

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • APRIL 2013

Ensign

A photograph of a stone wall with a small arched opening, surrounded by green plants and red flowers. The wall is made of light-colored, rough-hewn stones. The archway is built with smoother, rectangular stones. Green vines and leaves are climbing over the wall, and there are several red flowers, possibly geraniums, in the foreground and background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**Jesus Christ: Redeemer
and Exemplar, pp. 32, 40**

Equal Partnership in Marriage, p. 18

Loved Back into Activity, p. 30

**Comforting Doctrine of
the Resurrection, p. 50**



"The Light of Christ is that divine power or influence that emanates from God through Jesus Christ. It gives light and life to all things."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind," *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 15.

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Front: Photo illustration by Tim Taggart © IRI. Back: Photo illustration by Matthew Reier. Inside front cover: Photograph by Kristine Šumska.



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**A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**
April 2013 Volume 43 • Number 4

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Family Home Evening Ideas

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are a few examples.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND © IRI

“The Mission and Ministry of Jesus Christ,” page 32: Elder Russell M. Nelson shares five aspects of the life of Jesus Christ that we can emulate. Consider discussing these aspects and how to apply them personally and as a family. You may want to watch a Bible video (biblevideos.lds.org) to inspire your family and strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ.

“Death and Life: Pioneer Perspectives on the Resurrection,” page 50: Read the article before family home evening and choose which pioneer accounts and which quotations

from Church Presidents to discuss as a family. You may also want to read about Jesus’s Resurrection (see Luke 24; John 20), then conclude by sharing your testimonies

about the Savior and the promise that we will all be resurrected.

“Growing Relationships,” page 66: Read the stories in the article one at a time, identifying how gardening has blessed each author’s life. Your family may want to consider planting a small garden. If so, make a plan together and keep a record of the blessings you receive as the garden grows.

FAMILY HOME EVENING IS FOR ME

As a widow with eight grown children, I thought my responsibility for family home evening had passed. But my bishop’s call for everyone to hold weekly family home evening weighed heavily on me, so I determined to begin again. Once a month I invite all my children and grandchildren to my home. Each family takes a turn with the lesson, activity, and treat. On the other Mondays, I attend the empty nesters’ family home evening in our ward. Family home evening truly is for everyone—including me.

Loretta Derrick, Utah, USA

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DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

We welcome donated submissions showing the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. Please submit articles

through ensign.lds.org, or send them to Ensign Editorial, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. On each submission, please include your name, address, telephone number, email address, and the name of your ward and stake (or branch and district). Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified.



**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

He Is Risen

A testimony of the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a source of both hope and determination. And it can be so for any child of God. It was for me on a summer day in June 1969 when my mother died, it has been all the years since, and it will be until I see her again.

Sadness from the temporary separation was immediately replaced with happiness. It was more than a hope for a happy reunion. Because the Lord has revealed so much through His prophets and because the Holy Ghost has confirmed the truth of the Resurrection to me, I can see in my mind what it will be like to be reunited with our sanctified and resurrected loved ones:

“These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just. . . .

“These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.

“These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood” (D&C 76:65, 68–69).

Because Jesus Christ broke the bands of death, all of the children of Heavenly Father born into the world will be resurrected in a body that will never die. So my testimony and yours of that glorious truth can take away the sting of the loss of a beloved family member or friend and replace it with joyful anticipation and firm determination.

The Lord has given all of us the gift of resurrection, whereby our spirits are placed in bodies free of physical

imperfections (see Alma 11:42–44). My mother will appear young and radiant, the effects of age and years of physical suffering removed. That will come to her and to us as a gift.

But those of us who long to be with her forever must make choices to qualify for that association, to live where the Father and His Beloved resurrected Son dwell in glory. That is the only place where family life can continue eternally. A testimony of that truth has increased my determination to qualify myself and those I love for the highest degree of the celestial kingdom through the Atonement of Jesus Christ working in our lives (see D&C 76:70).

The Lord offers us a guide in this quest for eternal life in the sacramental prayers that help me and can help you.

We are invited to renew our baptismal covenants in every sacrament meeting.

We promise to always remember the Savior.

The emblems of His sacrifice help us appreciate the magnitude of the price He paid to break the bands of death, to offer us mercy, and to provide forgiveness of all our sins if we choose to repent.

We promise to keep His commandments. Reading the scriptures and the words of the living prophets and listening to inspired speakers in our sacrament meetings remind us of our covenants to do so. The Holy Ghost brings to our minds and hearts the commandments we most need to keep that day.

In the sacramental prayers, God promises to send the Holy Ghost to be with us (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79). I have found in that moment that God can give me what feels like a personal interview. He brings to my





TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

We should “liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23). Consider reading the sacrament prayers, found in Doctrine and Covenants 20:76–79. After reading President Eyring’s teachings about the sacrament prayers, you may want to invite those you are teaching to think of ways that these prayers can guide their lives and help them return to live again with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

attention what I have done that pleases Him, my need for repentance and forgiveness, and the names and faces of people He would have me serve for Him.

Over the years, that repeated experience has turned hope into feelings of charity

and brought an assurance that mercy was unlocked for me by the Savior’s Atonement and Resurrection.

I testify that Jesus is the risen Christ, our Savior, and our perfect example and guide to eternal life. ■

Your Personal Interview with God

President Eyring teaches that as we listen to the sacrament prayers, we can feel like we are having a personal interview with God. President Eyring thinks of the following three areas. Consider writing these questions in your journal and pondering them each Sunday this month. As you ponder and

receive impressions from the Holy Ghost, you can also write about those in your journal.

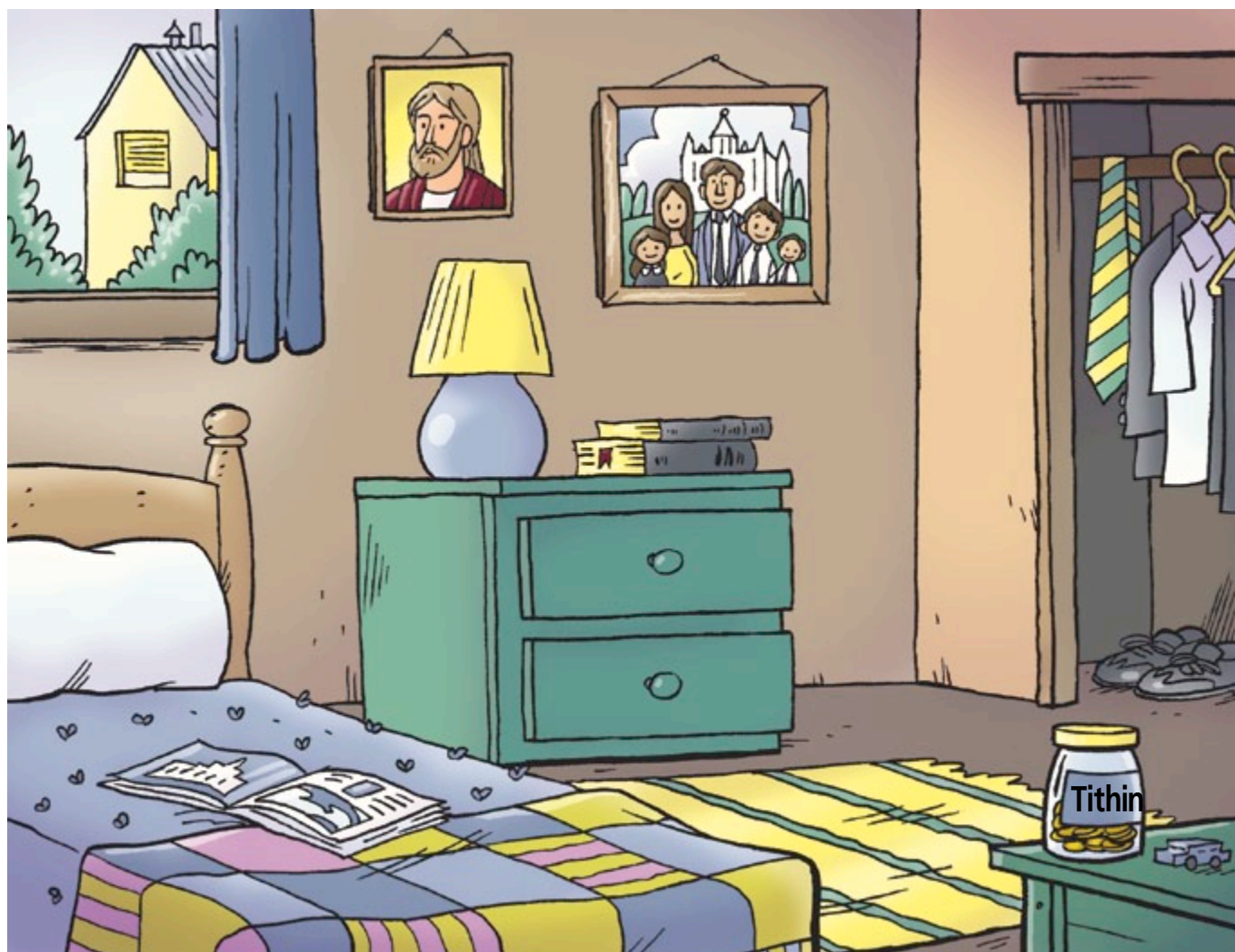
- What have I done that has pleased God?
- What do I need to repent of or ask forgiveness for?
- Whom would God like me to serve?

CHILDREN

Always Remember Jesus

Jacob is trying to “always remember” the Savior (D&C 20:77). Look around his bedroom.

What do you notice that might help him always remember Jesus?



Prayerfully study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life. For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

Temple Covenants

The saving ordinances received in the temple that permit us to someday return to our Heavenly Father in an eternal family relationship and to be endowed with blessings and power from on high are worth every sacrifice and every effort,”¹ said President Thomas S. Monson. If you have not yet been to the temple, you can prepare to receive sacred temple ordinances by:

- Believing in Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.
- Cultivating a testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the restored gospel.
- Sustaining and following the living prophet.
- Qualifying for a temple recommend by paying tithing, being morally clean, being honest, keeping the Word of Wisdom, and living in harmony with the teachings of the Church.
- Giving time, talents, and means to help build the Lord’s kingdom.
- Participating in family history work.²



President Monson further taught, “As we remember the covenants we make within [the temple], we will be more able to bear every trial and to overcome each temptation.”³

From the Scriptures

Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; 25:13; 109:22

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 92.
2. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 21.
3. Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, May 2011, 93.
4. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 29–30.
5. Sarah Rich, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 30.

Faith, Family, Relief



From Our History

“More than 5,000 Saints thronged the Nauvoo Temple after its dedication. . . .

“The strength, power, and blessings of temple covenants [sustained] the Latter-day Saints during their journey [west], when they [suffered] cold, heat, hunger, poverty, sickness, accidents, and death.”⁴

Like many Relief Society sisters, Sarah Rich served as a temple worker. She spoke of her experience: “If it had not been for the faith and knowledge that was bestowed upon us in that temple by . . . the Spirit of the Lord, our journey would have been like one taking a leap in the dark. . . . But we had faith in our Heavenly Father, . . . feeling that we were His chosen people . . . , and instead of sorrow, we felt to rejoice that the day of our deliverance had come.”⁵

The exodus was not a “leap in the dark” for faithful Latter-day Saint women. They were sustained by their temple covenants.

What Can I Do?

1. Am I worshipping in the temple regularly?
2. Am I encouraging my sisters to receive temple blessings?

STUDYING CONFERENCE TALKS TOGETHER

Changing our way of reviewing conference greatly enhanced our gospel discussions as a family.

By Greg Batty

For years we have enjoyed reading through the conference issue as a family, one article at a time. When we began, we would simply gather around the table and in turn each read a paragraph out loud. But we found that we were reading it to get through it, without stopping to digest the messages.

To get more out of what we were reading, my wife and I purchased one copy of the conference issue for each family member and planned how many talks we would need to study each week so that we could read them all before the next general conference. Some weeks we would read one talk, and other weeks it would be two, but everyone was to study the talk and highlight portions they liked. Then for family home evening we would teach each other from our highlighted sections.

Often our children had questions that opened up our discussions, or my wife and I asked questions from our study. We treasured hearing our teenagers explain their answers to those questions, sharing things they learned in seminary, at church, or

in their personal study. This became a great way of hearing each other's informal testimonies on a regular basis in a very comfortable, relaxed atmosphere.

Soon we found that our morning scripture study took on the same tone. Some days we would make it through only a few verses before the time would be gone quickly from discussion about those verses and how they applied to what was going on around us.

Our mornings are now filled with conversation, laughter, and unity before we each go out to our individual pursuits. We have strong testimonies of our prophet's counsel to study and pray together daily. Our family has been transformed into one that learns from and strengthens each other. All of this is a result of wanting to get a little more out of general conference. ■

Greg Batty lives in Utah, USA.



STUDY AND APPLY CONFERENCE MESSAGES

"Remember that the messages we have heard during this conference will be printed in the May issues of the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines. I urge you to study the messages, to ponder their teachings, and then to apply them in your life."

President Thomas S. Monson, "A Word at Closing," *Ensign*, May 2010, 113.



THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD FRIENDS

Friends have a strong influence on our actions, especially in our youth. “They will influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become.”¹ And when you choose good friends, “they will be a great strength and blessing to you. . . . They will help you be a better person and will make it easier for you to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.”²

On pages 26–27 of this month’s *New Era*, Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president, teaches the importance of seeking and being a good friend. “Seeking another person’s highest good is the essence of true friendship,” she says.

Building friendships on these principles will help youth form lasting relationships and social skills that go beyond merely becoming “friends” on social networking sites. As a parent you can help your children understand the importance of being a good friend and of choosing friends who will encourage them to live the gospel. The following suggestions may be helpful.

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- As a family, search the scriptures for examples of good friends. Discuss what qualities made those friendships strong.

Consider David and Jonathan (see 1 Samuel 18–23), Ruth and Naomi (see Ruth 1–2), and Alma and the sons of Mosiah (see Mosiah 27–28; Alma 17–20).³

- Review the section on friends in *For the Strength of Youth*. Share with your teens how friendships influenced your life. Invite them to share how they have influenced and been influenced by their friends.
- Read Sister Dalton’s article in this month’s *New Era*. Talk about the goal her daughter, Emi, set to seek good friends. Help your children set goals about the type of friends they want to seek and be.
- Consider holding a family home evening to share ideas for building friendships, such as: “To have good friends, be a good friend. Show genuine interest in others; smile and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect, and refrain from judging and criticizing those around you.”⁴

Suggestions for Teaching Children

- Being a friend includes helping others. Read “Standing Up for



SCRIPTURES ON FRIENDSHIP

Proverbs 17:17; 18:24

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Matthew 25:34–40

Luke 22:32

Mosiah 18:8–9

Caleb” in the March 2009 *Friend* and talk with your children about ways they can be kind to everyone they meet.

- In all situations, we have to decide what kind of friend we’ll be. Sing together “I’m Trying to Be Like Jesus”⁵ and then talk with your children about how they can choose to be a good friend, like the Savior, in various settings. ■

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 16.
2. *For the Strength of Youth*, 16.
3. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Real Friendship,” *New Era*, June 1998, 62–66.
4. *For the Strength of Youth*, 16.
5. “I’m Trying to Be Like Jesus,” *Children’s Songbook*, 78–79.

THE HOLY GHOST COMFORTS, INSPIRES, AND TESTIFIES

The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the greatest blessings we can receive in this life, for the Holy Ghost comforts, inspires, warns, purifies, and guides us. He can fill us “with hope and perfect love” (Moroni 8:26). He teaches “the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5). We receive revelation and spiritual gifts from God through the Holy Ghost. Most important, we receive our testimonies of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost.

Before you were baptized, you could feel the Holy Ghost from time to time. But only by receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost after your baptism could you enjoy the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, provided

you are worthy. This gift was given by a Melchizedek Priesthood holder by the laying on of hands (see Acts 19:6; D&C 33:15). Each Sabbath day thereafter, you can renew your baptismal covenants as you take the sacrament and thus receive the Lord’s blessing that you may “always have his Spirit” to be with you (D&C 20:77).

The Holy Ghost, often referred to as the Spirit, is the third member of the Godhead. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” (D&C 130:22).

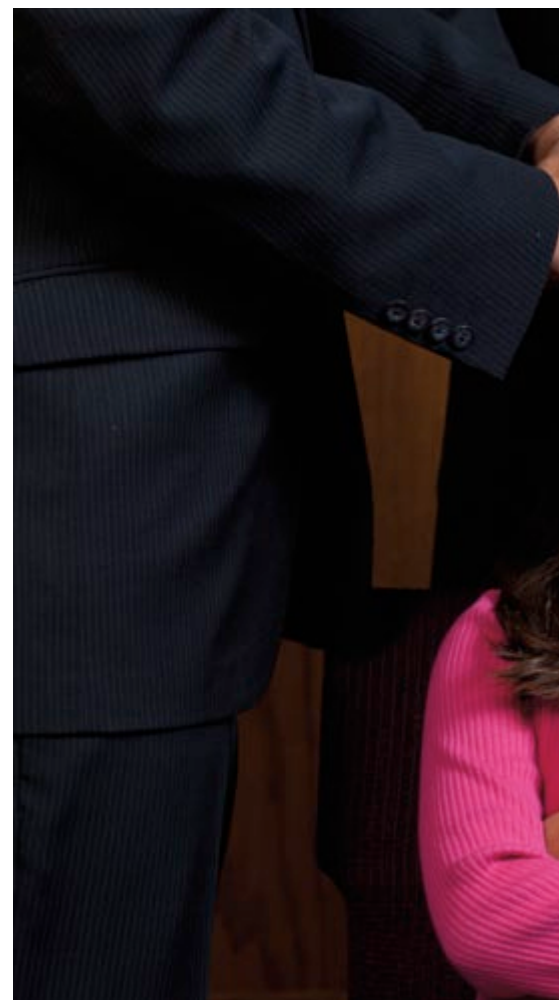
“Because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Helaman 4:24), we must be worthy of His companionship. We do so by, among other things, having virtuous thoughts, living with integrity, and seeking to keep the commandments. ■

For more information, see 2 Nephi 31:13, 17; 32:5; 3 Nephi 27:20; Moroni 10:5–8; Joseph Smith—History 1:70.

WE MUST NOT TAKE THIS GIFT FOR GRANTED

“As with all gifts, this gift must be received and accepted to be enjoyed. When priesthood hands were laid upon your head to confirm you a member of the Church, you heard the words, ‘Receive the Holy Ghost.’ This did not mean that the Holy Ghost unconditionally became your constant companion. Scriptures warn us that the Spirit of the Lord will ‘not always strive with man’ (Genesis 6:3). When we are confirmed, we are given the *right* to the companionship of the Holy Ghost, but it is a right that we must continue to earn through obedience and worthiness.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Unspeakable Gift,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 28.



After receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, we can do many things to invite His influence into our lives:

Pray.



Study the scriptures.



Worthily partake of the sacrament.



Worship in the temple.



View wholesome media, use clean language, and have virtuous thoughts.



Helping Children

PREPARE FOR BAPTISM

By Jessica Larsen and Marissa Widdison
Church Magazines

Childhood is a season of joyful firsts. The first time riding a bicycle, attending school, or trying a new food are a few of the exciting adventures that shape a child's life. As adults we have the opportunity to help children along that path of discovery. As adults in the Church, we also have the opportunity to help them grow in the gospel (see D&C 68:25). What can we do to make sure a child's baptism—the first covenant a person makes with our loving Heavenly Father—is a beautiful and meaningful event?

"It is the basic purpose of this Church to teach the youth: first in the home and then in church," taught President Boyd K. Packer.¹

In the following examples, parents share how they have prepared their children for the sacred ordinances and covenants of baptism and confirmation.

We Start Early

"The year each child turns seven is a time to celebrate," says Lori, a mother of four. She and her husband teach their children about baptism from the day they are born. However, when each child turns seven, their family begins more specific preparation. They hold a family home evening lesson each month about different topics related to baptism, such as covenants and Jesus's example.

Lori says the lessons during the month of the children's eighth birthdays are especially tender. She shows the children the clothes they wore when they received a name and a blessing, and she talks about the day that ordinance was performed.

