacob's ladder.²⁰ So, likewise, exists the potential for each of us to become a "saved being." But the path, or course, is set and modeled by Jesus Christ.

¹⁶ T&C 145 Abraham 2:4

¹⁷ Denver Snuffer, The Temple, Part 5, Podcast "The ensign prophesied had reference to a zodiacal, a constellation, a depiction of the heavens themselves. So when an ensign is reared, it's going to tell you about how to walk in the paths of God."

¹⁸ Denver Snuffer, Temple, Podcast #36

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ T&C 110 Lectures on Faith, Lecture Seventh

To walk this path and become a “saved being” requires one to ascend to the throne of God. Denver Snuffer explained in “Why A Temple” that this ascent is accomplished in two ways: 1) a temporary ascent that redeems the individual and secures a covenant; and 2) a gradual “eternal” ascent by degrees over eons of time that results in exaltation. This second, gradual ascent is the climb up Jacob’s Ladder through levels of progression to become a saved being, precisely like Christ.

Below is a lengthy but clarifying excerpt from the same blog post:

“[The second gradual form of ascent] cannot happen in mortality, but is accomplished over time. It requires attaining to the resurrection, meaning that death has no claim on you because you merit eternal life. This is what Christ gained in His life and through His sacrifice here. We are dependent upon His merits to overcome death. But we will have to attain the same thing before we finish the second form of ascent. Christ is the “prototype of the saved man” and we must “be precisely what he is and nothing else” or not be saved according to the Lectures on Faith.

The first, temporary ascent, is required to even hope to make the gradual eternal ascent and is accomplished while in the flesh. By this, one is “caught up,” but then returned to the world. This temporary ascent secures for the individual the promise (covenant) from God of being permitted to make the gradual eternal ascent on Jacob’s Ladder.

For mortals, the first form of ascent is possible. The scriptures, in particular the Book of Mormon, contain accounts of those who have ascended to God’s presence and overcome the fall of mankind...The reality is that most people, even very good believing people whose lives are filled with Christian charity and love for their fellow man, are not going to ascend even temporarily while they live in this fallen world...In this fallen world, the great challenge is to lay hold of the covenant right to ascend to God’s throne. (Rev. 3:20-21.) It is true that God is no respecter of persons and everyone CAN, but the truth is that very few will obtain the covenant while in the flesh.

In His mercy, God has made provisions for all people. He loves all mankind equally, has planned for allowing those good and believing people who will not qualify in their own right to ascend the “mountain of the Lord” into His presence to receive it through more ordinary means. God’s purposes cannot be defeated, even by man’s weakness. God has other means to qualify people to be His covenant family.

The purpose of a temple (meaning an actual temple commissioned, ordered, blessed, accepted and visited with His presence) is to substitute for the temporary ascent of a mortal into God’s presence. A real temple becomes “Holy Ground” and the means for making available to faithful people in every state of belief and hope the opportunity to receive, by authorized means, the same covenant, obligation, association, expectation and sealing through an authorized and binding arrangement in sacred space. This is the same thing they can receive from God directly if they enter into His presence while still in the flesh. In effect, the temple becomes an extension of heaven...

*The temple has only one real purpose: To convey God's promise to exalt those who experience it; provided they abide the conditions for exaltation. It portrays the real, second eternal-form of ascent in a way that gives the initiate a promise that if they walk in the path shown to them they will arrive at the Throne of God in the afterlife."*²¹

Malachi also adds to our understanding of the temple's importance.

*"For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, said the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."*²²

These verses have everything to do with the work underway to ultimately establish Zion and build a temple that is accepted by the Lord. The Fathers spoken of by Malachi are an unbroken line of Patriarchs beginning with Adam and descending down in a father to birth-right son descent down through Shem. After generations of apostasy, this order continued through a process of "adoption" beginning with Abraham and descending through Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph and Ephraim. These men held priesthood that was referred to in short as The Holy Order and made them Sons of God; bestowed rites and knowledge upon them that enabled them to enter back into the presence of the Lord while in the flesh, be redeemed from the fall and become members of God's family with a right of dominion. Adam prophesied that in the last days, *this same priesthood* and same order would be found again on the earth.

Elaboration of Adam's prophecy was given in a T&C section in February of 2017.

*"Now this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also — or in other words, at the end of the world, the final dispensation will restore again the pattern of the first, or Adam's, dispensation."*²³

The priesthood held by Adam and Eve and the religion practiced by them must be returned in its fullness during the final dispensation preceding Christ's return. In the beginning Adam dwelt in the presence of God and therefore represents a "fullness." He received instructions and spoke to God face to face. He dwelt in a temple setting called Eden, from which he was cast out, but it was a temple enjoying the presence of God.²⁴ After the fall, the gospel was taught to Adam and Eve by messengers sent from God. They were given priesthood and associated rites that included making them a son and daughter of God and included knowledge that enabled them to

²¹ Denver Snuffer, "Why A Temple?", Blog Post, April 29, 2016

²² T&C Joseph Smith History 3:4

²³ T&C 154:21

²⁴ T&C Glossary of Terms: "Elias, Elijah, Messiah"

enter back into the presence of the Lord while in the flesh and be redeemed from the fall. The priesthood they received establishes the order of the government of the family of God and has the right of dominion over the earth and is this same priesthood that was prophesied by Adam to return at the end of the world. For ease, we refer to it as the Holy Order.

It is this priesthood and the associated knowledge, rites, powers, promises and blessings that is known as the fulness of the gospel, or the fulness of the priesthood. This fulness holds the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God whereby they can behold the face of God and live.²⁵

Joseph Smith was among those select individuals who have lived on earth that have ever obtained this priesthood by the hand of God. He understood that the temple was required in order to teach the people about this priesthood and likewise connect them to God's family.

