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“My Days” of Temples and Technology

*These are your days to more fully turn
your hearts to your ancestors and bring saving
ordinances to millions within your families.*

Have you ever wondered why you were sent to earth now rather than at a different time in history? What would it have been like to stand by the side of Moses or to be a friend of Mary, the mother of Jesus? How about living in Nauvoo when the Prophet Joseph walked the streets, or joining other teenagers as they pulled and pushed their handcarts a thousand miles to a new home in the Salt Lake Valley?

Sometimes we look at former days or different places and ask, “Why not me? Why am I here in this place, and why now?”





I want to challenge each of you to set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple.

You are not the first to wonder about the time and place of your life. A prophet living in the Americas asked the same questions. His name was Nephi—not the Nephi in the beginning of the Book of Mormon but Nephi the son of Helaman the second and the great-grandson of the prophet Alma the Younger.

In the world in which Nephi lived, money, power, and popularity were more important than what was right. Many of the people openly disregarded the commandments. They lied, took what was not theirs, and ignored the law of chastity. Those who kept the commandments were ridiculed and mistreated (see Helaman 7:4–5, 21; 8:2, 5, 7–8).

“When Nephi saw [these things], his heart was swollen with sorrow . . . and he [exclaimed] in the agony of his soul:

“Oh, that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem, that I could have joyed with him in the promised land; then were his people easy to be entreated, firm to keep the commandments of God, and slow to be led to do iniquity; and they were quick to

hearken unto the words of the Lord—

“Yea, if my days could have been in those days, then would my soul have had joy in the righteousness of my brethren” (Helaman 7:6–8).

Nephi was an amazing prophet of God, yet for a moment he wondered why he was living on the earth during *his* time. He knew that the Savior was to come to earth in the not-too-distant future, but for the moment, it appears that the beautiful events just around the corner seemed to elude him.

In only 20 years from the time he spoke, a night would pass without darkness and Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Within 55 years, the Savior, resurrected and glorified, would descend out of heaven to the Saints in the land Bountiful. Nephi’s son would be there, and the Savior would address him personally and ordain him as one of the twelve disciples selected in the Western Hemisphere. We could suppose that Nephi’s daughters and sons and granddaughters and grandsons were among the 2,500 Saints whom Christ invited one by one to come forward and personally feel the

prints of the nails in His hands and feet. It would not be difficult to believe that Nephi's great-grandchildren were among those little children that the Savior blessed one by one and who were encircled with fire and ministered to by angels. Had Nephi clearly seen the future of his righteous family and friends, surely he would not have wanted to alter the time of his mortality.

Gratefully, Nephi remained righteous, taught the people with courage, worked mighty miracles, and along with the prophet Samuel prophesied of the imminent coming of the Savior. The Lord with His own words promised He would bless Nephi forever (see Helaman 10–11; 16).

Although he had wondered about his time and place, he concluded with very powerful words: “Behold, . . . these are my days” (Helaman 7:9).

My beloved young brothers and sisters, these are your days. You have been chosen to live in the final years preceding the Savior's

return to earth. We do not know the exact day or year of His coming, but we can readily see the signs that precede His coming.¹

One day, just as Nephi came to see his vital place in preparing for the Savior's coming to the Nephites, we will look back and see the glorious blessing that was ours to live in our time as we prepare the world for the Savior's return. Let us see beyond the difficulties and the obstacles confronting us to our important purposes and to the glorious days ahead. Let us each echo Nephi's words: “These are my days.”

With these being your days, what is the Lord asking of you? First, you are to take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ. Learn of Him and of His love and unspeakable goodness to you and determine that you will always keep His commandments. You are to follow the Savior, love God, and serve those around you. All of us can have the privilege of living our lives as disciples of Christ, being led by His Spirit and lifting those around us.



A Sacred Duty

Some experiences are saved for specific generations. I want to talk about one of your sacred duties that has never quite been the same for any previous generation.

It has been only a few years that temples have become available throughout the world. With the dedication of the Phoenix Arizona Temple on November 16, 2014, we now have 144 operating temples in the world. When I was young, there were 13 temples in the world.

My wife, Sister Kathy Andersen, grew up in the state of Florida, USA. When she was five years old, her parents brought their family to the temple to be sealed together forever. The trip required a six-day, 2,500-mile (4,023 km) drive across the United States to the Salt Lake Temple. Today there are 47 temples that are closer to her Florida home than the Salt Lake Temple.

President Thomas S. Monson has encouraged the youth of the Church to visit the temples often to do baptisms for the dead.

He said: “Now, my young friends who are in your teenage years, always have the temple in your sights. Do nothing which will keep you from entering its doors and partaking of the sacred and eternal blessings there. I commend those of you who already go to the temple regularly to perform baptisms for the dead, arising in the very early hours of the morning so you can participate in such baptisms before school begins. I can think of no better way to start a day.”²

You have responded to the Lord’s prophet, and each year millions on the other side of the veil are given the opportunity to accept their baptism. No generation that has ever lived on this earth has had so great a privilege as you have to enter the doors of the Lord’s house and assist in the salvation of those who have come before.

As you well know, there is a vital *first* step that allows us to accomplish the sacred work of the temple. We are to search out and find those members of our families who came before us.

The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of this work as a “welding link” connecting families together from one generation to another (D&C 128:18).