"It is the perfect time to focus on the blessings of temple covenants," Lori points out. "We always make a point of teaching that the choice to be baptized is the first step in preparing for the blessings of the temple."



We Make It a Family Affair

Monica, a mother of four, recommends getting older children involved in helping younger siblings prepare whenever possible. "Hearing their teenage brother or sister testify and share his or her experience really adds power," she says. Lori adds that sometimes they ask the children preparing for baptism to teach what they have learned to younger siblings.



We Use It as a Missionary Tool

When Daniel's daughter turned eight, he knew she would want to share her baptism day with friends who were not members of the Church. So their family decided to extend invitations for Allison's baptism to friends from school and the neighborhood. These friends were asked to bring favorite Bible verses to the baptism. After the baptism, Allison underlined the verses in her new set of scriptures and wrote her friends' names in the margins.

"Of course, as her family, we were very involved in that day. But we also let her just be with friends a while afterward and talk to them about what she felt," Daniel said. "It was a really tender moment to see our child set an example."

We Practice the Bishop's Interview

Kimberly, a mother of children approaching baptism age, remembers walking into the bishop's office for her baptismal interview when she was eight years old. "I was so nervous!" Kimberly says.

Now she tries to ensure that her children don't face feelings of panic. She and her husband talk to their children about bishop interviews and ask them questions about baptism in an interview-like setting. These interviews do more than familiarize children with the interview process—they also encourage the children to think deeply about what the covenant of baptism means to them.

We Have a Wonderful Opportunity

These parents are quick to point out that they haven't done anything excessive in preparing their children for baptism and confirmation, but many of them did use words like "thorough" and "consistent" to describe the lessons they have taught over the years. "We made sure our kids understood that this was an important step in their lives, and that it was a big deal," Kimberly says. "We always made sure we were the ones preparing them, and not just hoping their Primary teachers were teaching them."

What a wonderful opportunity we have been given to help prepare the children we love for baptism and confirmation! As we prayerfully do so, the Lord will be with us to shape this first covenant-making experience into a powerful foundation for future spiritual growth. ■

The next two pages answer some questions children have about baptism and confirmation.

NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, "Teach the Children," *Ensign*, Feb. 2000, 10.

Understanding Baptism

By Marissa Widdison
Church Magazines



Who will baptize me?

Whoever baptizes you needs to hold the priesthood—the power to act in the name of God. When Jesus wanted to be baptized, He went to John the Baptist, who had the priesthood (see Matthew 3:13).

The person who baptizes you will get permission from your bishop or branch president.



Do I have to go under water to be baptized?

Jesus was baptized by immersion, which means He went completely under the water and quickly came back up again (see Matthew 3:16). This is how you will be baptized. Being baptized this way reminds us that we are leaving behind our old life and starting a new life dedicated to serving God and His children.



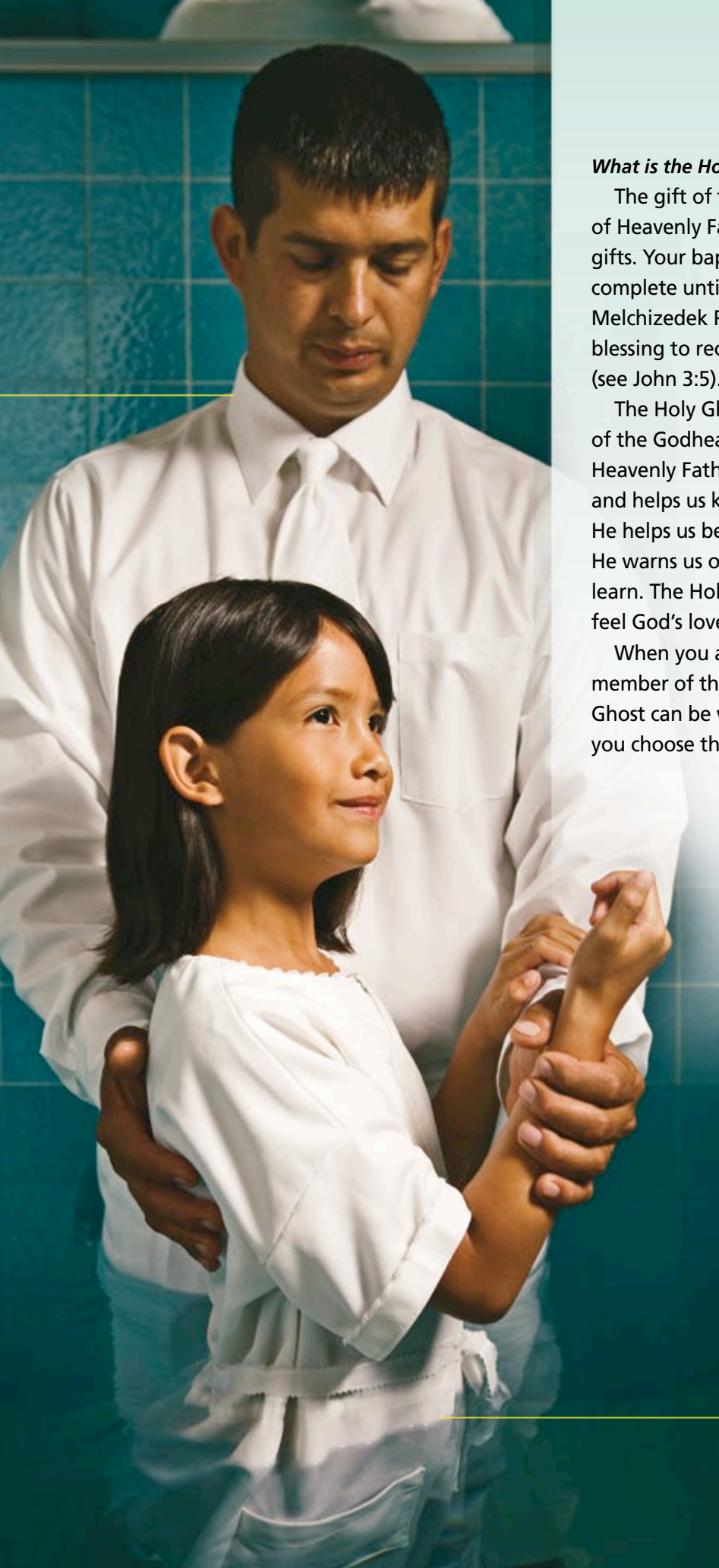
What promises do I make when I am baptized?

When you are baptized, you make a covenant, or two-way promise, with Heavenly Father. You promise Him that you will do certain things, and He promises to bless you. This covenant is described in the sacrament prayers that are said each Sunday (see D&C 20:77–79). You promise:

- To remember Jesus Christ.
- To keep His commandments.
- To take upon yourself the name of Christ, which means to put His work first in your life and do what He wants instead of what the world wants.

As you keep this promise, Heavenly Father promises that the Holy Ghost will be with you and that your sins will be forgiven.

PHOTO © DYNAMIC GRAPHICS; PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS
BY DAVID STOKER, MATTHEW REIER, AND SARAH JENSON



What is the Holy Ghost?

The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of Heavenly Father's most precious gifts. Your baptism by water isn't complete until men holding the Melchizedek Priesthood give you a blessing to receive the Holy Ghost (see John 3:5).

The Holy Ghost is a member of the Godhead. He testifies of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and helps us know what is true. He helps us be spiritually strong. He warns us of danger. He helps us learn. The Holy Ghost can help us feel God's love.

When you are confirmed a member of the Church, the Holy Ghost can be with you always if you choose the right.



Why do I have to be at least eight years old to be baptized?

The Lord teaches that children shouldn't be baptized until they are old enough to understand the difference between right and wrong, which the scriptures say is eight years old (see Moroni 8:11–12; D&C 29:46–47; 68:27).



How DOES HE KNOW?

*My father was always there to greet me when I came home.
I thought it was because he didn't trust me.*

By Joel Hancock

I have lived on a small island off the North Carolina, USA, coast all my life. My home is protected from the open ocean by a barrier island that my family calls the Banks. This barrier island, populated by wild horses and waterfowl, was a summer wonderland to me as a boy—a natural theme park that charged no admission.

Most families who lived on the islands had some kind of boat. By the time I was a teenager, my parents allowed me to use a boat without adult supervision. I often went with my six older brothers to the Banks where we could play. We swam in the ocean, waterskied on the sound, chased after herds of wild horses, and dug for clams.

Each afternoon or early evening as we returned home to my father's dock, I saw my father standing on the shore, awaiting our return. As we secured the boat, he asked about our day and inspected the boat to make sure it was okay. I thought he was just worried about his boat.

My brothers eventually bought boats of their own, and my father entrusted his boat to me alone when I took my friends and younger cousins to the Banks. One thing about my father stayed the same even as I grew older and matured. No matter the occasion or the amount of time we spent on the island, he was always there walking to the shore the very moment our boat came into view.

It seemed as though he had an internal tracking device that allowed him to know the very instant I headed for home. I could not elude him by staying later than usual or heading home early. He always knew exactly when I would approach the shore.

Even after I had a boat and a family of my own, my father was always there to welcome us back to the dock after we had gone out on the water. "How does he know?" I used to ask. "How can he tell exactly when I am headed for home?"

Eventually, having sons of my own who wanted to go boating alone revealed my father's secret.

The first summer afternoon that my two sons headed out alone on the boat, my heart ached for their safety because I had a deeper understanding of how dangerous the water could be. From the moment my sons departed, I stared almost without respite toward the horizon, waiting for their return.

After a few long hours, I could see my sons in the distance as they made their way back. Then, just like my own father, I walked to the shore to reassure myself that all was well—not with my boat, but with my boys.

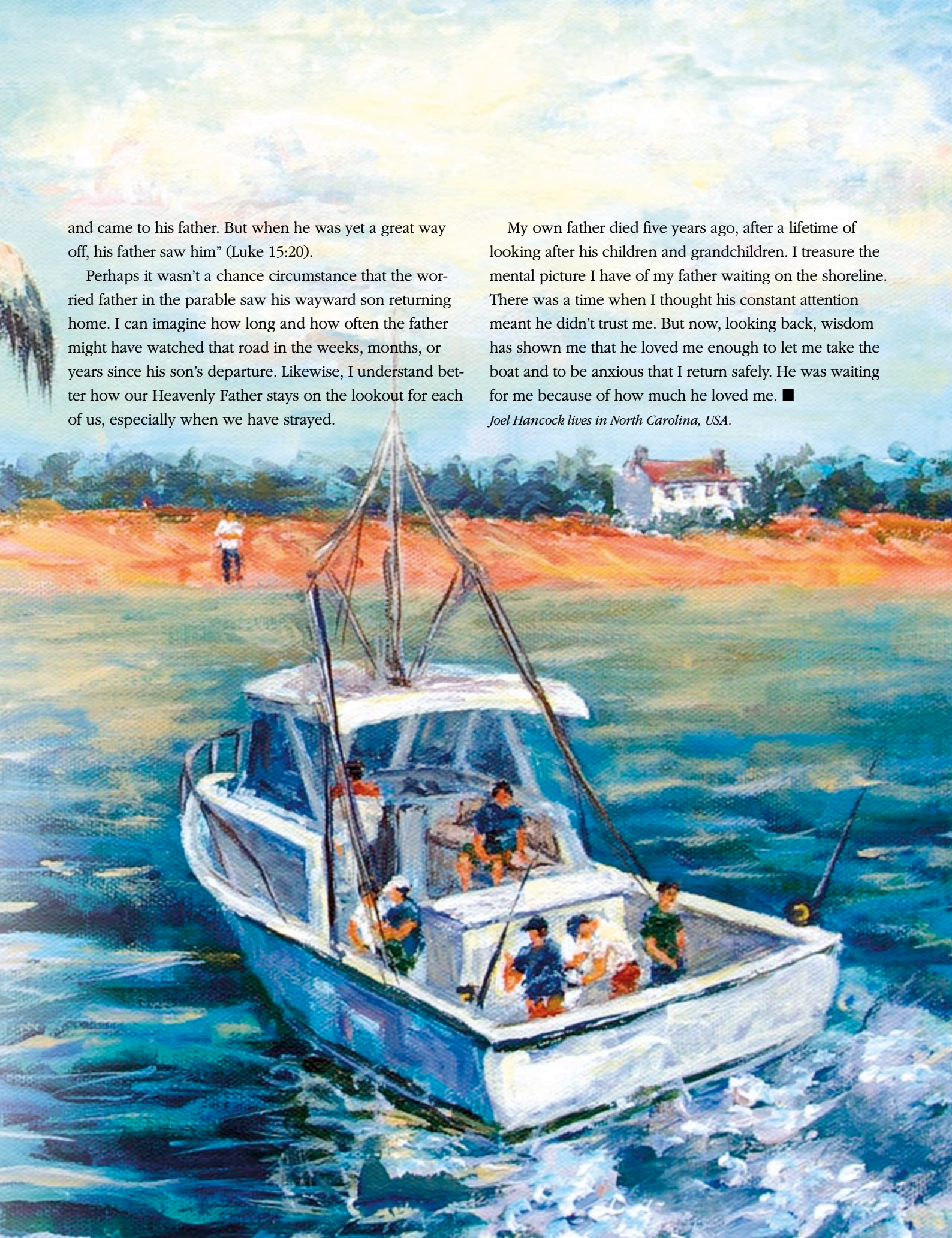
Every time I see my sons as they break the horizon for home in our small powerboat, I remember a specific verse in the Savior's parable of the prodigal son. "And he arose,

and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him" (Luke 15:20).

Perhaps it wasn't a chance circumstance that the worried father in the parable saw his wayward son returning home. I can imagine how long and how often the father might have watched that road in the weeks, months, or years since his son's departure. Likewise, I understand better how our Heavenly Father stays on the lookout for each of us, especially when we have strayed.

My own father died five years ago, after a lifetime of looking after his children and grandchildren. I treasure the mental picture I have of my father waiting on the shoreline. There was a time when I thought his constant attention meant he didn't trust me. But now, looking back, wisdom has shown me that he loved me enough to let me take the boat and to be anxious that I return safely. He was waiting for me because of how much he loved me. ■

Joel Hancock lives in North Carolina, USA.





EQUAL PARTNERSHIP IN MARRIAGE

*In the plan of happiness, man and woman play equally
powerful and equally important roles.*

By Valerie M. Hudson, Professor of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University,
and Richard B Miller, Professor of Family Life at Brigham Young University

The restored gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims the doctrine of equal partnership between men and women, here and in the eternities. In this context, it is important to understand what Latter-day Saints mean by the term *equal partnership*. Equality is all too often mistaken to mean that if two things are equal, they must be identical to each other.

But the truth is otherwise. Even though we aspire to be of “one heart and one mind” (Moses 7:18), that does not mean that spouses will be or should be identical. For example, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” teaches that gender is “an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”¹

Latter-day Saint theology teaches that gender difference does not superimpose a hierarchy between men and women: one gender does not have greater eternal possibilities than the other.² As Elder Earl C. Tingey, formerly of the Presidency of the Seventy, has said: “You must not misunderstand what the Lord meant when Adam was told he was to have a helpmeet. A helpmeet is a companion suited to or equal to [the other]. [They] walk side by side . . . not one before or behind the other. A helpmeet results in an absolute equal partnership between a husband and a wife. Eve was to be equal to Adam as a husband and wife are to be equal to each other.”³

“In some cultures, tradition places a man in a role to dominate, control, and regulate all family affairs. That is not the way of the Lord. In some places the wife is almost owned by her husband, as if she were another of his personal possessions. That is a cruel, mistaken vision of marriage encouraged by Lucifer that every priesthood holder must reject.”

—Elder Richard G. Scott



This statement teaches that as we come to better understand the story of Adam and Eve in light of the restored gospel, we will better understand God’s plan for the equal partnership between men and women.

Eve and Adam and the Plan of Happiness

In the Garden of Eden, Eve was the first to partake of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This act led to serious consequences, not the least of which was the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden. Because of this, some individuals have interpreted the story of the Garden of Eden as the story of Eve’s spiritual inferiority. However, Latter-day Saint theology rejects this interpretation. As Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has declared: “Some Christians condemn Eve for her act, concluding that she and her daughters are somehow flawed by it. Not the Latter-day Saints! Informed by revelation, we celebrate Eve’s act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode called the Fall.”⁴

Although the Fall brought the possibility of evil and affliction into the world, it allowed



“Some Christians condemn Eve for her act, concluding that she and her daughters are somehow flawed by it. Not the Latter-day Saints! Informed by revelation, we celebrate Eve’s act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode called the Fall.”

— Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Adam and Eve to have posterity and for all of us to progress toward our eternal destiny to become like our heavenly parents (see 2 Nephi 2:22–23, 25). Furthermore, Elder Oaks taught that partaking of the fruit was not a sin but a necessary transgression: “[Eve’s] act, whatever its nature, was formally a transgression, but eternally a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life. . . . [The Prophet] Joseph Smith taught that it was not a ‘sin,’ because God had decreed it.”⁵

Eve’s choice was momentous: because of her choice, sin and death afflicted her and Adam and their posterity. However, by entering mortality, she and Adam gained the opportunity to have children and to strive toward exaltation. God also provided that Adam and Eve would rule together, as Elder Bruce C. Hafen, formerly of the Seventy, and his wife, Marie, explained:

“Genesis 3:16 states that Adam is to ‘rule over’ Eve, but this doesn’t make Adam a dictator. . . . *Over* in ‘rule over’ uses the Hebrew *bet*, which means ruling ‘with,’ not ruling ‘over.’ . . . The concept of interdependent, equal partners is well-grounded in the



Equality in marriage does not mean sameness; it means becoming one while fulfilling complementary roles.

"Men and women, though spiritually equal, are entrusted with different but equally significant roles. . . . Men are given stewardship over the sacred ordinances of the priesthood. To women, God gives stewardship over bestowing and nurturing mortal life, including providing physical bodies

for God's spirit children."

— Elder M. Russell Ballard

doctrine of the restored gospel. Eve was Adam's 'help meet' (Genesis 2:18). The original Hebrew for *meet* means that Eve was adequate for, or equal to, Adam. She wasn't his servant or his subordinate."⁶

In the plan of happiness, man and woman play equally powerful and equally important roles. For the plan to work, each must hearken to the other. Before God, they stand as equals.

Equality and Love in LDS Doctrine

There is a crucial relationship between equality and love in LDS doctrine. Spouses are to enter their marriage relationship convinced of each other's equality. The first utterance Adam made after God created him and Eve in the Garden of Eden was to declare Eve's equality with him—that they would be "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

Different cultures across the globe and across time have viewed the relationship between husbands and wives in many different ways, often at odds with the doctrine of equal partnership. But LDS General Authorities have stated that priesthood holders must reject hierarchical marriage. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

"In some cultures, tradition places a man in a role to dominate, control, and regulate all family affairs. That is not the way of the Lord. In some places the wife is almost owned by her husband, as if she were another of

his personal possessions. That is a cruel, mistaken vision of marriage encouraged by Lucifer that every priesthood holder must reject. It is founded on the false premise that a man is somehow superior to a woman. Nothing could be farther from the truth."⁷

Moreover, contrary to scripture and the teachings of latter-day prophets, some men and women have interpreted *presiding* to mean that after equal counsel, equal consent is not necessary because the presider (or husband) has the right of final say. But President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: "In the Church there is a distinct line of authority. We serve where called by those who preside over us. In the home it is a partnership with husband and wife equally yoked together, sharing in decisions, always working together."⁸

In considering the equal partnership, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles eloquently said: "There is not a president or a vice president in a family. The couple works together eternally for the good of the family. . . . They are on equal footing. They plan and organize the affairs of the family jointly and unanimously as they move forward."⁹ Both husband and wife have a sacred obligation to refrain from thoughts and actions that might undermine that equal partnership.

