

# THESE ARE YOUR DAYS

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



**By Elder Neil L. Andersen**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

**H**ave 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?” (See Helaman 7:6–8.)

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.<sup>1</sup>

One day, 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.

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.

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.”<sup>2</sup>

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 (see D&C 2:2; 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 just recently. The near future 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.



Preston England Temple



## YOUTH TEMPLE CHALLENGE

Set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple.

### An Invitation to 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 [templechallenge.lds.org](http://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-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.”

To see how this works, see a short video of “Finding Our Cousins: The Eberts’ Experience” at [lds.org/go/EbertNE2](https://lds.org/go/EbertNE2).

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.”<sup>3</sup>

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.”<sup>4</sup>

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.

These are your days. You were born in a time of temples and technology. These are your days to more fully turn your hearts to your fathers and bring saving ordinances to millions within your families. These are your days to prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior.

As you contribute to this sacred work, your knowledge

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### Youth Temple Challenge and Social Media

Join in the social media campaign based on Elder Andersen’s invitation to youth. See what’s been happening with other youth and add your own experiences using [#TempleChallenge](https://twitter.com/TempleChallenge).

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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. **NE**

*From the address “Find Our Cousins!” given at the Family Discovery Day devotional for youth at the RootsTech 2014 Family History Conference, Feb. 8, 2014; see [lds.org/go/cousinsNE2](https://lds.org/go/cousinsNE2).*

#### NOTES

1. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 7–10.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 93.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 21.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—A Beacon to the World,” 92.

## FINDING YOUR COUSINS

### Just Getting Started?

Fill out the booklet *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together* and then enter the details at [FamilySearch.org](https://FamilySearch.org). A ward or branch family history consultant can help you.

### Does Your Family Tree Appear Full?

1. Sign in to [FamilySearch.org](https://FamilySearch.org) with your LDS Account and click “Family Tree.” Select the “Fan Chart” view.
2. Hover over a family member’s name on the outer ring and click the small fan icon, placing that person in the center.
3. Change the view to “Descendancy” 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.