In Moroni's first visit to the Prophet Joseph Smith, he instructed Joseph that "the hearts of the children [would] turn to their fathers" (D&C 2:2). The Prophet Joseph later explained that Church members were to become "saviors on Mount Zion. . . . But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion?" he asked. "By building their temples . . . and going forth and receiving all the ordinances . . . in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, . . . and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers."³

The Prophet Joseph spoke of this work as "a welding link" connecting families together from one generation to another (D&C 128:18). The physical welding link in Joseph's day was created by softening and melting two pieces of metal in a fiery oven, joining them together while they were still malleable, and then letting them cool and harden into an unbreakable chain. The importance of the powerful, spiritual welding that binds us all together forever is stated clearly in the scriptures: "We without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they

without us be made perfect" (D&C 128:18).

In the past this work of finding family names, documenting them, and bringing them to the temple was principally the work of older members of the Church. Why was that? Because it required enormous time and effort. It would often begin with large reels containing microfilmed records. It meant painstaking attention to dates and places, thick historical books with limited availability, and at times remote country cemeteries.

Our ability to find our ancestors online has emerged only in the past few years, with tremendous advancements in the past few months. The months ahead will bring even more availability.

While your generation has become extremely devoted to visiting the temple, in the months and years ahead you will be just as outstanding in finding and bringing names to the temple with you.

I want to challenge each of you to set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple. (To begin the challenge, visit



When we see ourselves in perspective of our family, those who came before us and those who come after us, we realize how we are part of a wonderful link that connects us all together.

templechallenge.lds.org.) There is something powerful in searching out those who need temple ordinances, learning who they are, and then being part of their receiving these sacred ordinances. This is how you become “saviors on Mount Zion” (see Obadiah 1:21 and D&C 103:9). There is a joy and satisfaction that is understood only through spiritual feelings. We are linked to our ancestors forever.

Some of our families have been in the Church for many generations, and much of our direct ancestors’ work in the temple has been done. In 2013, for the first time, I could see my ancestors in a fan chart online, including my great-grandfather Niels Andersen, after whom I was named, and my great-great-grandfather Moroni Stocks, the first family member to be named for a Book of Mormon prophet. I was able to see photos of dozens of my family members online. Do you know what your great-grandparents looked like?

Finding Our Cousins

If your chart is not as complete as mine, your first responsibility is to fill it in as best

you can. More and more information is becoming available each month.

If your chart is as complete as mine, there is still very important work for you to do. This work goes on and on. It will not be complete even when the Savior returns. When our chart appears complete, we help others find those in their lines and we find those closely related to those on our family tree. We call it “finding our cousins.”

How do we find our cousins? In two ways.

First, we go to our chart, and we find those closely related to our great-great-great-grandmothers or grandfathers. For example, I might go up my chart to Grandma Frances Bowen Evans and then look at the families of Grandma Evans’s brothers and sisters. She had five sisters and two brothers. In this way, I can find my cousins.

The second way to find our cousins is to help those around us. We begin with the special booklet *My Family*. If your family is new to family history, fill out the booklet. Or if your tree looks like mine, take the booklet to a new member or someone who hasn’t

been quite as involved in the Church as your family has been and help them search out their family. As you do so, you will help them bring others to the temple. These are your brothers and sisters, but we also like to call them your “cousins.”

We are all brothers and sisters in our Father’s family. Our own families are not randomly thrown together. President Monson has said, “We discover something about ourselves when we learn about our ancestors.”⁴

When we see ourselves in perspective of our family, those who came before us and those who come after us, we realize how we are part of a wonderful link that connects us all together. As we search them out and take their names to the temple, we bring to them something they cannot obtain without us. In doing so, we are connected to them, and the Lord through His Spirit confirms to our soul the eternal importance of what we are doing.

President Monson said, “Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings.”⁵

I add to his words that blessings and power from on high await our family members who have gone before us as they accept the ordinances we perform for them in the holy temples. They have finished their mortality, but they continue to live. We become “saviors on Mount Zion” and are bound together with them forever.

You were born in a time of temples and technology. These are your days to more fully turn your hearts to your fathers.

As you contribute to this sacred work, your knowledge and faith in the Savior will

increase and you will receive a more certain witness that life continues beyond the veil. You will receive protection against the temptations that surround you, and you will prepare yourself and the world you live in for the Second Coming of the Savior.

I know that life continues beyond the veil. I testify that Jesus is the Christ. He is our Savior and Redeemer. He lives. His glorious Atonement allows these ordinances in the temple to last forever. ■

From an address, “Find Our Cousins,” delivered at the Family Discovery Day devotional for youth in conjunction with the RootsTech 2014 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Feb. 8, 2014. To learn more, visit lds.org/go/Andersen215. To watch this year’s addresses on February 14, visit lds.org/discoverfamily.

NOTES

1. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 7–10.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 93.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 473.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 21.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—A Beacon to the World,” 92.

FINDING YOUR COUSINS

Does your family tree appear full? Find more cousins by following these steps: (1) Sign in to FamilySearch.org and click “Family Tree.” Select the “Fan Chart” view. (2) Hover your mouse over a family member’s name on the outer ring of the fan and click the small fan icon, placing that person in the center. (3) Change the view to descendency and then click to show four generations. (4) Look for temple icons that indicate ordinances may be needed for the displayed cousin. If prompted by FamilySearch, check for duplicate names. (5) Work your way around the outer ring of your fan chart and, when finished, move back one generation and repeat the previous steps.