Priesthood stewardship does not superimpose a hierarchical relationship over the God-ordained equality between

A marriage of equal partners is also one in which the partners help one another in their stewardships, indeed, are “obligated to help one another as equal partners.”



husband and wife in their roles as parents. President James E. Faust (1920–2007) taught, “Every father is to his family a patriarch and every mother a matriarch as coequals in their distinctive parental roles.”¹⁰

Equality does not mean sameness, however. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “Men and women, though spiritually equal, are entrusted with different but equally significant roles. . . . Men are given stewardship over the sacred ordinances of the priesthood. To women, God gives stewardship over bestowing and nurturing mortal life, including providing physical bodies for God’s spirit children and guiding those children toward a knowledge of gospel truths. These stewardships, equally sacred and important, do not involve any false ideas about domination or subordination.”¹¹

A marriage of equal partners is also one in which the partners help one another in their stewardships, indeed, are “obligated to help one another as equal partners.”¹² This partnership extends to housework and childcare. President Packer has said, “There is no task, however menial, connected with the care of babies, the nurturing of children, or with



“Every father is to his family a patriarch and every mother a matriarch as coequals in their distinctive parental roles.”

— President James E. Faust

the maintenance of the home that is not [the husband’s] equal obligation.”¹³

Women also assist their husbands, directly and indirectly, with the burdens of supporting a family. Finally, there must be room enough in a marriage for the dreams of both the husband and the wife and sweet encouragement from each to the other to follow those dreams.

Research on the Benefits of Equal Partnerships

Social science research supports the prophetic instruction that couples who have an equal partnership have happier relationships, more effective parenting practices, and better-functioning children. Scholars have consistently found that equal partners are more satisfied and have better overall marital quality than couples where one spouse dominates.¹⁴ Equal-partner relationships have less negative interaction and more positive interaction.¹⁵ Moreover, there is evidence that equal partners are more satisfied with the quality of the physical intimacy in their relationship.¹⁶

Parents with high relationship equality are more likely to work together as a team in parenting their children.¹⁷ These benefits



In a very real and meaningful sense, couples who stand as equals before each other find greater joy.

of partnership to marital relationships and parenting practices create a healthier environment for children, making them less susceptible to depression, anxiety, drug abuse, and delinquency.¹⁸

Equal Partnership Brings Joy

One of the most precious wellsprings of joy is a sincerely equal partnership between husband and wife. In a very real and meaningful sense, couples who stand as equals before each other find greater joy. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified:

“Brethren and sisters, material possessions and honors of the world do not endure. But your union as wife, husband, and family can. The only duration of family life that satisfies the loftiest longings of the human soul is forever. No sacrifice is too great to have the blessings of an eternal marriage. To qualify, one needs only to deny oneself of ungodliness and honor the ordinances of the temple. . . . Our family is the focus of our greatest work and joy in this life.”¹⁹ ■

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. For example, see Moses 2:26–27; 2 Nephi 26:28, 33.

3. Earl C. Tingey, “The Simple Truths from Heaven: The Lord’s Pattern” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Jan. 13, 2008), speeches.byu.edu.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 73.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan,” 73.
6. Bruce C. and Marie K. Hafen, “Crossing Thresholds and Becoming Equal Partners,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2007, 27.
7. Richard G. Scott, “Honor the Priesthood and Use It Well,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 46.
8. Boyd K. Packer, “The Relief Society,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 73.
9. L. Tom Perry, “Fatherhood, an Eternal Calling,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 71.
10. James E. Faust, “The Prophetic Voice,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 6.
11. M. Russell Ballard, “The Sacred Responsibilities of Parenthood,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2006, 29–30.
12. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”
13. Boyd K. Packer, “A Tribute to Women,” *Ensign*, July 1989, 75.
14. See Bernadette Gray-Little and Nancy Burks, “Power and Satisfaction in Marriage: A Review and Critique,” *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 93, no. 3 (1983), 513–38.
15. See Bernadette Gray-Little, Donald H. Baucom, and Sherry L. Hamby, “Marital Power, Marital Adjustment, and Therapy Outcome,” *Journal of Family Psychology*, vol. 10, no. 3 (1996), 292–303.
16. See Michael Brezsnayak and Mark A. Whisman, “Sexual Desire and Relationship Functioning: The Effects of Marital Satisfaction and Power,” *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, vol. 30 (2004), 199–217.
17. See Farrah M. Hughes, Kristina Coop Gordon, and Lowell Gaertner, “Predicting Spouses’ Perceptions of Their Parenting Alliance,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 66 (2004), 506–14.
18. See Kristin M. Lindahl, Neena M. Malik, Karen Kaczynski, and Julie S. Simons, “Couple Power Dynamics, Systemic Family Functioning, and Child Adjustment: A Test of a Mediation Model in a Multiethnic Sample,” *Development and Psychopathology*, vol. 16 (2004), 609–30.
19. Russell M. Nelson, “Set in Order Thy House,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 71.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

What roles do women serve in the Church?

Women have always played an integral role in the work of salvation. When the Church was restored, it was organized the same way Jesus Christ organized His Church anciently, with priesthood duties assigned to men. Worthy women serve in the Church as leaders, counselors, missionaries, teachers, and in many other responsibilities. Both men and women regularly preach from the pulpit, lead congregational prayers, and contribute in Church councils. Fathers and mothers together share the vital responsibility of raising children.

Finding Joy

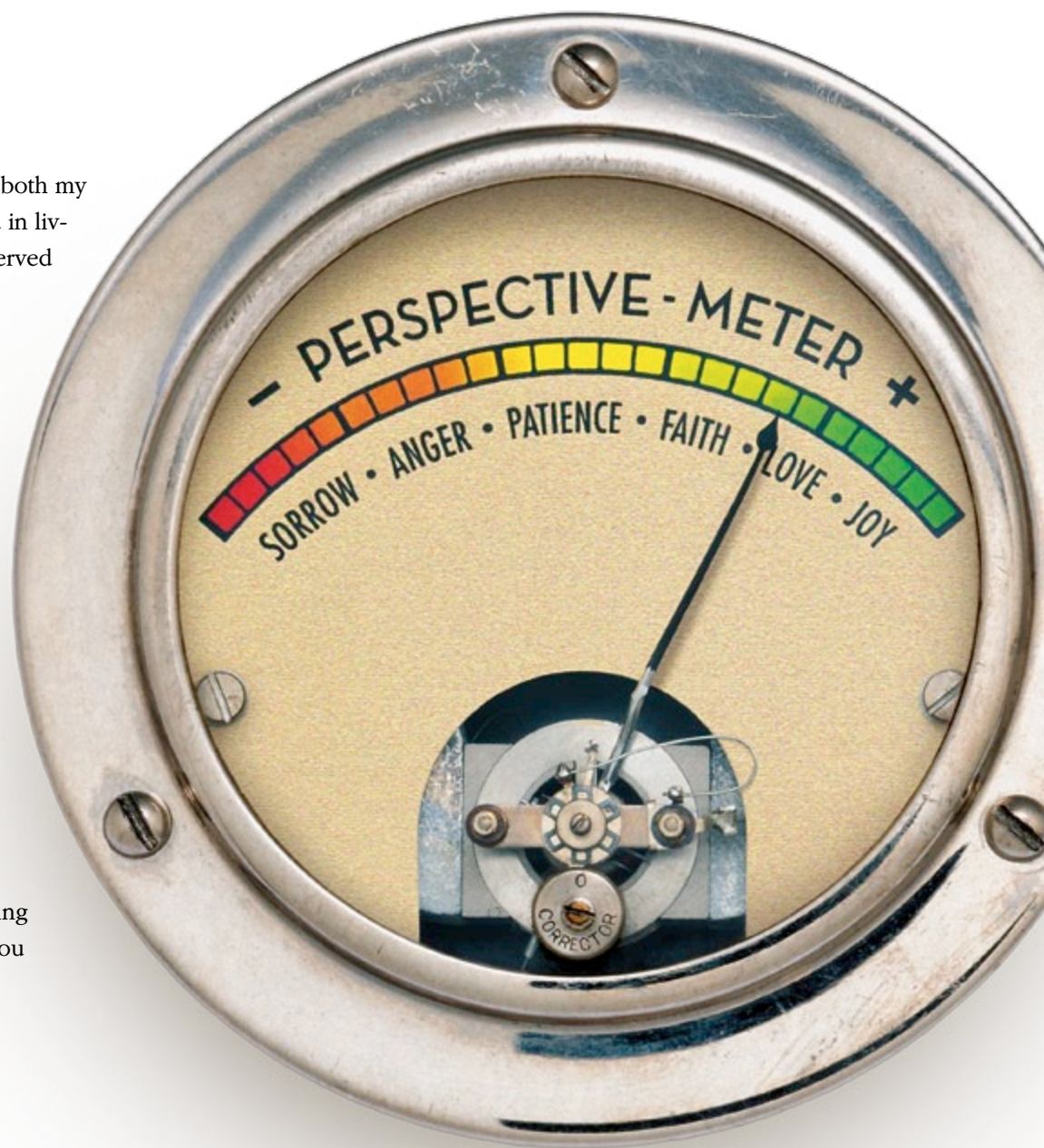
WITH MY LESS-ACTIVE SPOUSE

Even though my husband isn't active in the Church, I have found great joy serving in and attending Church.

Name withheld

I grew up in a family where both my parents were fully engaged in living the gospel. My father served in various callings, including many leadership positions, and I always imagined my husband would do the same when I was married. Like my mother, I wanted to serve the Lord with my husband.

Although I did get married in the temple to a wonderful man, my expectations of serving in the Church with my husband seem unlikely—he is less active. Many men and women in the Church have a spouse who is less active, and I know how heartbreaking it can be to have someone you



deeply love reject the gospel. But we don't have to be unhappy. It took me a while, but by applying the following ideas, I have changed my perspective and found tremendous peace.

1. **Choose to be happy.** For a long time, I felt very depressed after I returned home from attending church alone. Then one day I realized my attitude was hardly inspiring my husband to attend church. He needed to see that the Church brought me joy and inspired me. When I started to show him that church was not a burden, my attitude changed. I no longer felt ashamed as I sat by myself among my ward members. Today I feel true happiness when I go, and I know that's how the Lord wants me to feel. Even if my husband doesn't want to return to the Church, I have found great joy in attending.
2. **Don't compare yourself with others.** I learned this lesson in a profound way when I attended the funeral of a dear sister in my ward who had taken her own life. This sister had a beautiful family—a husband and three darling children—who attended church together. How often I envied her. I had no idea she struggled with severe depression. My heart broke for this family, and I realized that everyone carries private burdens. It doesn't help us to compare ourselves with others. I learned in a powerful way to be grateful for my life.
3. **Don't nag, needle, threaten, or belittle your spouse.** I finally realized that I didn't want my husband to go to church just because I was bothering him; I wanted him to *choose* for himself to go to church. Respecting one another's God-given agency does require patience and faith, but trying to manipulate another's agency leads to

frustration and resentment. Rather than focus on changing my husband, I focused on the positive qualities that led me to love him in the first place, and the Lord has blessed me to truly appreciate the wonderful man I married.

4. **Balance church life with family life.** I have come to understand the difference between essential Church meetings—like sacrament meeting—where I feast on the Spirit, and less important social activities with Church members. I can attend church with my child, worship in the temple, and serve in a calling and as a visiting teacher, but I cannot always attend the holiday parties and social gatherings. I've learned not to worry about what I can't do; I just try to do my best.
5. **Have faith that God loves you.** I don't understand the purpose for everything that happens in my life, but I have grown in my ability to feel the Lord's love for my family and for me. The Apostle Paul taught that “we see through a glass, darkly” in this life, but we will be able to know God “face to face” in the next life, where He will make everything right (see 1 Corinthians 13:12). I hope and pray for the day my husband will participate fully in the gospel and enjoy all the blessings activity brings. Until then, my faith in the Lord's love for me and my family sustains me.

The family I have now is different from what I once imagined it would be, but we love each other. As I continue to pray for my husband and my family's future, I find blessings in my challenges. I have learned that I don't need to lean on anyone else to have a strong testimony, and I can stand on my own spiritual feet. I have learned to appreciate more fully that I am, and always will be, a daughter of God. ■

*Sometimes you have to
give up something good
for something better.*

CHOOSING THE Better PART

By Matthew D. Flitton
Church Magazines

One day Zoltán Szűcs of Szeged, Hungary, surprised his kayaking coach by telling him that he wouldn't be going to Germany for a competition.

"It was on the same day as my baptism, so I said no," Zoltán said.

At age 17, Zoltán had won many competitions in kayaking. It's a popular sport in Hungary, and Zoltán was good—good enough that becoming a professional was a real possibility. Beyond deciding to miss just one competition, Zoltán would soon give up kayaking entirely. He had something better to do.

Kayaking had been good for Zoltán. Over the years working with his coach, he had learned self-control, obedience, and hard work. Zoltán had also learned to avoid substances and habits that would hurt his performance. It wasn't an easy life; it was lonely, and going pro would take up more time. Pros practice 12 hours a day and have to compete on Sunday.

"Kayaking took most of my time," Zoltán says. "I was fanatical. Because

of that, I left a lot of things out of my life."

That's why Zoltán decided that he couldn't devote himself to both the gospel and kayaking. In 2004 he told his coach he wasn't going to kayak anymore.

Earlier that year the missionaries started teaching Zoltán's mom. He didn't take part in the lessons. He grudgingly accepted his mom's invitation to her baptism. But his heart was touched by what he felt once he entered the church building. Zoltán agreed to meet with the missionaries, partly because he could identify with them.

"Missionaries were interesting to me because they were normal people but lived a higher standard," he says.

Because of the higher standard that Zoltán was already living as a kayaker, he readily accepted the teachings of the gospel as valuable. He was baptized two months later.

At first he thought he could continue kayaking but not do competitions on Sundays. But because he's

the type of person who, once committed to an activity or course, wants to do well at it, he chose to give up kayaking entirely.

He tried once to kayak as a hobby after his baptism. When he did, his coach asked him to help teach others and organize trips since he wouldn't compete. But he didn't want to make commitments to kayaking—or any other activity—that could get in the way of his discipleship.

So Zoltán hung up his paddle and dedicated himself to Church service in a decision reminiscent of one President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) made when he got married. President Hunter was an accomplished musician who played dozens of instruments. In the evenings he had been playing in an orchestra, but the lifestyles of those he associated with conflicted with gospel standards. So President Hunter put his instruments away and brought them out only occasionally for family sing-alongs.¹

Zoltán misses kayaking, but he realized that his love for kayaking



Zoltán Szücs, of Szeged, Hungary, gave up kayaking to have more time for the gospel.



was strong enough to compete with, and possibly overcome, his love for the Lord if he stayed too close to the sport.

The same principle can apply to any activity that takes us away from who God wants us to be. For each of us it may be better to go through life without certain things—even if they are good things—rather than risk our eternal life to have them.

“The Church became my life,” Zoltán says. “Knowing that kayaking couldn’t be a living if I wanted to be active and that it would be just a hobby, it became easy to give up. Instead, I wanted to make Heavenly Father my focus.”

Zoltán began to study the gospel with the same intensity he brings to any pursuit. He set a goal to serve a mission. He wanted to stay in his country and teach others.

He served in Hungary and now works as a high school English teacher. He continues to set his priorities on the gospel. “There are things we need to give up because they get in the way of God,” he says. “It’s easy to give up the bad once we know we should. Often we don’t realize when we should give up something good for something better. We think that because it’s not bad, we can hold onto it and still follow God’s plan.” But Zoltán knows that we must give up the good if it keeps us from following God’s plan for us. ■

NOTE

1. See Eleanor Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter* (1994), 81.



By Elder
Jairo Mazzagardi
Of the Seventy

Drawn to the Temple

For many good people, the temple inspires feelings that can instantly penetrate the heart.

Before I was called as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, my wife and I spent several years serving in the Campinas and São Paulo Brazil Temples. In both temples, I was often amazed that people traveling by the temple would be so drawn to it that they would stop, enter, and inquire about it.

When they entered, we informed them that they could go no further without proper preparation. We then explained the purpose of the temple, shared some basic doctrines of the gospel, and invited them to meet with the missionaries. For many good people, the temple itself is a tremendous missionary because it inspires feelings that can instantly penetrate the heart.

My wife, Elizabeth, and I know the power of such feelings firsthand. Nearly 40 years ago, a good friend and colleague, a member of the Church, started bringing up the gospel with us in casual conversation. On several occasions, he sent the missionaries to visit us. We liked the missionaries and agreed to take the discussions, but we were not truly interested in what they had to teach.



That changed in October 1978, when my colleague invited several friends, including us, to the São Paulo Brazil Temple open house. He rented several buses at his own expense so that his friends could join him at the temple, about 50 miles (80 km) away.

When Elizabeth entered the baptistry, she felt something she had never experienced before, something she later recognized as the Holy Ghost. The feeling was a great joy in her heart. She knew in that moment that the Church was true and that it was the Church she wanted to join.

A similar feeling came to me at the end of the open house, when we were escorted to the sealing room and taught the doctrine of eternal families. That doctrine touched me. I was successful in my profession, but I had long felt an emptiness in my soul. I did not know what could fill that void, but I sensed that it had something to do with family. There, in the sealing room, things started to fall into place in my mind and heart.

Within a few days, missionaries contacted us again. This time we were very interested in hearing their message.

The elders encouraged us to pray fervently about the truth. I decided this was the only way I *could* pray. I knew that I couldn't make a commitment to join the Church without having a real testimony. I was anxious about approaching Heavenly Father to ask for a confirmation from Him, but at the same time, I was sure He would answer me. I shared with Him the deep desires of my heart and asked Him to give me an answer that would assure me that joining the Church was the correct path.

The following week in Sunday School, our

friend who had invited us to the temple open house was sitting behind me. He leaned forward and began talking to me. The words he said answered exactly what I had prayed to know. I had no doubt that Heavenly Father was speaking to me through him. At the time, I was a stern, hardened man, but my heart melted and I began to weep. When my friend had finished, he invited my wife and me to be baptized. We accepted.

On October 31, 1978, less than a month after our experience at the São Paulo Temple, we were baptized and confirmed. The next day we participated in the second dedicatory session of the São Paulo Brazil Temple. A year later we returned to the temple with our two sons to be sealed as a family. All three occasions were beautiful, memorable experiences. We have continued to perpetuate those feelings with regular temple worship over the years.

Twenty-eight years to the day after our baptism, my wife and I again stood in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. I had just been called as temple president. It was a tender experience for us to walk the halls of the house of the Lord and to feel anew the tender feelings that had been the catalyst of our conversion.

The temple continues to bring my wife and me great happiness. When we see a young couple entering the temple to be sealed as an eternal family, we feel great hope.

Many people throughout the world are prepared to hear the message of the gospel. They feel a thirst similar to what I felt more than 30 years ago. The temple and its ordinances are powerful enough to quench that thirst and fill their voids. ■

Loved

BACK INTO ACTIVITY

Name withheld

When my son Jack* was 14, he pierced his ears, quit going to seminary, and refused to go to church.

My husband and I tried everything we could think of to change this attitude. Nothing seemed to work. Jack was angry at the world and at us. We came to recognize that all we could do for him was display charity—the pure love we had for him. But we were amazed to see many other people abundantly extend love in ways that significantly helped my son.

Jack's brothers and sisters were the first to show charity. His older brothers repeatedly invited him to social activities with their friends, even when having a little brother tag along might not have been popular. His older sister lived across the country, and she called him regularly to just chat.

Jack's grandpa Oscar also made a huge difference. When Jack started choosing a different path, Grandpa Oscar began calling him once a week, and they talked about everything from horses to school to motorcycles.

Next door to us lived the Carlton family. They had a son who liked many of the same activities as Jack: rock climbing, hiking, camping, and ballroom dancing. Although Jack didn't attend church, the Carltons didn't exclude him. Rather, they welcomed him into their home, shared meals, and were interested in his activities. Their continued love and support were critical to Jack.

When Jack was 15, he decided to do a project for his Eagle Scout Award. Jack's Scout leader, Brother White, opened his wood shop and spent hours with Jack and my

husband building a large box in which to store food for horses. This helped Jack to earn his Eagle Scout Award.