*“Go and finish the temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood.”*²⁶

When the Lord commanded that the Nauvoo temple be built He reminded the saints:

*“For therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained, that you may receive honor and glory.”*²⁷

*“‘Honor’ being the promise from God into the afterlife respecting what you can expect to receive from God as an oath and as a covenant. ‘Glory’ being intelligence or knowledge and understanding, light and truth, things that were not comprehended but which God hoped to have the saints at that point comprehend.”*²⁸

It will be through the temple that all the rites, ordinances, knowledge and understanding pertaining to this Holy Order is bestowed by heaven through the Holy Spirit of Promise unto those willing to give heed to the message sent from heaven to become the sons and daughters of God by adoption. This is the honor and glory Joseph referred to.

The temple is to be the place on earth where couples can be sealed in an unbroken chain into the family of God. The reconnection is ordinance based and will require a temple where God has come and accepted it.²⁹ These sealings of couples into the family of God by the Law of Adoption is the Spirit of Elijah prophesied and required to return to the earth by Malachi.

²⁵ T&C 82:1-14

²⁶ TPJS p. 322

²⁷ T&C 141:11

²⁸ Denver Snuffer, Temple, Part 3, Podcast #35, September 16, 2018

²⁹ Ibid.

Further understanding of the Spirit of Elijah and how it relates to the coming temple in Zion, what is meant by Saviors on Mount Zion and the chiastic nature of God's plan at the beginning and the end of the world can be found by studying the following references:

- T&C Glossary of Terms: "Elias, Elijah, Messiah"
- Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith p. 336-340
- T&C Glossary of Terms: "Hearts Turned to the Fathers"
- Denver Snuffer, "Elijah Reconsidered," October 14, 2011

Another important concept to understand regarding the prophesied temple is its role in the reorientation and central nature of the Zion society.

The temple will create the culture upon which Zion will exist. It will be the law which will govern the behavior of Zion. It will be the mechanism for reorienting society in Zion, providing legal, cultural and covenant foundations for the society.³⁰

It will also be the place of conferences, festivals and feasts.³¹

"Feasts, and the returning of the feasts, belong in the house of God as part of that renewal—my understanding is that the feasts that were incorporated into the Law of Moses were a preservation, in a Mosaic law format, of feasts that pre-existed the Law of Moses. The Fall Harvest, the Barley Festival—these things preceded, they antedated, the Law of Moses. They were handed down as part of the original religion, or at least some of them were. Meaning that they go back to the era of the first Fathers. Anything that reckons from the first Fathers—those to whom our hearts are to turn—that religious practice is to return and to be celebrated in the house of the Lord at the end.

The only one that existed from the days of Adam to Noah to Abraham that got added, that will be observed, is the Passover. Because the Passover was added as an additional testimony, given in the days of Moses, to point forward specifically to the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb (whose blood would save Israel), with a command that it got preserved. So even though it got added and wasn't part of that original, the addition at the time of the Passover itself was an event symbolizing liberation from the world, coming out from under the bondage of Egypt (which is what its last-days people are supposed to ultimately achieve), coming out from under the influence of the head of gold and the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the modern-day kingdoms—being liberated from all of that. And at the same time, being liberated as a consequence of the blood of the Lamb. So the addition of the Paschal Lamb, and that feast, is going to stand at the renewal.

The rest of the feasts of Moses, only insofar as they were part of what was from Adam to Noah, and only in the form that was celebrated during that time period, will be preserved and observed, and observed in the format that the first Fathers observed it—which may differ,

³⁰ Denver Snuffer, "Why a Temple?" Blog Post, April 29, 2016

³¹ Denver Snuffer, Temple, Part 4, Podcast, September 19, 2018

*perhaps markedly, but perhaps not you know, altogether, from the way that the Law of Moses had their festivals.”*³²

Finally, the requirement of a temple whenever God has a covenant people means that financial preparations must also occur in order to fulfill the Lord’s command. The Lord told Joseph Smith:

“Verily I say unto you that it is my will that a house should be built unto me in the land of Zion like unto the pattern which I have given you. Yea, let it be built speedily by the tithing of my people. Behold, this is the tithing and the sacrifice which I, the Lord, require at their hands, that there may be a house built unto me for the salvation of Zion...”

To this end, in December of 2016, it was announced that a group of three women had organized a Temple Fund for the necessary financial preparation in the gathering of excess tithing funds. While tithing funds are to be used for the poor among the individual fellowships as they see fit by common consent, the excess is to be used for the funding of the coming temple.³³ Individuals are obligated to care for the needs of their families as an obligation and command from the Lord. The funding of the temple is to come from our abundance---that which we have after all our family obligations and needs are met and the assistance of the poor in our individual fellowships.

The Temple Fund is the only “general” fund that exists within the established covenant people at this time.³⁴ All funds are being gathered and a meticulous record kept of each donation. Each donation is considered a gift without financial benefit (no tax write-off) or expectation of any participation or personal benefit to ever come to the giver. When the time comes that a command is given and construction begins, a record will be kept of each expenditure. All gifts and expenditures will become transparent at the conclusion of the project.³⁵ At the time of this writing (October 2021) all gifts to the Temple Fund have been 100% unused.

You can find more on the Temple Fund at thetemplefund.net

All gifts are given because it is the hope of each giver and the belief of those who have entered into the covenant to participate in the fulfillment of God’s promise:

*“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 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...”*³⁶

³² Denver Snuffer, “Temple Fund,” Blog Post, December 28, 2016; “Temple Fund Website,” December 29, 2016

³³ Denver Snuffer, “Things to Keep Us Awake at Night,” p. 14, March 19, 2017

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 15

³⁶ T&C 96:5