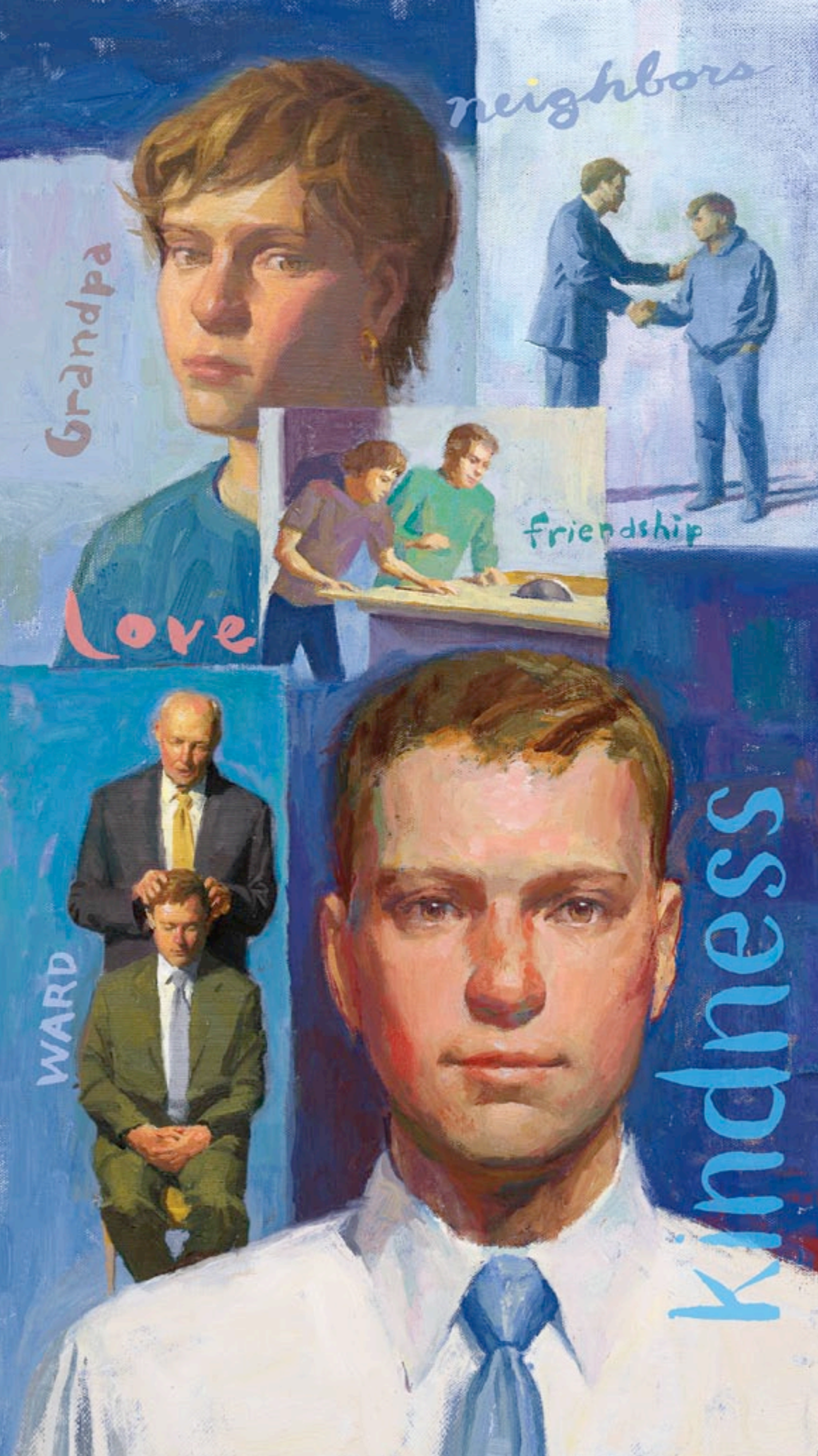
We have also been blessed with wonderful bishops. Bishop Noble not only visited with Jack in an official capacity but also invited him to go on mule rides and hired him for odd jobs. When a new bishop was called, he recognized Jack's needs and received inspiration on how best to meet those needs.

The members of our ward also showed great charity. Every time Jack attended church, our neighbors and friends greeted him warmly. They didn't criticize his long hair or his choices; instead they shook his hand. In the neighborhood they were equally kind. One neighbor called Jack when she had odd jobs. She told me often what a great worker he was and offered to write letters of recommendation for him. Each of these acts of charity helped strengthen Jack's self-esteem.

Each person who crossed Jack's path with love played a part in helping him remember who he is—a wonderful son of our Heavenly Father. Collectively, these acts of charity blessed Jack's life in incredible ways. At the age of 22, Jack decided to begin attending his local student ward. With the help of yet another encouraging bishop, he subsequently received his patriarchal blessing and was ordained to the office of priest in the Aaronic Priesthood.

I will be forever grateful to the people in our ward, our neighborhood, and our extended family who treated Jack with love. I know that charity, the pure love of Christ, can touch souls when nothing else can. ■

**Names have been changed.*



Each person who crossed Jack's path with love played a part in helping him remember who he is—a person of great worth.



WEARING THE MANTLE OF CHARITY

"All of you wear the mantle of charity. Life is perfect for none of us. Rather than being judgmental and critical of each other, may we have the pure love of Christ for our fellow travelers in this journey through life. May we recognize that each one is doing [his or] her best to deal with the challenges which come [his or] her way, and may we strive to do our best to help out."

Thomas S. Monson, "Charity Never Fails," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 125.



**By Elder
Russell M. Nelson**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

The Mission and Ministry of **JESUS CHRIST**

*The best evidence of our adoration
of Jesus is our emulation of Him.*

As one among the “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world” (D&C 107:23), I believe I serve best if I teach and testify of Him. First, I might ask the same questions He once posed to the Pharisees: “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?” (Matthew 22:42).

These questions often come to mind as I meet with leaders of governments and various religious denominations. Some acknowledge that “Jesus was a great teacher.” Others say, “He was a prophet.” Others simply do not know Him at all. We should not be totally surprised. After all, relatively few people have the restored gospel truths we have. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are but a small minority among those who claim to be Christians.

Our circumstance today was foreseen centuries ago by Nephi:

“And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few . . . ; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small. . . .

“And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory” (1 Nephi 14:12, 14).

That righteousness, that power, and that glory—indeed, all of our many blessings—stem from our knowledge of, obedience to, and gratitude and love for the Lord Jesus Christ.



During His relatively brief sojourn in mortality, the Savior accomplished two overarching objectives. One was His “work and [His] glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). The other He stated simply: “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done” (John 13:15).

His first objective we know as the Atonement. This was His magnificent mission in mortality. To the people of ancient America, the resurrected Lord gave His mission statement:

“I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me” (3 Nephi 27:13–14).

In continuing His sermon, He revealed His second objective—to be our exemplar: “Ye know the things that ye must do . . . ; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do” (3 Nephi 27:21).

His first objective I have defined as His *mission*. His second objective I would like to identify as His *ministry*. Let us review these two components of His life—His mission and His ministry.

The Mission of Jesus Christ—the Atonement

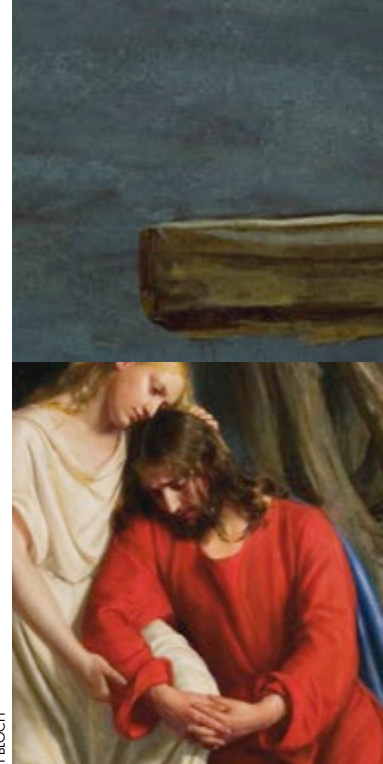
His mission was the Atonement. That mission was uniquely His. Born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father, He was the only one who could voluntarily lay down His life and take it up again (see John 10:14–18). The glorious consequences of His Atonement were infinite and eternal. He took the sting

out of death and made temporary the grief of the grave (see 1 Corinthians 15:54–55). His responsibility for the Atonement was known even before the Creation and the Fall. Not only was it to provide for the resurrection and immortality of all humankind, but it was also to enable us to be forgiven of our sins—upon conditions established by Him. Thus His Atonement opened the way by which we could be united with Him and with our families eternally. This prospect we esteem as eternal life—the greatest gift of God to man (see D&C 14:7).

No one else could effect the Atonement. No other person, even with the greatest wealth and power, could ever save one soul—not even his own (see Matthew 19:24–26). And no other individual will be required or permitted to shed blood for the eternal salvation of another human being. Jesus did it “once for all” (Hebrews 10:10).

Though the Atonement was consummated during the time of the New Testament, events of Old Testament times frequently foretold its importance. Adam and Eve were commanded to offer sacrifices as “a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Moses 5:7). How? By the shedding of blood. From their own experience they confirmed the scripture that “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11).

Physicians know that whenever blood ceases to flow to an organ, trouble begins. If blood flow to a leg is interrupted, gangrene may follow. If flow to the brain is stopped, a stroke may result. If blood fails to flow normally through a coronary artery, a heart attack may develop. And if hemorrhage is uncontrolled, death ensues.



WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON (STABAT MATER), BY JAMES TISSOT, © BROOKLYN MUSEUM, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, INSET: DETAIL FROM IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH

The Savior began shedding His blood for all mankind not on the cross, where the agony of the Atonement was completed, but in the Garden of Gethsemane.



Adam, Eve, and generations to follow learned that whenever they shed blood from an animal, its life was terminated. For their sacrificial rite, not just *any* animal would do. It was to be a firstling of the flock and one without blemish (see, for example, Exodus 12:5). These requisites were also symbolic of the eventual sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God.

Adam and Eve were given a commandment: “Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore” (Moses 5:8). From that day to the meridian of time, animal sacrifice continued to be a type and shadow of the eventual Atonement of the Son of God.

When the Atonement was accomplished, that great and last sacrifice fulfilled the law of Moses (see Alma 34:13–14) and terminated the practice of animal sacrifice, which had taught that “the life of the flesh [was] in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11). Jesus explained how the elements of ancient sacrifice were subsumed by the Atonement and commemorated symbolically by the sacrament. Note again references to the life, the flesh, and the blood:

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:53–54).

Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind—even as many as will—will be redeemed. The Savior began shedding His blood for all mankind not on the cross but in the Garden of Gethsemane. There He took upon Himself the weight of the sins of all who would ever live. Under that heavy load, He bled at every pore (see D&C 19:18). The agony of the Atonement was completed on the cross at Calvary.

The importance of the Atonement was summarized by the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said, “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was

buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”¹

With that authority and with profound gratitude, I so teach and testify of Him.

The Ministry of Jesus Christ—the Exemplar

The Lord’s second far-reaching objective in mortality was to serve as an example for us. His exemplary life constituted His mortal ministry. It included His teachings, parables, and sermons. It encompassed His miracles, loving-kindness, and long-suffering toward the children of men (see 1 Nephi 19:9). It embraced His compassionate use of priesthood authority. It included His righteous indignation when He condemned sin (see Romans 8:3) and when He overthrew the tables of the money changers (see Matthew 21:12). It also included His heartaches. He was mocked, scourged, and disowned by His own people (see Mosiah 15:5)—even betrayed by one disciple and denied by another (see John 18:2–3, 25–27).

Wonderful as His ministerial acts were, they were not and are still not unique to Him. There is no limit to the number of people who may follow the example of Jesus. Similar acts have been done by His prophets and apostles and others among His authorized servants. Many have endured persecution for His sake (see Matthew 5:10; 3 Nephi 12:10). In our own time, you know brothers and sisters who have earnestly striven—even at a terrible price—to emulate the Lord’s example.

That is as it should be. That is His hope for us. The Lord asked us to follow His example. His appeals are crystal clear:

- “What manner of men ought ye to be? . . . Even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27; see also 3 Nephi 12:48).
- “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).
- “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done” (John 13:15; see also John 14:6).

These and other similar scriptures were not written as suggestions. They are divine imperatives! We are to follow His example!

To facilitate our desire to follow Him, perhaps we could consider five aspects of His life that we can emulate.

Love

If I were to ask which characteristic of His life you would identify first, I think you might name His attribute of love. That would include His compassion, kindness, charity, devotion, forgiveness, mercy, justice, and more. Jesus loved His Father and His mother (see John 19:25–27). He loved His family and the Saints (see John 13:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:16). He loved the sinner without excusing the sin (see Matthew 9:2; D&C 24:2). And He taught us how we can show our love for Him. He said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Then, to underscore that His love was not *unconditional*, He added, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:10; see also D&C 95:12; 124:87).

Another expression of our Savior’s love was His service. He served His Father, and He served the people with whom He lived and labored. In both ways we are to follow His example. We are to serve God, “to walk



The feature that distinguished the Savior’s teaching above that of all other teachers was that He taught truths of eternal significance. Only He could have revealed our purpose in life.



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, BY JAMES TISSOT; INSET: DETAIL FROM CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER, BY HEINRICH HOFMANN, COURTESY OF C. HARRISON CONROY CO.



in all his ways, and to love him” (Deuteronomy 10:12; see also 11:13; Joshua 22:5; D&C 20:31; 59:5). And we are to love our neighbors by serving them (see Galatians 5:13; Mosiah 4:15–16). We start with our families. The deep love that binds parents to their children is forged by service to them through their period of total dependence. Later in life dutiful children may have the opportunity to reciprocate that love when they serve their aging parents.

Ordinances

A second aspect of the Savior’s exemplary life was His emphasis on sacred ordinances. During His mortal ministry He demonstrated the importance of the ordinances of salvation. He was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Even John asked, “Why?”

Jesus explained, “For thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15; emphasis added). Not only was the ordinance essential, but the example set by Jesus and John was also essential.

Later the Lord instituted the ordinance of the sacrament. He explained the symbolism of the sacrament and administered its sacred emblems to His disciples (see Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 24:30).

Our Heavenly Father also gave instruction regarding ordinances. He said: “Ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory” (Moses 6:59).

During the Lord’s postmortal ministry, the higher ordinances of exaltation were revealed (D&C 124:40–42). He has provided for these ordinances in His holy temples. In our day, washings, anointings, and endowments are granted to individuals who are properly prepared (see D&C 105:12, 18, 33; 110:9; 124:39). In the temple, an individual may be sealed to husband or wife, to progenitors, and to posterity (see D&C 132:19). Our Master is a God of law and order (see D&C 132:18). His focus on ordinances is a powerful part of His example to us.

Prayer

A third aspect of the Lord's exemplary ministry is prayer. Jesus prayed to His Father in Heaven and also taught us how to pray. We are to pray to God the Eternal Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost (see Matthew 6:9–13; 3 Nephi 13:9–13; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:9–15). I love the great Intercessory Prayer offered by the Lord recorded in John, chapter 17. In it the Son communicates freely with His Father on behalf of His disciples, whom He loves. It is a model of effective and compassionate prayer.

Knowledge

A fourth aspect of the Lord's example is the use of His divine knowledge. As mentioned earlier, many non-Christians acknowledge that Jesus was a great teacher. Indeed, He was. But what truly distinguished His teaching? Was He a skilled instructor of engineering, mathematics, or science? As Creator of this and other worlds (see Moses 1:33), He surely could have been. Or, as the Author of scripture, He could have taught literary composition very well.

The feature that distinguished His teaching above that of all other teachers was that He taught truths of *eternal* significance. Only He could have revealed our purpose in life. Only through Him could we learn of our *premortal* existence and of our *postmortal* potential.

On one occasion the Master Teacher told His skeptical listeners that they had three witnesses of Him:

- John the Baptist.
- The deeds that Jesus had accomplished.
- The word of God the Eternal Father (see John 5:33–37).

He then proffered a fourth witness: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

The word *think* in that phrase may at first seem to be out of place. But it is vital to the meaning Jesus was trying to convey. He knew that many of His listeners did actually *think* that eternal life was in the scriptures. But they were wrong. The scriptures alone *cannot* bestow eternal life. Of course

there is power in scripture, but that power comes from Jesus Himself. He *is* the Word: *Logos*. The power of eternal life is in Him, who "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1; see also 2 Nephi 31:20; 32:3). Then, because of the stubborn stance of His skeptics, Jesus went on to rebuke them: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have [eternal] life" (John 5:40).

The Master could overwhelm us with His supernal knowledge, but He does not. He honors our agency. He allows us the joy of discovery. He encourages us to repent of our own mistakes. He permits us to experience the freedom that comes from our willing obedience to His divine law. Yes, the way He uses His knowledge provides a great example for us.

Endurance

A fifth aspect of the Lord's ministry is His commitment to endure to the end. Never did He withdraw from His assignment. Though He experienced suffering beyond our comprehension, He was not a quitter. Through deepening trials He endured to the end of His assignment: to atone for the sins of all humankind. His final words as He hung from the cross were, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

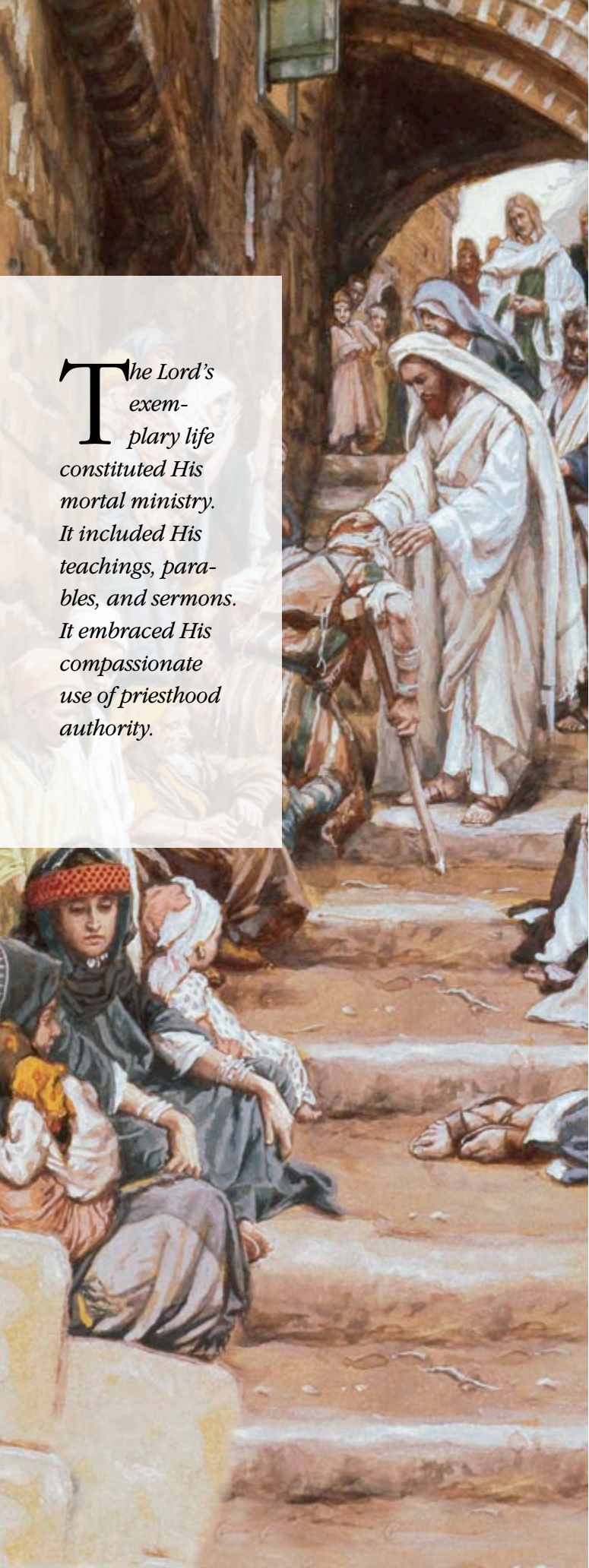
Application to Our Lives

These five aspects of His ministry can be applied in our own lives. Surely the best evidence of our adoration of Jesus is our emulation of Him.

When we begin to realize who Jesus is and what He has done for us, we can understand, to some degree, the logic of the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). In other words, all that we think and do and say should be steeped in our love for Him and His Father.

Ask yourself, "Is there anyone whom I love more than the Lord?" Then compare your answer to these standards set by the Lord:

- "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."



The Lord's exemplary life constituted His mortal ministry. It included His teachings, parables, and sermons. It embraced His compassionate use of priesthood authority.

- “He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37).

Love for family and friends, great as it may be, is much more profound when anchored in the love of Jesus Christ. Parental love for children has more meaning here and hereafter because of Him. All loving relationships are elevated in Him. Love of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ provides the illumination, inspiration, and motivation to love others in a loftier way.

Ordinances provide a focus for service of eternal worth. Parents should consider which ordinance is needed next by each child. Home teachers should think of an appropriate ordinance needed next in each family they serve.

The Savior's example of *prayer* reminds us that personal prayer, family prayer, and prayerful pursuit of our assignments in the Church should become part of our lives. To know and to do the will of the Father provides great spiritual strength and confidence (see D&C 121:45). On the Lord's side is where we want to be.

Knowledge “of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be” (Jacob 4:13) allows us to act upon true principles and doctrine. That knowledge will lift our level of behavior. Acts that otherwise might be driven by appetite and emotion will be superseded by deeds shaped by reason and right.

A commitment to *endure to the end* means that we will not ask for a release from a call to serve. It means that we will persevere in pursuit of a worthy goal. It means that we will never give up on a loved one who has strayed. And it means that we will always cherish our eternal family relationships, even through difficult days of disease, disability, or death.

With all my heart I pray that the transforming influence of the Lord may make a profound difference in your life. His mission and His ministry can bless each of us now and forevermore. ■

From a devotional address given on August 18, 1998, at Brigham Young University. For the full text in English, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.

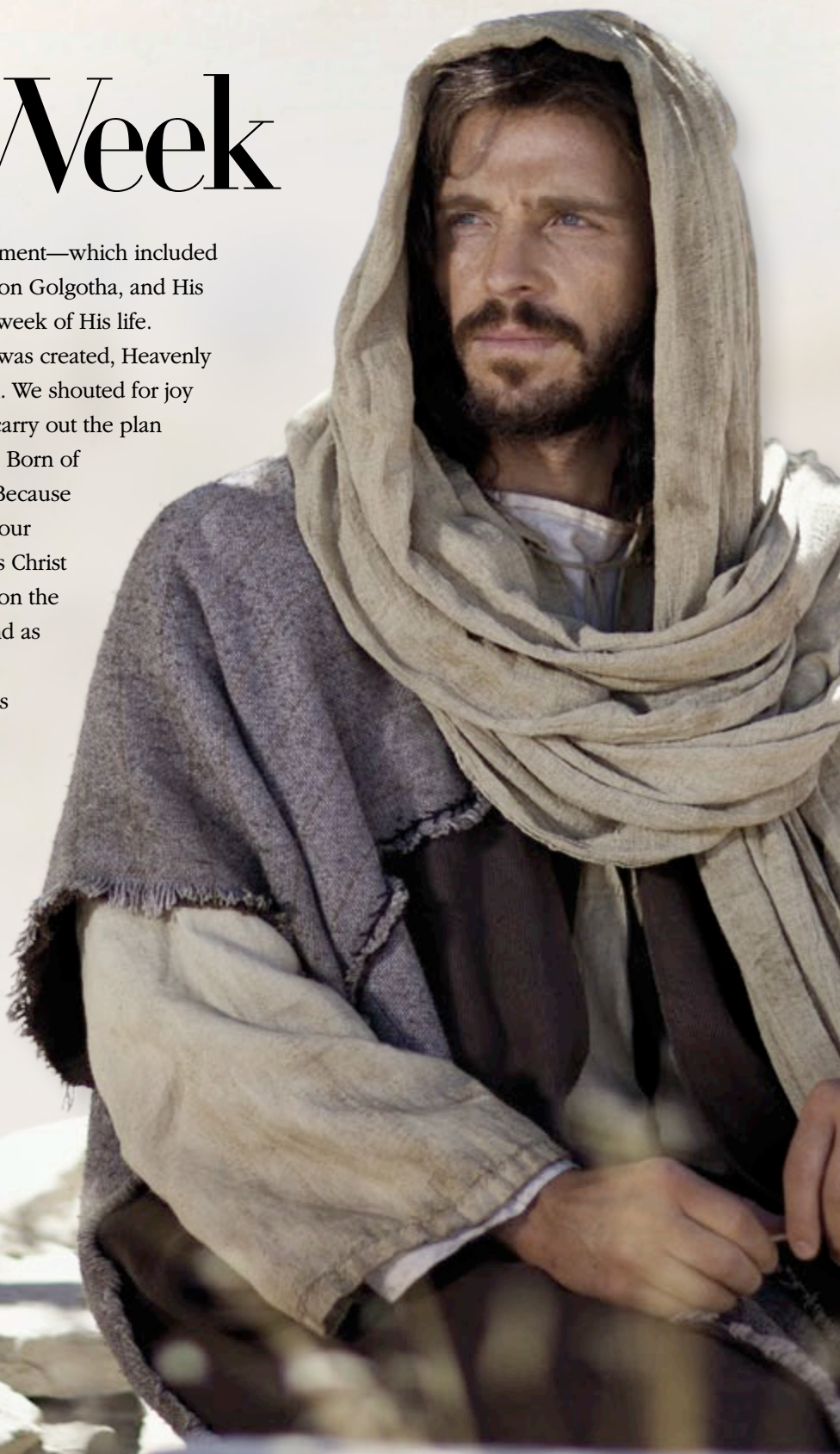
Easter Week

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, fulfilled the Atonement—which included His suffering in Gethsemane, His Crucifixion on Golgotha, and His Resurrection from the tomb—during the last week of His life.

In the Council in Heaven before the earth was created, Heavenly Father presented His plan for us, His children. We shouted for joy when Heavenly Father chose Jesus Christ to carry out the plan of salvation (see Job 38:7 and Abraham 3:27). Born of Mary at Bethlehem, Jesus lived a sinless life. Because of His Atonement, we can return to live with our Heavenly Father and receive eternal life. Jesus Christ will come again in power and glory to dwell on the earth during the Millennium, and He will stand as Judge of all people at the last day.

Following are images from the Bible videos that portray the last week of the Savior's life. Consider reading the scripture verses listed for each image. For a full chronology of events, refer to the harmony of the four Gospels in the Bible Dictionary or the Guide to the Scriptures. The Bible videos are available at biblevideos.lds.org.

IMAGES © IRI



On the fifth day before Passover, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as was prophesied. People recognized Him as their King, shouted “Hosanna,” and placed their garments and palm fronds on the ground in front of the donkey. (See Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Zechariah 9:9.)



For the second time during His mortal ministry, Jesus cleansed the courts of the temple. “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves,” He told the money changers (Matthew 21:13). Then many of the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw His miracles, they became angry and sought for a way to destroy Him. (See Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19.)

Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of the Father, condescended to come to earth to redeem all people from the Fall. (See 1 Nephi

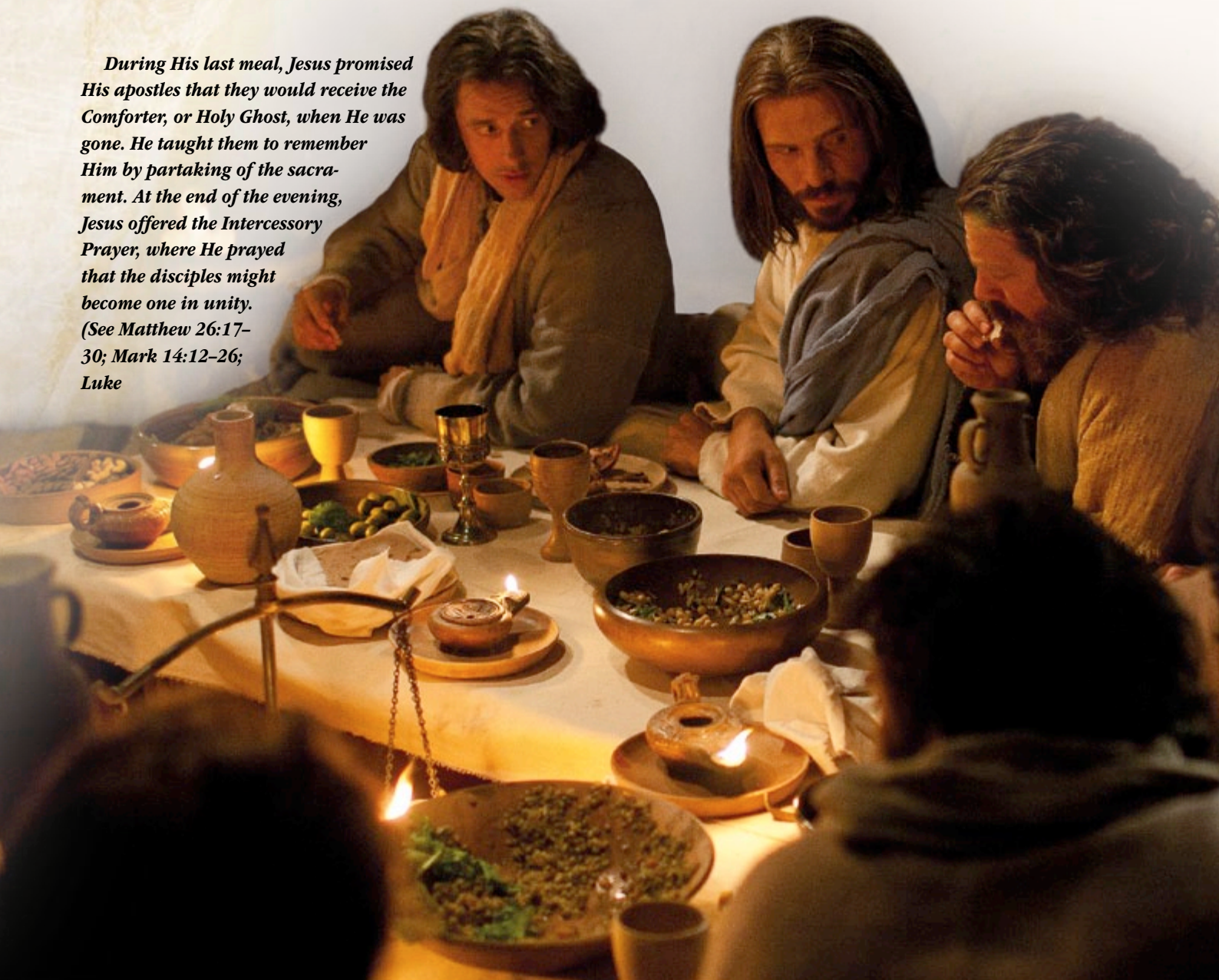


Throughout the week, the Savior delivered some of His most memorable sermons, including His teachings about the widow's mite. (See Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4.)

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the Savior knelt and prayed, His agony for the sins of the world causing Him "to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit" (D&C 19:18). Soon Judas Iscariot and a multitude of armed men arrested Jesus, and all the disciples forsook the Lord and fled. (See Matthew 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-50; Luke 22:39-53.)



During His last meal, Jesus promised His apostles that they would receive the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, when He was gone. He taught them to remember Him by partaking of the sacrament. At the end of the evening, Jesus offered the Intercessory Prayer, where He prayed that the disciples might become one in unity. (See Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke





After an illegal trial and cruel scourging, Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be crucified, completing the “great and last sacrifice” that made salvation possible for all the children of God (see Alma 34:14–15). Before nightfall, Jesus’s followers removed His body from the cross, dressed Him in linen and spices, and laid Him in a tomb. (See Matthew 27; Luke 23; Mark 15; John 19.)



Sunday morning dawned, and Mary Magdalene and other faithful women arrived at the tomb to further anoint Jesus’s body. They found the stone of the tomb rolled away and two angels who declared joyous tidings: “He is not here: for he is risen” (Matthew 28:6). The resurrected Savior had conquered physical death and made it possible for each of us to live again: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). (See Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20.) ■

BEHOLD THE Lamb of God



The figure of the ancient sacrificial lamb can help us understand the Atonement.

By David Rolph Seely and Jo Ann H. Seely

Instructors in Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University

On the rocky slopes of Mount Gerizim in the Holy Land, Samaritans have gathered for centuries to celebrate Passover. Families dressed in holiday attire assemble as priests in ritual robes chant scripture passages and men and youths wearing white clothing tend fires in roasting pits. One-year-old sacrificial lambs are brought individually to the village square, often by young boys who call them by name and stroke them affectionately. These lambs are prized possessions the families offer to God.

Passover begins at sunset when the high priest raises his voice, and at the moment of sacrifice, the people joyfully shout and clap, hugging and kissing one another. They exult in the blood of the lambs and rejoice as they fulfill the principles

of sacrifice recorded in the books of Moses: obey the commandments, offer a precious gift, and sacrifice unblemished lambs. The sweet savor of the roasting lambs fills the air until the feast commences at midnight, when loved ones join together to sing hymns and to give thanks to God.

The Passover lamb serves as a powerful metaphor of the mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ. The sacrificial lamb foreshadowed the sacrifice of the Savior. Nephi taught his people that the law of Moses, which required them to sacrifice lambs, was intended to cast their minds toward Christ: “For this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of [Christ]” (2 Nephi 11:4). At the beginning of the Savior’s ministry, John the Baptist introduced Jesus as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the



sin of the world” (John 1:29). The Apostle Peter taught the early Saints that they were redeemed through “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish” (1 Peter 1:19). As we explore the symbolism of the sacrificial lamb and the role of our Savior, the Lamb of God, our understanding of the Atonement can deepen.

The Sacrificial Lamb

The symbols of sacrifice have been in use since Adam and Eve stepped outside the Garden of Eden into the fallen world. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains, “Adam and Eve . . . knew this world would contain thorns and thistles and troubles of every kind. Perhaps their most challenging realization . . . [was] the fact that they would now be distanced from God, separated from Him with whom they had walked and talked.”¹ In His love, Heavenly Father established the sacrificial lamb to remind Adam and Eve that they could return to His presence because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They were taught by an angel, “This thing is a similitude of

the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth” (Moses 5:7).

Generations later, the prophet Abraham learned first-hand what it meant for God to sacrifice His Only Begotten Son. Without explanation, God commanded Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest . . . and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains.” With what must have been a grieved heart, Abraham obediently “rose up early” the next morning and took Isaac to fulfill God’s commands. When they arrived at the appointed place, Isaac noted the wood and the fire for the sacrifice and asked, “Where is the lamb?” Abraham responded, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” Then Abraham built the altar, readied the wood, and bound Isaac for sacrifice. (See Genesis 22:2–9.)

Traditionally, an animal’s legs were bound before it was sacrificed. In Jewish literature the story of Abraham and Isaac is known as the *Akedah*, or “The Binding,” in reference to Abraham binding his son. Heavenly Father spared Abraham and Isaac by providing the ram in the thicket;

Adam and Eve were told to sacrifice “the firstlings of their flocks” (Moses 5:5), a practice they passed on to their children.





Abraham's experience with his son Isaac was a stark lesson about the Savior's sacrifice.

the blood of the animal was shed for Isaac.

Abraham's obedience in "offering up his son Isaac, which is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son" (Jacob 4:5), was accounted to him for righteousness. The children of Israel, Abraham's posterity, continued to learn about the Atonement of Jesus Christ through the sacrifices they offered, first at the tabernacle in the wilderness and then at the temple, under the law of Moses. Lambs were offered as the burnt offerings at the morning and evening sacrifices and on sabbaths, special feasts, and holy days (see Exodus 29:38–42; Numbers 28–29). The Lord instructed the men of Israel to bring their sacrifices "without blemish" of their "own voluntary will"; each man placed his hand upon the head of his lamb, and the lamb was "accepted for him to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:3, 4).

These blood sacrifices became a poignant symbol of the Atonement: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to

you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). In return for these sacrifices, the Lord extended transcendent promises: "I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. . . . And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God" (Exodus 29:43, 45).

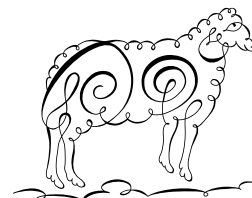
The children of Israel also learned about the Atonement through the Passover, a feast commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. The elements of the Passover meal—especially the lamb—pointed to the coming of the Messiah and the redemption He would offer from death and hell.

Shortly before the children of Israel were freed from bondage in Egypt, the Lord commanded them to "take to them every man a lamb, . . . without blemish, a male of the first year" (Exodus 12:3, 5). Each family chose a lamb on the 14th day of the first month and sacrificed it, being careful to avoid breaking any bones. They took the blood of the animal and daubed it on the door frames as a token of their obedience to the Lord's commandments. In return for their obedience, the Lord promised He would "pass over" them and spare their firstborn (Exodus 12:13). After the Israelites escaped from Egypt, they continued to celebrate Passover each year.

The central symbol of Passover is the lamb offered as a substitute for the firstborn of Israel. Samaritans continue this tradition today, but for the Jews, Passover sacrifices were discontinued once the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. After this time the Jews continued to observe Passover, which retained many powerful symbols, but they did not perform blood sacrifices.

Doctrinal Points

- The sacrifice of the Passover lamb foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ is also known as the Lamb of God.
- The Savior's Atonement fulfilled the law of Moses and ended the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.
- God has commanded us to offer a broken heart and a contrite spirit for a sacrifice.





PEACE / LEAVE WITH YOU, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

At the Last Supper, a Passover meal, the Savior showed how His sacrifice would deliver Israel from spiritual and physical

Heavenly Father spared the children of the families who kept Passover, but when it came time for the infinite and eternal sacrifice, He “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Romans 8:32). There “was no ram in the thicket to be offered as a substitute” for the Lamb of God.²

Jesus Christ as Fulfillment of the Sacrificial Lamb

Isaiah describes the Messiah as a meek and suffering servant: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7). Before the Savior fulfilled His role as the sacrificial Lamb of God, He met with His apostles at the Last Supper and commemorated Israel’s deliverance from Egypt (see Matthew 26:17–20). After the meal, the Lord took two symbolic elements of the Passover—the unleavened bread and the wine—and sanctified them to represent His body and His blood: “Take, eat; this is my body.

“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it” (Matthew 26:26–27).

The newly instituted sacrament represented a different type of deliverance. Whereas Israel had been delivered from physical bondage, the Savior’s impending sacrifice promised deliverance from spiritual and physical death.

John identifies Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb in his gospel. After Jesus suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane, John

records that the Savior was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, and the soldiers “took Jesus, and bound him” (John 18:12), which reminds us of the *Akedah* (“The Binding”) and symbolizes a bound sacrifice. Jesus was brought before the Jewish leader Annas and the High Priest Caiaphas, and then to the Roman rulers Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate. Although Jesus solemnly declared His Messiahship to His initial accusers, He “opened not his mouth” during His trial before Herod Antipas and was also silent at times before the chief priests and Pilate (Isaiah 53:7; see also Mark 15:3–5; Luke 23:8–9). He was eventually condemned to die.

John also records that the Last Supper occurred the day before Passover; thus the Savior was likely bound and crucified at the same time the Passover lambs were being sacrificed at the temple (see John 13:1). John also recounts that when Pilate ordered the soldiers to break the legs of those being crucified to hasten their deaths, the soldiers instead pierced Jesus’s side to make sure He was dead. Just as the lambs of Israel were sacrificed without breaking any bones, so the Son of God was sacrificed and the scriptures fulfilled: “A bone of him shall not be broken” (John 19:36; see also Psalm 34:20).

After the Savior completed His atoning sacrifice, blood sacrifices were no longer a gospel ordinance. We are now required to offer the Lord “a broken heart and a contrite

spirit” (3 Nephi 9:20). We are also asked to comply with the principles of sacrifice by obeying the commandments, offering precious gifts of love, time, and service, and remembering the sacrifice of our Savior. Our sacrifices deepen our worship, acknowledge our debt to God, and express gratitude for our blessings (see Bible Dictionary, “Sacrifices”).

Worthy Is the Lamb

In the spring a myriad of newborn lambs dot the countryside of the Holy Land, reminding us of the Beloved Lamb who was sacrificed so that we might live. In his marvelous vision, Nephi was taught that “the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him,

Jesus Christ was bound and taken to rulers before whom He “opened not his mouth” (see Isaiah 53:7).

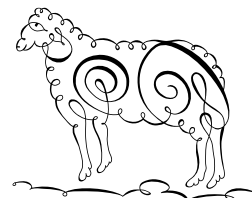


or they cannot be saved” (1 Nephi 13:40; for the full vision, see 1 Nephi 11–14). We cannot access the full blessings of the Atonement of the Lamb of God without making sacrifices of our own. In fact, in the *Lectures on Faith* we are taught that “a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation. . . . It [is] through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life.”³

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches that our sacrifices of “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 9:20) and our loving service to our fellow beings are a small but “worshipful imitation” of the sacrifice of our Savior. Elder Oaks says, “Just as the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ is at the center of the plan of salvation, we followers of Christ must make our own sacrifices to prepare for the destiny that plan provides for us.”⁴

After the Savior fulfilled His role as the sacrificial Lamb, He rose from the tomb and ascended to heaven, where He stands “on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). Those who “[come] out of great tribulation, and [wash] their robes . . . in the blood of the Lamb” are welcomed into the presence of God, where “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Revelation 7:14, 17).

We join with the angelic praise recorded by John the Beloved and immortalized by George Frideric Handel in his oratorio *Messiah*: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. . . . Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Revelation 5:12–13). ■



“The Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and . . . all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved” (1 Nephi 13:40).

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Ministry of Angels,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 29.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Search for Jesus,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1990, 4.
3. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 69.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 22.

Death AND Life

PIONEER PERSPECTIVES ON THE RESURRECTION

As early Church converts journeyed to the western United States to gather with the Saints, they encountered death but were bolstered by their new faith in the restored gospel. Following are excerpts from pioneer accounts that show the Saints' hope in the Resurrection, together with comforting teachings from the first five Church Presidents.

An account of an unnamed Scandinavian Latter-day Saint father whose young son died on the journey from New York to Utah in 1866:

"With the help of a friend the little grave was dug and the remains placed therein. The child dying from a contagious disease, there were no assembled mourners, no formal ceremony, no floral emblems, no spiritual song, no word of eulogy. But ere the bereaved father departed he uttered a brief dedicatory prayer in his native language (Danish) as follows: . . .

"Heavenly Father: Thou gavest me this little treasure—this darling boy, and now thou hast called him away. Wilt thou grant that his remains may lie here undisturbed until the resurrection morn. Thy will be done. Amen."

"And rising from the ground his parting words were:

"'Farewell, my dear little Hans—my beautiful boy.' Then with drooping head and aching heart he stoutly bent his way to his camping ground."¹

President Joseph Smith (1805–44):

"How consoling to the mourners when they are called to part with a husband, wife, father, mother, child, or dear relative, to know that, although the earthly tabernacle is laid down and dissolved, they shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die any more, but they shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."²



Joseph Watson Young (1828–73), nephew of Brigham Young, traveled from England to the United States in 1853:

“It was a mournful scene to consign a fellow creature to the silent deep at the dead hour of the night with only a few lonely witnesses. . . . He [Charles Jones] had no relative on board or anyone in particular to mourn him except a fellow servant. These are the fondest hopes of human nature blasted in a moment. This young man had forsaken all to go into Zion, and his heart burned with lively anticipations of the future, little thinking that he was to consign his earthly body to the hungry wave. However, he died not as those who have no hope, for his peace was made with his God, and he had the full assurance of a glorious resurrection in the morning of the just.”³



Above: Joseph Watson Young. Right: President Brigham Young.

President Brigham Young (1801–77):

“What a dark valley and a shadow it is that we call death! To pass from this state of existence as far as the mortal body is concerned, into a state of inanition [emptiness], how strange it is! How dark this valley is! How mysterious is this road, and we have got to travel it alone. I would like to say to you, my friends and brethren, if we could see things as they are, and as we shall see and understand them, this dark shadow and valley is so trifling that we shall turn round and look about upon it and think, when we have crossed it, why this is the greatest advantage of my whole existence, for I have passed from a state of sorrow, grief, mourning, woe, misery, pain, anguish and disappointment into a state of existence, where I can enjoy life to the fullest extent as far as that can be done without a body.”⁴





Dan Jones (1811–62), Welsh convert who, with Mrs. Williams and other Church members, sailed to the United States in 1849:

“Mrs. Williams, of Ynysybont near Tregaron [Wales], is worsening fast, and signs are that she will not live long. . . . She said that the greatest honor she had ever received was to be able to become a member of the true church of the Son of God, that there was no fear in her breast concerning the other life and that her religion now proved its strength more than ever before. . . . She solemnly counseled her sons to continue faithful until death so that they would obtain with her a better resurrection. . . . She continued lucid through the night, and at a

quarter past four the next morning her spirit departed in peace, leaving a smile on her lips.”⁵

President John Taylor (1808–87):

“How consoling it is to those who are called upon to mourn the loss of dear friends in death, to know that we will again be associated with them! How encouraging to all who live according to the revealed principles of truth, perhaps more especially to those whose lives are pretty well spent, who have borne the heat and burden of

the day, to know that ere long we shall burst the barriers of the tomb, and come forth living and immortal souls, to enjoy the society of our tried and trusted friends, no more to be afflicted with the seeds of death, and to finish the work the Father has given us to do!”⁶



Above: Dan Jones. Right: President John Taylor.



Andrew Jenson (1850–1941), Danish immigrant who traveled in the Andrew H. Scott wagon company from Nebraska, USA, to Utah in 1866:

“When we witnessed their [our fellow travelers’] earthly remains deposited in mother earth, in the wilderness, we all wept, or felt like weeping; for the thought of burying dear ones in this manner, when friends and relatives must immediately hasten away, without hopes of ever visiting the resting places of their dead again, was sad and trying indeed. . . . But their graves will be found when Gabriel sounds his trump in the morning of the first resurrection. These departed ones thus laid down their bodies as they were marching towards Zion. The Lord called them home before they reached their destination; they were not permitted to see Zion in the flesh; but they shall receive glory

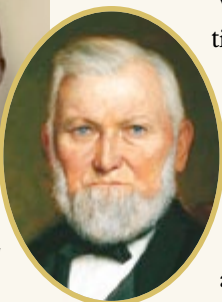
and rejoice hereafter; they died while endeavoring to obey God and keep his commandments, and blessed are they who die in the [Lord].”⁷

President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98):

“Without the gospel of Christ the separation by death is one of the most gloomy subjects it is possible to contemplate; but just as soon as we obtain the gospel and learn the principle of the resurrection the gloom, sorrow and suffering occasioned by death are, in a great measure, taken away. . . . The resurrection of the dead presents itself before the enlightened mind of man, and he has a foundation for his spirit to rest upon. That is the position of the Latter-day Saints today. We do know for ourselves, we are not in the dark with regard to this matter; God has revealed it to us and we do understand the principle of the resurrection of the dead, and that the gospel brings life and immortality to light.”⁸



Above: Andrew Jenson. Right: President Wilford Woodruff.



For readability, some spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been standardized.

NOTES

1. Robert Aveson, “Leaves from the Journal of a Boy Emigrant,” *Deseret News*, Mar. 12, 1921, 4:7; available at lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysearch.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 52.
3. Joseph W. Young, *Journal*, Mar. 6, 1853, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; available at mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 273.



William Driver (1837–1920), pioneer who traveled from England to New York, USA, in 1866:

“Willie, my dearest child, was very ill all night until 7:30 a.m., when he was released from his sufferings. God bless his dear soul. How he suffered. He came to his death through Mr. Poulter’s cart breaking on St. Ann’s Hill, Wandsworth, Surrey, England. Oh, how I mourn this great affliction. O Lord, help me by thy power to bear it as from thy hand and stimulate me to more nobly and faithfully serve Thee, and may I live to prepare to meet him in



Above: William Driver. Right: President Lorenzo Snow.

a happier and better world with his dear sister, Elizabeth Maryann, and at the resurrection of the just may I be there to meet them.”⁹



President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901):

“In the next life we will have our bodies glorified and free from sickness and death. Nothing is so beautiful as a person in a resurrected and glorified condition. There is nothing more lovely than to be in this condition and have our wives and children and friends with us.”¹⁰ ■

5. “A Letter from Capt. D. Jones to the Editor of *Udgorr Seion*,” in Ronald D. Dennis, *The Call of Zion: The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration*, vol. 2 (1987), 164–65; available at mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu.

6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (2001), 50–51.

7. Andrew Jenson, Journal, Aug. 20, 1866, in *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Oct. 8, 1866, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, 6; available at lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysearch.

8. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church:*

Wilford Woodruff (2004), 82–83.

9. Frank Driver Reeve, ed., *London to Salt Lake City in 1866: The Diary of William Driver* (1942), 42; available at mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu.

10. Lorenzo Snow, in Conference Report, Oct. 1900, 63.



**By Elder
Paul V. Johnson**
Of the Seventy

Where Can I Turn for Peace?

*No matter how daunting the challenges in our lives
or in the world around us, we know we can have peace
through the power of the infinite Atonement.*

We live in a world where peace seems elusive. War, armed conflict, and terrorism constantly take their toll somewhere in the world, and crime, gang violence, and other illegal activities affect the peace in our cities and towns. Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and other natural disasters disrupt peaceful lives, and the quakes in the economies of the world have left many struggling.

Some threats to our peace are more individual. Physical or emotional problems, pain, personal debt, addictions, fear, worry for others, and sins—either our own or someone else’s—can obstruct a peaceful outlook in our individual lives.

The scriptures refer to two types of peace we hope for in our lives. One is the absence of war, turmoil, and strife among nations, groups, or individuals. The other is the inner peace of the soul.

One of our hymns asks, “Where can I turn for peace?”¹ The ultimate answer is, “To the Prince of Peace.” Jesus Christ holds the answers for both types of peace. Each of the threats above can be resolved by and through the Savior Jesus Christ. He can control the elements. He has power to heal individuals and nations. His Atonement makes possible the forgiveness of sins and frees people

from afflictions and addictions. His teachings contain the keys to living in peace individually and as a world.

Inner peace is a fruit of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul said, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (Galatians 5:22). The Savior said, “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you” (John 14:27). Peace is a gift. We don’t determine the conditions upon which this gift is given. Our Father in Heaven sets the terms. Sometimes we become so focused on our quest for peace that we forget it is one of the fruits of a righteous life. Our best course for finding peace is to live righteously—to keep our covenants. This is the only course that leads to that inner peace we all desire. The adversary would tempt us to put all our efforts into directions other than a righteous life in our search for peace, but if we do this we will be disappointed in the end. True peace comes only from the Lord as a result of our righteous lives.

Peace amidst Trials

The gift of peace doesn’t mean all our problems and challenges will dissolve according to a timeline we set. But we can have peace amidst trials. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said:





Despite their precarious circumstances, Helaman said he and his stripling warriors “did pour out [their] souls in prayer to God” and that He “did speak peace to [their]

“Indifference to the Savior or failure to keep the commandments of God brings about insecurity, inner turmoil, and contention. These are the opposite of peace. Peace can come to an individual only by an unconditional surrender—surrender to him who is the Prince of Peace, who has power to confer peace. One may live in beautiful and peaceful surroundings but, because of inner dissension and discord, be in a state of constant turmoil. On the other hand, one may be in the midst of utter destruction and the bloodshed of war and yet have the serenity of unspeakable peace. If we look to man and the ways of the world, we will find turmoil and confusion. If we will but turn to God, we will find peace for the restless soul.”²

Think of Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail. It was hardly a setting naturally conducive to peaceful feelings, particularly in light of the struggles of the Saints who had been driven from Missouri. Joseph’s circumstances and those of his people weighed on his soul, and he cried out in anguish to the Lord. The Lord answered by saying, “My son, peace be unto thy soul” (D&C 121:7). Joseph was given the gift of peace even though his circumstances didn’t change right away.

Mormon and Moroni provide examples of individuals remaining steadfast and working diligently in the most trying of circumstances. They lived in a time when the civilization around them was on a steep downward path. Mormon lamented that his people were without civilization and delighted in abomination (see Moroni 9:11, 13). He wrote to Moroni:

“O the depravity of my people! They are without order and without mercy. . . .

“And they have become strong in their

perversion; and they are . . . brutal, . . . and they delight in everything save that which is good. . . .

“. . . They are without principle, and past feeling” (Moroni 9:18–20).

But even with the society in such decline, Mormon told his son, “Notwithstanding their hardness, let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God” (Moroni 9:6).

Mormon reminded his son where their hope and peace were found:

“Be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down . . . but may Christ lift thee up . . . and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever.

“And may the grace of God the Father . . . and our Lord Jesus Christ . . . be, and abide with you forever” (Moroni 9:25–26).

This pattern of inner peace being dependent on diligence and righteousness is pervasive throughout the scriptures. A beautiful verse in Psalms includes the phrase “righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psalm 85:10).

Those who choose unrighteousness cannot experience this inner peace. Isaiah speaks of those whose iniquities have separated them from God:

“Their feet run to evil, and . . . their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity. . . .

“The way of peace they know not; . . . they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace” (Isaiah 59:7–8).

Isaiah summarizes this truth: “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (Isaiah 48:22).

If we give in to temptations, we can damage the inner peace we want and need. Nephi lamented that he struggled with this challenge in his life. He wrote, “Why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul?” (2 Nephi 4:27). This is something each of us faces.

In an interview with a person coming back to the Church, I was struck by how clearly he had come to understand this principle. He recounted how letting go of the iron rod and walking in forbidden paths had brought much sorrow and strife into his life and how his efforts to return to a righteous life had opened the way for the gift of peace to be bestowed on him again. He was so grateful to have that in his life again.

When we face stormy seas and high winds, we may be tempted to ask, “Carest thou not that [I] perish?” (Mark 4:38). We know that the Savior has power to calm our storms, but sometimes He calms our souls instead. As the hymn says, “He answers privately.”³

The Power of the Atonement

At one point in the long wars between the Nephites and Lamanites, Helaman recounted to Moroni the precarious circumstances he and his stripling warriors faced. Because of lack of reinforcements and supplies, it looked as if they would be overthrown. He wrote:

“We did pour out our souls in prayer to God, that he would strengthen us and deliver us out of the hands of our enemies. . . .

“ . . . And it came to pass that the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would

deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him” (Alma 58:10–11).

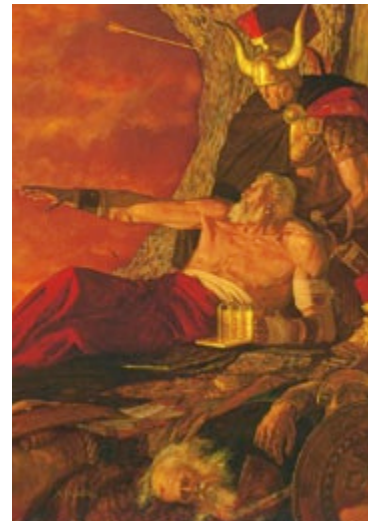
Notice the connection among faith, hope, and peace. This inner peace can be powerful when we have absolute faith and hope in the power of the Savior and His Atonement. He told His disciples: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

No matter how daunting the challenges in our lives or in the world around us, we know we can have peace through the power of the infinite Atonement because Christ overcame the world. Faith in Jesus Christ and in His Atonement engenders the hope of deliverance and the promise of a better world to come. Using this “eye of faith” (Ether 12:19) to see the fulfilling of the Savior’s promises deepens the peace within us because we know of the great blessings and relief that await us if we will only remain faithful. Even in troubled times we have a great promise of peace from the Lord: “He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23).


I testify that our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, love us and that the great gift of peace in this life is available to each of us. I pray that as we each strive to follow the Savior, peace will be poured into our hearts. ■

NOTES

1. “Where Can I Turn for Peace?” *Hymns*, no. 129.
2. *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1997), 172.
3. *Hymns*, no. 129, verse 3.



Mormon and Moroni provide examples of individuals remaining steadfast, working diligently in the most trying of circumstances, and finding inner peace.



THE RESTORATION AND EARLY CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS

By Michael R. Ash

From the day the Prophet Joseph Smith received the gold plates in 1827 until his martyrdom in 1844, the floodgates of revelation were opened as he restored scripture, doctrines, and priesthood authority. The Restoration not only reestablished the original Church of Jesus Christ but also reestablished teachings that had been lost.

Many teachings and practices that distinguish Latter-day Saints from other modern Christians are now known to have been believed and practiced by the early Christians as well. Here are a few of them.

Our Premortal Life

Though the doctrine of premortal life is hinted at in the Bible (see Jeremiah 1:5), many Christian theologians before Joseph Smith had taught that humans and their spirits are created from nothing. The book of Abraham reveals that we had a premortal life with our heavenly family and that we chose the plan of salvation presented by our Heavenly Father (see Abraham 3:22–23).

We now know that this doctrine of premortal life was also accepted by many Jews and Christians around the time of Christ. According to one Jewish

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HISTORICAL RESEARCH
SHOWS THAT TRUTHS
REVEALED TO THE
PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH
WERE TAUGHT BY EARLY
CHRISTIANS.

scholar, Jews in the first few centuries after Christ believed that the soul existed in a heavenly “spiritual reservoir”¹ before being placed into a body, as evidenced by the Apocrypha’s reference to spirits waiting in “chambers of souls”² before birth. The pseudepigraphical book of Enoch, which some Jews and early Christians considered scripture, taught that “all the souls of the children of man have been before they came down to the world.”³

Salvation for the Dead

Though some Christian denominations disagree with each other regarding the necessity of ordinances and works, they all agree that in order to be saved, we must accept Christ and make His sacrifice fully effective in our lives, acknowledging His divinity and the wonderful gift He gave us. However, since the days of Adam, only a small fraction of God’s children have ever had the opportunity to hear the gospel, much less accept it.

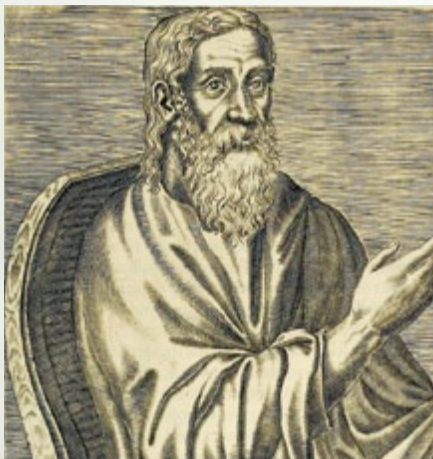
Thanks to modern revelation, we know that ordinances necessary for individual salvation can be performed by proxy for those who didn’t have the chance to receive them while in mortality. A loving and just



Truths known to early Christians regarding premortality, the afterlife, and exaltation were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

God allows all His children the opportunity to accept or reject the gospel and its necessary ordinances.

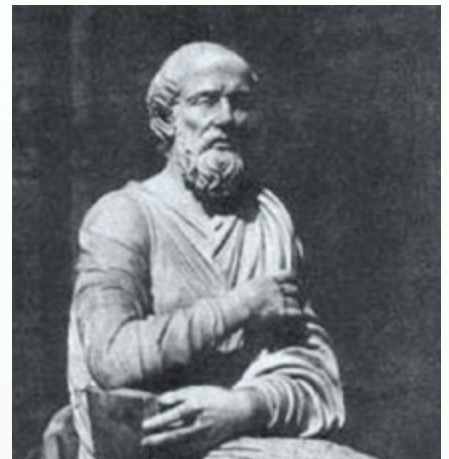
Baptism for the dead is mentioned in the New Testament (see 1 Corinthians 15:29), as is the fact that the Savior delivered the gospel to those in spirit prison (see 1 Peter 3:18–19; 4:6), but before Joseph Smith’s day most Christian theologians taught that these passages were simply anomalies or ambiguities that didn’t really describe early Christian practices and beliefs. More recently, however, non-LDS scholars have written about ancient Christian traditions describing Christ’s preaching to the dead in the spirit world and having taught that baptism was the key to their release.



Clement of Alexandria (second to third century) wrote about salvation for the dead and becoming like God.



Irenaeus (late second century), spoke of varying degrees of reward in the hereafter, as well as Jesus Christ's mission to make us as He is.



Hippolytus (third century) taught that a righteous person will become "a co-heir with Christ."

Some of these early traditions suggest that just as John the Baptist's birth preceded the birth of the Savior so that he could herald Jesus's ministry, so likewise John was killed before the Crucifixion to herald Jesus's coming in the spirit world.⁴

Clement of Alexandria, an early Christian writer of the late second to early third century, said that "Christ went down to Hades [the spirit world] for no other purpose than to preach the gospel."⁵ Clement claimed that Christ not only "visited" and "preached" to the dead but "baptized the just men of old, both gentiles and Jews, not only those who lived before the coming of the Lord, but also those who were before the coming of the Law."⁶

Some non-LDS scholars now recognize that baptism for the dead was an authentic ancient Christian practice. One historian reports that in the early Christian Church "the necessity of Baptism is such that the Apostles and teachers . . . who preached the Gospel had to go down to limbo, there to teach and baptize the just already dead."⁷

Degrees of Glory

While Christian teaching had traditionally maintained that the dead go either to heaven or hell, Joseph Smith learned that there are many degrees of glory in the hereafter. Jesus once taught in a parable that we will reap what we sow and that some will bring forth fruit "an

SCHOLARS NOW RECOGNIZE THAT BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD WAS AN AUTHENTIC ANCIENT CHRISTIAN PRACTICE.

hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (Matthew 13:8). Irenaeus, an early Christian writer of the late second century, explained this passage to mean that there will be varying degrees of reward in the hereafter:

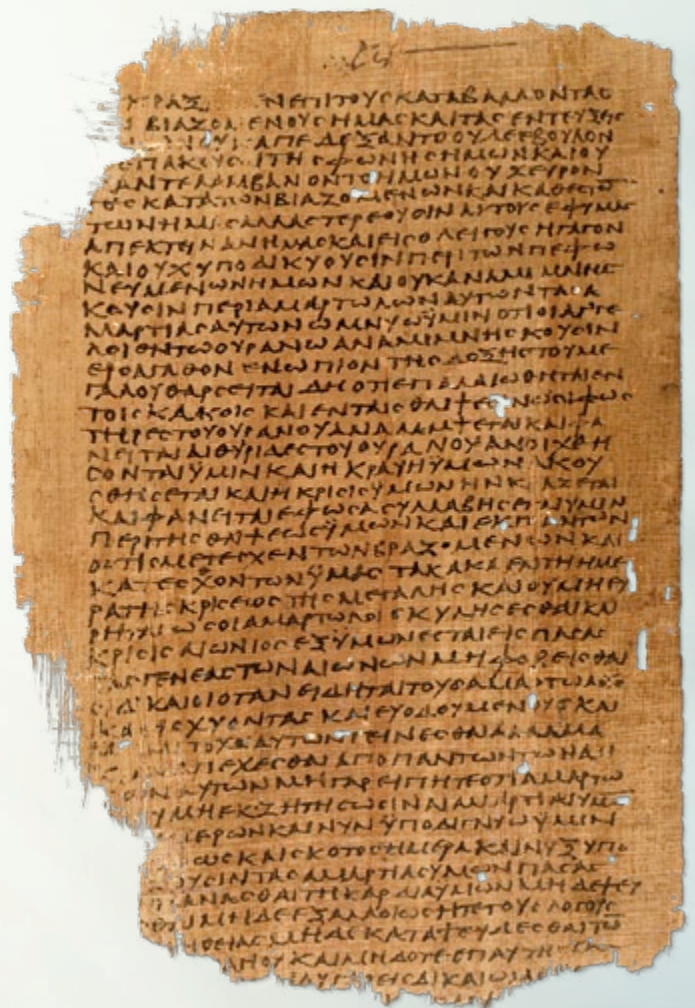
"Then those who are deemed worthy of abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city. . . . There is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: . . . it was on this account the Lord declared, 'In My Father's house are many mansions' [John 14:2; see also D&C 98:18]. For all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place."⁸

Heirs to the Father

Latter-day Saints believe that our Heavenly Father wants us to inherit all that He has so that we can become like Him and His Son. The Epistle to the Hebrews taught that Jesus is “appointed heir of all things” (Hebrews 1:2). Paul taught that the righteous will become “joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17), and Peter taught that they would be “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

Many early Christians believed that the righteous could become like the Father. Irenaeus wrote that Jesus Christ became “what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.”⁹

Clement of Alexandria wrote that Jesus became man so that we may “learn from man how man may become God” and explained that because the righteous will become so “near to the Lord, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation; and they are called by the appellation of gods, being destined to sit on thrones with the other gods that have been first put in their places by the Saviour.”¹⁰



A fragment from one version of the pseudepigraphical book of Enoch, which was used by early Christians and taught that all men “have been before they came down to the world.”

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Why was a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ needed?

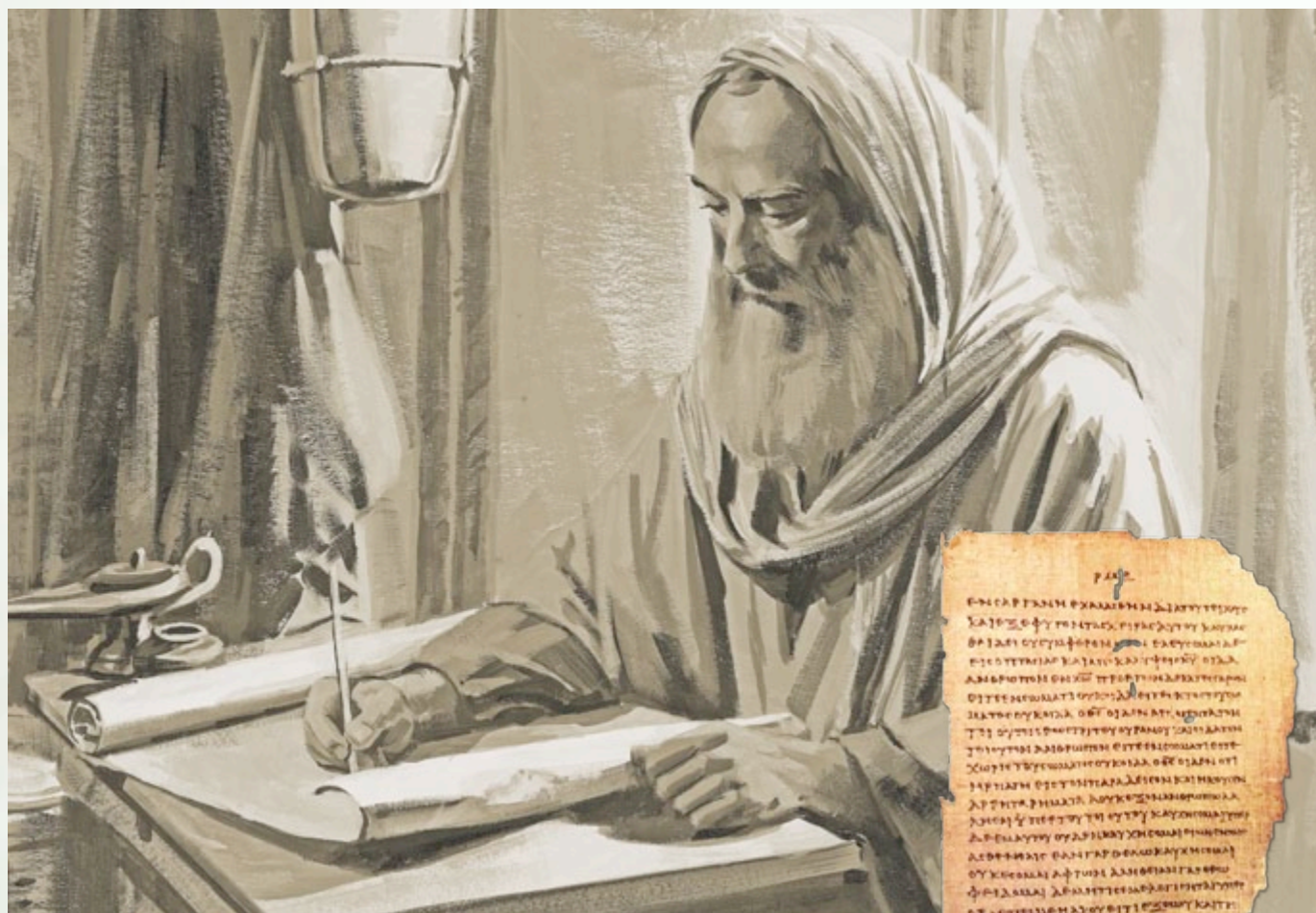
A general falling away from the truth occurred after the death of Christ’s Apostles. This is called the Apostasy (see Amos 8:11–12; Acts 20:29–30; 2 Timothy 4:3).

After the Apostles and many righteous Church members were killed and other members departed from the truth, the Lord took the priesthood authority and His Church from the earth. Without God’s priesthood authority, the Church no longer functioned as Christ had established it. The ordinances were changed, and many plain and simple truths were lost. While many good people and

some truth remained, the original Church was lost.

The Apostle Peter prophesied of the “restitution of all things” before Christ’s Second Coming (see Acts 3:19–21). Having been lost because of the Apostasy, Christ’s Church and His authority were to be restored to the earth.

Joseph Smith’s First Vision marked the beginning of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. In subsequent years, Christ restored His priesthood and reorganized His Church. He has continued to reveal truths to His prophets and to restore the blessings that were taken from the earth for a time. (See **Restoration** in **FAQ** on **Mormon.org**.)



The Apostle Paul taught that we can become “joint-heirs with Christ” and also mentioned baptism for the dead. Though some truths taught by the Savior and His early Apostles became obscured over the centuries, the gospel restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith contains those truths in their proper context and purity.

Even as late as the third century, Hippolytus, bishop of Portus, explained that the righteous will become “a companion of the Deity, and a co-heir with Christ, no longer enslaved with lusts or passions, and never again wasted by disease. For thou hast become God.”¹¹

The early Christian writings on deification are so extensive that non-LDS scholar G. L. Prestige stated that the early Christian Church “taught that the destiny of man was to become like God, and even to become deified.”¹²

Conclusion

These and other authentic ancient Christian teachings were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith because he sought the Lord in study and prayer. From Joseph Smith’s First Vision—which came after he read James

SCHOLARLY STUDIES
HAVE BUTTRESSED THE CLAIM
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DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL OF
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THE MERIDIAN OF TIME.

1:5—we find that many of the Prophet’s revelations were precipitated by his hunger for scripture study and asking Heavenly Father for divine insight. Teachings which had been lost after the demise of the early Apostles were

KEY TEACHINGS

- Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord restored truths that had been known and taught by Christians in the first, second, and third centuries.
- Among the early Christian teachings restored through Joseph Smith are premortal life, salvation for the dead, the degrees of glory, and our ability to become like Heavenly Father through Christ's Atonement.
- As we study and pray, we can receive a witness from the Holy Ghost of the truthfulness of these teachings.



once again given to the Saints of Christ's restored Church.

Thanks to the restoration of these lost teachings, we rejoice with the early Christian Saints in the knowledge that we once lived a premortal life with our Heavenly Father. We know that God is merciful and loves all humankind and has established a plan so that every one of His children will have the opportunity to hear the gospel and receive the ordinances of salvation—even if they never had the chance while in mortality. We also learn that Heavenly Father expects us to participate in the work of bringing salvation to those who died without hearing the good news.

With our early Christian brothers and sisters, we can rejoice in the knowledge that Heavenly Father is *just* as well as *merciful* and offers different degrees of glory according to our faithfulness and willingness to follow His Son. Lastly, and most importantly, we learn that we *really are* God's sons and daughters and that He wants us not only to become like Him but also to share in his glory and become partakers of His divine nature.

In the more than a century and a half since the days of Joseph Smith, scholarly studies have buttressed the claim that the Prophet restored doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in the meridian of time. The eternal truth of these teachings, however, can be

confirmed only by the Spirit. Only by aligning ourselves with God can these teachings bless our lives, help draw us closer to the Father, and eventually lead us back to our heavenly home. ■

Michael R. Ash lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Hayyim Schauss, *The Lifetime of a Jew: Throughout the Ages of Jewish History* (1950), 63.
2. 2 Esdras 4:41.
3. Quoted in Hugh W. Nibley, *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 2—Enoch the Prophet*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks (1986), 242. Several different versions of the book of Enoch existed in early Christian times, all of which are discussed in this book.
4. See Hugh W. Nibley, *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 4—Mormonism and Early Christianity*, ed. Todd M. Compton and Stephen D. Ricks (1987), 121. While we do not know if this teaching is true, it speaks to John's important mission as a forerunner.
5. Quoted in Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 118.
6. Quoted in Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 122–23. Though we do not believe that Christ baptized people from the spirit world, this statement shows that the concept of baptism for the dead was very much alive among early Christians.
7. Joseph Tixeront, *History of Dogmas* (1910), 118.
8. Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, 10 vols. (1885–96), 1:567.
9. Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1:526.
10. Clement of Alexandria, "Exhortation to the Heathen," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 2:174; and Stromata 7:10, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 2:539.
11. Hippolytus, "The Refutation of All Heresies," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 5:153.
12. G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, (1952), 73.

Growing

RELATIONSHIPS

Gardens create places of natural beauty and offer opportunities for strengthening friendships and teaching our children the law of the harvest.

Growing a garden can help us become more self-reliant. But in the following accounts, three members describe blessings they have received from gardening that go beyond food—blessings that have enriched their relationships with family, Church members, and friends.

Growing Children

As a young father, I felt the importance of teaching my children how to work—to enjoy working when they could and to endure it when they must. Gardening provided

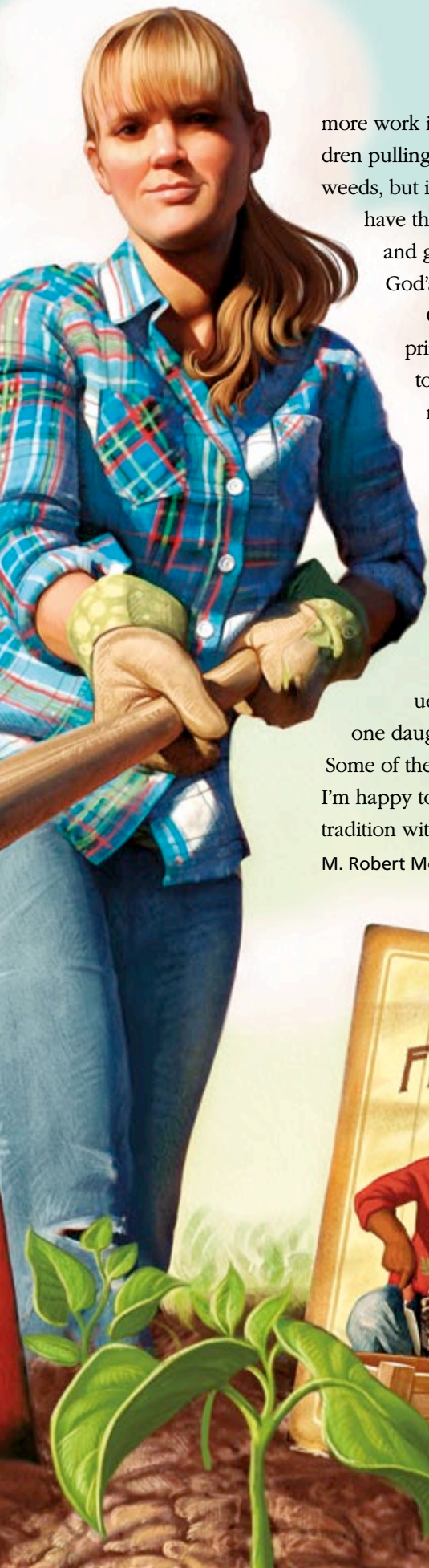
an excellent way to teach our children about meaningful work.

Our sizeable garden offered considerable work for the family, and we kept a variety of tools—hoes, rakes, and shovels—so that all the children could help. My wife and I often worked shoulder to shoulder with our children so they learned a consistent work ethic by our example and through their efforts. We were all companions as we learned to work together.

A productive and beautiful garden was good, but my wife and I were more concerned about the development of our children. At times we could have accomplished



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREG NEVBOLD



more work in our garden without our children pulling up the seedlings they mistook for weeds, but it was important for our children to have the chance to learn. Both children and garden grew as we all marveled at God's creations.

Gardening also helped us teach the principle of choice and accountability to our children. The Lord taught, "Fear not to do good, . . . for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap" (D&C 6:33). Our garden helped clarify this metaphor for our children. They looked forward to each harvest when they could enjoy the fruits of their labors, especially the fresh strawberries.

The joy of gardening continues in our family. All our children—one daughter and four sons—still garden. Some of them have families of their own, and I'm happy to see them carry on the gardening tradition with their children.

M. Robert Mock, Utah, USA

Small Harvest, Great Friends

On one of my many trips to Deseret Industries while I was attending Brigham Young University, I found some large gardening pots for sale. I bought them on a whim and made plans to use them to plant a garden in my Provo, Utah, apartment complex. I knew nothing about gardens, except that a familiar Primary hymn—"The Prophet Said to Plant a Garden"¹—taught me to follow the prophet by planting one.

I worked in my garden in the afternoons when I knew people would be getting home from class or work. Before then, my apartment complex had not been very friendly, and I had almost moved out. My roommates and I decided to use the garden as a way not only to connect with the ward but also to connect people in our ward with one another. We made a conscious effort to speak with everyone who walked by as we gardened. By the end of the summer, I didn't have much of a harvest—only a few



tomatoes, carrots, and some basil. But what I really ended up with was a better sense of belonging and the knowledge that I had helped build ward unity. I formed some of my dearest friendships while working in that garden.

When I look back at that summer, I am so grateful I followed the directions of that Primary song. I learned that the Lord blesses us in unexpected ways when we follow the counsel of His prophets.

Elisa Freeman, Wyoming, USA

NOTE

1. "The Prophet Said to Plant a Garden," *Children's Songbook*, 237.

A Place for Beauty

My parents taught my six siblings and me the importance of growing our own food and beautifying our surroundings. Wherever I live, growing a garden and creating beauty in my environment are things that bring me a most satisfying kind of joy.

In 2004 I moved to Africa for two years and attended a ward that had a few acres of undeveloped landscape as part of the property. As a ward, we turned that land into 20 smaller plots for families to grow their own vegetables. The garden was a blessing in my life and the lives of the members because we were able to supplement the food we purchased with food from the garden.

A few years later, my sister and I lived together in Brooklyn, New York, USA. With some faith, we found an apartment to rent with a backyard that needed to be developed. With time and a lot of help from friends, the backyard became an oasis in the city. As much as I love growing my own food, I've realized that creating a space of beauty to share with others has brought the greatest satisfaction. Our garden was a place where people could come to relax, enjoy the peace and quiet, and remove themselves from the noise and hustle of the city. I'm reminded of what President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught the Relief Society: "As you take the normal opportunities of your daily life and create something of beauty and helpfulness, you improve not only the world around you but also the world within you."¹ ■

Sarah Fulton, California, USA

NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Happiness, Your Heritage," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 119.

Enjoying the harvest of a garden enriches our lives beyond the great taste of fresh fruits and vegetables.





Sin

By Lisa J. South

*A little blue flower—
It didn't belong in my garden,
But it looked so appealing,
Smelled so sweet.
What could it hurt to leave it?*

*Pretty blue bells,
Deep green leaves
On dainty, curling stems
That slowly, silently
Choked the life out of my lilies.*

SOMETHING WAS WRONG WITH MY PLANE

One evening as I was taxiing my plane full of passengers to the runway, I had a feeling that something was wrong with the aircraft steering system. To confirm my spiritual impression, I pulled off the taxiway and did a few 360-degree turns. Nothing seemed out of order.

I wondered, “Should I take off and get the passengers to their destination on time, or should I return to the gate?” I knew returning would create a long delay. Taxiway runs are one way; I would have to wait for ground control to create a space for me to taxi against the traffic flow. Then we

would have to wait for the maintenance crew to check out the plane. The delays could cause problems for the airline and for the passengers who had people to meet and connections to make. I also wondered how the maintenance department would react to my report that the plane had a problem when I had nothing to go on except a strong feeling.

As captain of the aircraft, I was responsible for our safety, so I decided to follow my impression and return.

When we arrived at the gate, I told the mechanic that I felt something was wrong with the plane but that

I didn’t know what the trouble was. He did not believe there was a problem.

“It was probably just the wet taxiway,” he said. “You may have been slipping on the asphalt.” He agreed, nevertheless, to look at the steering gear on the nose wheel. After checking it, he asked me to off-load the passengers so he could take the plane for a test ride.

When he returned 30 minutes later, he was very concerned. During the test ride, he had heard an intermittent grinding sound. When he applied the brakes as he was turning around to return to the gate, he lost control of the plane and nearly ran off the taxiway.

A close inspection revealed that the brakes had undergone improper maintenance the previous evening. Had I landed the plane after our flight, the brakes would have failed, and I would have lost control of the plane.

I received another aircraft to pilot, and I safely delivered my passengers to their destination three hours late.

I am glad I listened to the whisperings of the Spirit. I know that the Spirit will direct us if we seek the Lord’s guidance and listen to the promptings that come. ■

Craig Willie, Utah, USA

I wondered how the maintenance department would react to my report that the plane had a problem when I had nothing to go on except a strong feeling.



FINDING JOY IN LIFE

On one occasion I was reading a general conference talk by Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Though I had heard and read this talk before, one phrase caught my attention and stayed in my thoughts.

A few hours later my son, who was living in an apartment with his friends, came by for a visit. He had served a full-time mission and had attended a few semesters of college. He was unsure what educational direction he should go and which career path he should pursue. Because he had been frustrated and felt that school, for now, was a waste of time and money, he put his studies on hold and began working full time.

He told me that one of his friends had suggested they go to an island in the Bahamas or the Caribbean, get jobs, and have fun for a few months. My son was excited about the prospect. I could easily see how enticing such a carefree experience could be to a young man.

Just then, Elder Scott's impressive message came to my mind. I picked up the *Ensign* and read the following to my son: "You are here on earth for a divine purpose. It is not to be endlessly entertained or to be constantly in full pursuit of pleasure. You are here to be tried, to prove yourself so that you can receive the additional blessings God has for you. The tempering effect of

patience is required" ("Finding Joy in Life," *Ensign*, May 1996, 25).

Without a word, my son took the magazine, walked away, and read the whole talk. Later all he said was that he would not be embarking on his island adventure.

In time he entered the police academy, a path that led him to meet his future wife. They married in the Mesa Arizona Temple and today are raising three wonderful children. In 2010 my son finished his bachelor's degree and is truly "finding joy in life."

My son's proposed adventure might have been a fine

experience; on the other hand, it might have been spiritually dangerous. Each time I reflect on this experience, the Spirit touches my heart.

I am thankful for the words of the prophets and that I was prompted to recall a talk that helped me provide guidance. I am also thankful that my son listened to a messenger of the Lord and allowed the Spirit to influence him. I know that many blessings and tender mercies come when we listen to and follow the teachings of the Savior and

His servants. ■

Karen Rockwood, Idaho, USA



When my son told me that one of his friends had suggested they go to the Bahamas or the Caribbean to have fun for a few months, Elder Scott's message came to my mind.

THE PHONE SWITCHED OFF

In March 1997, while living in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, my husband and I were baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day-Saints.

As I studied the doctrines of the Church, many of my questions were answered. It was interesting to learn about the plan of salvation, including the practice of baptism for the dead. I was surprised to learn that we could be baptized for our deceased ancestors.

A year after our baptism, the mission

president invited us to prepare to go to the temple. As part of our preparation, we started doing family history research. One day as I was thinking about doing this work, the phone rang. It was my mother-in-law. I asked her if she would send me a list of the deceased ancestors on my husband's side of the family. She was amazed and told me that baptism for the dead was not Christ's doctrine but rather something the Mormons had made up. I wasn't sure how to answer her because

I wasn't familiar with scriptural references that supported the doctrine.

As I was thinking about how to respond, the phone switched off. I was unsure for a minute what had happened, but I hung up the phone and went to my bedroom. I took the New Testament into my hands, knelt to pray, and asked Heavenly Father to show me where I could find the answer.

At the end of my prayer, I opened the Bible. I felt as if someone had told me to read the 29th verse on the very page I had opened. I was in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, which talks about the doctrine of baptism for the dead.

I was touched and surprised that Heavenly Father had answered my prayer at that very moment. It was a wonderful feeling.

I was thinking deeply about this experience when suddenly the phone rang again. It was my mother-in-law, asking me why the phone had switched off. I told her I didn't know but then asked her to open her Bible and read 1 Corinthians 15:29.

A few days later a list of deceased relatives was on my table. My mother-in-law had read the scripture and now believed that the Savior, through the Apostle Paul, had taught the doctrine of baptism for the dead.

God has promised great blessings to those who do this redemptive work. I know this to be true. ■

Seda Meliksetyan, Armenia



My mother-in-law told me that baptism for the dead was not Christ's doctrine but rather something the Mormons had made up.

WHERE CAN I GET A MAGAZINE LIKE THIS?

While on a trip with my family from Nevada, USA, to Alaska, USA, I struck up a conversation with a tall, attractive, friendly lady across the aisle.

She asked me where I was going, and I told her we were heading to Juneau, Alaska, to visit our son and his family. She told me she was from Las Vegas. Then, becoming emotional, she added that she was going to Juneau to visit her in-laws to have a memorial service for her husband, to whom she had been married for 20 years. He had recently passed away from cancer.

I looked across the aisle and thought to myself how fortunate I was to know the plan of salvation and to be a temple worker in the Las Vegas Nevada Temple. I wondered what I could do for this woman to lift her spirits.

Suddenly, as clear as a bell, I remembered a quote by the Prophet Joseph Smith I had handed out in Relief Society. When he organized the Relief Society, he observed that the sisters “will fly to the relief of the stranger; they will pour in oil and wine to the wounded heart of the distressed; they will dry up the tears of the orphan and make the widow’s heart to rejoice” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 452).



I wondered what I could do to lift the spirits of this woman, whose husband had recently passed away.

I looked across the aisle once more. I saw a stranger in distress, a widow with a wounded heart. I remembered that I had read the July 2011 *Ensign* earlier that day. It contained some uplifting articles I thought might give her some encouragement and comfort.

I gathered my courage, opened the magazine to an article, and asked her to read it. I watched her closely and was surprised that she read every single line—intently. When she had finished, she read another article.

Evidently something she had read touched her heart. She hugged the

magazine tightly against her chest and then wiped a tear from her eye.

“Where can I get a magazine like this?” she asked me. I told her she could keep it. Then she read some more.

When we arrived in Juneau, she grabbed my hand, looked straight into my eyes, and said, “Thank you.”

I learned a great lesson from that experience. We are surrounded by strangers with wounded hearts who need a kind word of encouragement and who need to know what we as Latter-day Saints know. ■

Sharon Rather, Nevada, USA

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

Church Leaders Discuss the “Hastening of Work”

By Sarah Jane Weaver

Church News

In the midst of changes that require Latter-day Saint teenagers to take a greater role in missionary preparation, family history and temple work, and Sunday instruction, leaders say the youth of the Church have been “called to action” and asked to “arise and shine forth” (D&C 115:5).

The changes make one thing obvious: “The Lord has something He wants to do,” said Elder Paul B. Pieper of the Seventy.

Elder Pieper, Executive Director of the Priesthood Department, recently participated in a *Church News* roundtable discussion about the changes that will impact youth in many areas. Also participating in the roundtable discussion were Elder Allan F. Packer of the Seventy and Executive Director of the Family History Department, Elder William R. Walker of the Seventy and Executive Director of the Temple Department, Elder W. Craig Zwick of the Seventy and Assistant Executive Director of the Missionary Department, Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy and Commissioner of Church Education; Elder Dennis C. Brimhall, an Area Seventy and managing director of the Family History Department, and Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president.

Making reference to lowering the age at which young men and young women can begin missionary service, to the new youth curriculum, and to a First Presidency letter asking that youth get involved in family history research and take family names to the temple, Elder Pieper said he did not see the “three strands coming together” before conference. “I remember going to conference . . . and asking myself, ‘How did all of this get corre-

lated?’ It was obvious it was the Lord’s hand.”

Elder Zwick said the Lord’s words are clear: “I will hasten my work in its time” (D&C 88:73). “The Lord Himself is taking charge here,” he added. “I don’t think there has ever been a generation of youth that has been prepared for the curriculum like [the youth] are today. I don’t think there has ever been a group of youth that has done as many baptisms or more ordinances for the dead . . . [or] that has been as close to temple work and all of the facets of that as this group. And certainly all of that . . . prepares them for missionary service and builds a sure foundation for additional responsibilities in the years following their missions.”

It is a very powerful message that God trusts His youth, said Elder Brimhall.

“When the Lord does anything, all the things fall into place at the right time, and that is what is happening with this,” said Elder Johnson, noting that those working on the new youth curriculum did not know there would be a shift in the age when missionaries could begin service.

Elder Walker spoke of the First Presidency letter encouraging youth to complete their family history and take those names to the temple. “The youth being able to have their own limited use recommends . . . has been a really wonderful thing,” he said. “Young people [are] anxiously engaged in doing the work in the temple and understand the doctrine. . . . That really helps to prepare them spiritually for all these wonderful things that are in store for them.”

Elder Packer said that recently he heard of a young woman who stood and shared her testimony of family history work. “This is a whole lot



more fun than what the old people said it was going to be,” she said.

“That is the Spirit of Elijah,” said Elder Walker. “That is the turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers and the fathers to the children.” Family history work, Elder Packer added, will change how the youth make decisions and how they feel about challenges. He said they might think, “If Grandpa did this, I can do it too.” He said that a temple president reported

Church leaders agree that the Lord is hastening His work and that the youth of the Church have been called to action.

that when youth stand proxy in baptism for any name they come out smiling, but “when they do it for an ancestor they have tears in their eyes. They feel something deeper; they feel something more.”

Helping the youth gain perspective is a goal of the new youth curriculum—where learning resources replace lesson manuals, said Elder Pieper. The curriculum will allow youth instructors to determine what they need to build into each Sunday experience to prepare youth for temple and family history work and missionary service.

“The new MTC is the home,” said Elder Packer. “The new family history center is the home. The new curriculum is going to help the youth and the parents both in that role.”

The message to parents is “Church leaders trust you as parents and trust these young men and young women who are being raised in your homes,” said Elder Zwick.

All the changes move the “Church to where it needs to be, where it’s prophesied to be,” said Elder Johnson. “The Lord knows what the future is, and . . . this is just one of the many things He is doing to advance that kingdom, to help it roll forth.”

Elder Pieper said, when contemplating all that happened during general conference this October, he sees “a prophet with keys, flinging doors open and saying, ‘There you go.’ We are inviting you to come and get engaged in this work. It is the Lord’s time now. We all know that. We all felt it. The Church is feeling it. Of course it will work.” ■



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHURCH NEWS



Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles speaks during the Seminar for New Missionary Training Center Presidents and Visitors' Center Directors on January 17, 2013, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Book of Mormon: Gathering Israel, Preparing for Second Coming

By R. Scott Lloyd
Church News

The Book of Mormon is “specifically addressed to the remnant of the house of Israel” and is a sign to the world that the Lord has begun to gather scattered Israel, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said on January 17, 2013. Elder Nelson’s remarks in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building in Salt Lake City, Utah, concluded the three-day 2013 Seminar for New Mission Training Center Presidents and Visitors’ Center Directors. Elder Nelson identified two important promises of the Book of Mormon as being that scattered Israel will be gathered and that the Lord will come again.

In the dispensation of Abraham, Elder Nelson said, God covenanted that through Abraham’s lineage people of all nations would be blessed. Other components of the covenant were numberless posterity, certain lands would be inherited, the Savior of the world would come through the lineage, and the seed of Abraham would be the official bearers of the priesthood to all nations. Elder Nelson recounted that Israel was disobedient and was scattered as a result, but God promised that in time, Israel would be gathered back into the fold of the Lord. “The . . . title page of the Book of Mormon makes reference to the house of Israel, and the three fare-

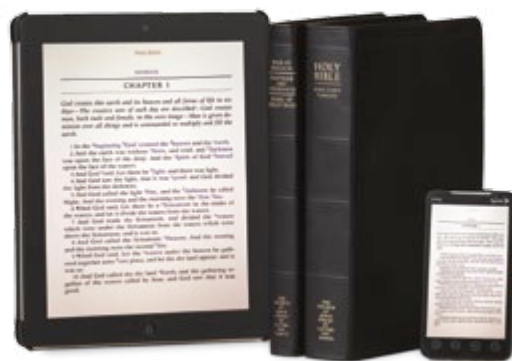
well speeches of Mormon and Moroni close the Book of Mormon by making reference to the gathering of Israel,” Elder Nelson explained. “So the whole Book of Mormon is bracketed by this doctrine. It’s one of the important teachings of the Church. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon exists as a sign to the entire world that the Lord has commenced to gather Israel and fulfill covenants He made those 4,000 years ago to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

“We not only teach this concept, but we participate in it,” he remarked to the departing missionary couples. “We do so as we help to gather the elect of the Lord on both sides of the veil. Marvelously and mercifully, the invitation to come unto Christ can also be extended to those who died without a knowledge of the gospel. Part of their preparation requires earthly efforts of others. So we gather pedigree charts and create family group sheets and do temple work vicariously to gather individuals unto the Lord and into their families, their eternal families.”

The promise of the gathering is important, Elder Nelson said, because it is “a promised prelude to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. The Book of Mormon is God’s instrument brought forth to accomplish both of those divine objectives.”



Church Releases New Edition of English Scriptures in Digital Formats



After nearly eight years of work, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has released in digital formats an updated edition of its English-language scriptures and study aids.

The last update to the Church's English scriptures—the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—was completed in 1981. The improvements made for that edition, including the addition of extensive study helps in each book of scripture, were significant and crowned 10 years of work.

The 2013 edition includes revisions to study aids, new photos, updated maps, and adjustments to chapter and section headings.

Online and mobile versions of the new edition are available now at scriptures.lds.org. Annotations that readers have made in their Gospel Library accounts will automatically transfer to the new digital scriptures.

The Church plans to release printed copies of the new edition beginning in August 2013. Because the new edition maintains the pagination and font style of the earlier edition, most members will notice little if any difference. For example, all the verses found on page 47 of the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon

will be found on page 47 of the new edition. This consistency allows members to continue using the 1981 edition.

"The current edition of the scriptures, with its extensive study helps, will continue to serve Latter-day Saints very well," said Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "This new edition incorporates adjustments that will be a blessing to Church members in years to come, but members should not feel that they need to purchase a new set of scriptures, particularly since all of the adjustments are available in digital formats at no cost. Changes to the scriptural text include spelling, minor typographical, and punctuation corrections."

Eight years ago Church leaders requested that an updated edition of the English scriptures be produced. The intent was to make helpful adjustments such as updating some archaic spellings, correcting mistakes in the study helps, and incorporating recent historic findings into the section headings of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Examples of spelling updates for the new edition include changing "stedfast" to "steadfast," "morter" to "mortar," and "rereward" to "rearward." Additionally, minor typographical errors in spelling and punctuation in the text have been

corrected to ensure fidelity to the earliest manuscripts and editions.

Typeface adjustments in the new edition help indicate more clearly what is scripture and what is a study help. The style and format of titles, table of contents pages, and abbreviations pages have also been standardized to improve the reading experience.

Some of the adjustments to headings are intended to provide a clearer context for the scriptures. For example, in the Doctrine and Covenants some of the section headings have been revised and introductory headings have been added to both official declarations to provide the reader with a better understanding of the purposes of those revelations and the Church's doctrine related to them.

Printed copies of the new edition will be available in the same sizes and bindings (Holy Bible, Book of Mormon, triple combination, and quadruple combination) as the earlier edition, and the current economy covers will be available in black. The current bonded leather covers are being upgraded to a simulated leather cover in black and burgundy, and the current genuine leather will be replaced with an upgraded genuine leather cover in black, burgundy, and brown. ■

Apostles Attend Presidential Inauguration

Elder L. Tom Perry and Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles represented the Church at the 57th Presidential Inauguration at the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Monday, January 21. They attended with their wives, Barbara D. Perry and Mary G. Cook.

Elder Holland Dedicates New MTC Buildings

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated three newly renovated buildings at the Provo Missionary Training Center.

The dedicatory prayer was given as part of his devotional address on January 15, 2013, to missionaries at the center—including new MTC presidents and visitors' center directors. "We have just completed the Matthew Cowley Instructional Building, the Addison Pratt Residence Building, and the Dan Jones Residence Building, as part of the upgrading and renovation going on at this center," he said. "In those three names we celebrate three of the greatest missionaries that have ever served in this dispensation."

Church Pageant Schedule Released for 2013

Following are the dates and locations for 2013 Church pageants. Admission to all pageants is free, but reservations may be required. More information can be obtained



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CHURCH NEWS

Elder Quentin L. Cook and his wife, Mary, left, and Elder L. Tom Perry and his wife, Barbara, stand at the U.S. Capitol.

at www.lds.org/locations/pageants.

- Mesa Arizona Easter pageant, "Jesus the Christ": March 19–21, 26–30; 525 East Main St., Mesa, Arizona.
- Martin Harris Pageant, "Martin Harris, the Man Who Knew": August 2–3, 6–10, 13–17, 11000 N. 8400 West, Clarkston, Utah.
- Hill Cumorah Pageant, "America's Witness for Christ": July 12, 13, 16–20; on Highway 21 between Palmyra and Manchester, New York.
- Manti Utah pageant, "Mormon Miracle": June 20–22, 25–29, at Manti Temple grounds in Manti, Utah.
- Nauvoo Pageant, "A Tribute to

Joseph Smith": July 9–August 3, Tuesdays through Saturdays, two blocks west of the Nauvoo Temple in Nauvoo, Illinois.

CORRECTION

In the printed version of *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow*, page 2 features an image not of President Snow's father but of President Snow's son, Oliver Goddard Snow. Also, in the caption on page 28 the names Brigham Young Jr. and Francis M. Lyman should be switched. These corrections will be made in digital versions of the manual.

IN OTHER CHURCH MAGAZINES

THE NEW ERA

Special Section on Temples

Whether your youth are preparing to enter the temple for the first time or are looking for ways to make their temple experiences even better, the temple-focused articles in the April *New Era* can help. Examples include:

- “My First Temple Recommend” on pages 2–4, where Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shares how the questions in

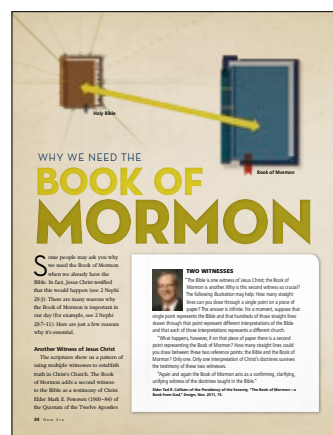


a temple-recommend interview help us receive the blessings of the temple.

- “Youth Voices: Attending the Temple” on pages 5–7, where youth share how they have been blessed by temple attendance.

The Book of Mormon— for Us

This month’s *Come, Follow Me* lessons for youth focus on the Apostasy and the Restoration. One of the lesson outlines for Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women asks, “Why do we need the Book of Mormon?” You’ll find ideas to answer this question in “Why We Need the Book of Mormon” on pages 34–35.



THE FRIEND

Learning about the Temple

Look in the April *Friend* to find many articles that can help children learn about the temple. “Celebrating Temples!” on pages 6–7 describes how children all over the world have participated in temple dedications. You can also use “Beauty Within: Designing the House of the Lord” (pages 24–25) to teach children about how a temple is built and furnished to prepare it to be a dedicated house of the Lord.



Treasures of Truth Restored

April’s Primary theme is about the Restoration of the Church in the latter days. Pages 40–41 in the April *Friend* can help children learn about the treasures of gospel truth that were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

DRINKING FROM THE FOUNTAIN

By Aaron L. West

Editor, Church Publishing Services

When we talk about the beauty of temples, we typically mention spires, windows, and murals. We speak reverently of baptismal fonts, endowment rooms, sealing rooms, and celestial rooms.

But when a prophet dedicates a temple to the Lord, he dedicates the entire edifice, not just the beautiful parts that everyone notices. In the dedicatory prayer for the Kansas City Missouri Temple, President Thomas S. Monson said: “We dedicate the ground on which this temple stands. We dedicate every part of this beautiful structure, from the unseen footings to the majestic figure of Moroni crowning its highest point.”¹ When President Joseph Fielding Smith pronounced the dedicatory prayer on the Ogden Utah Temple, he dedicated “the foundations, the walls, the floors, the ceilings, the tower, and all parts of the building,” and he prayed for protection of “all the mechanical parts, the lighting conduits and fixtures, the ventilating system and elevators, and all things pertaining to this building.”²



*Jesus Christ
is the fountain
of living water.*

I'm grateful that the Lord inspires His prophets to dedicate every part of every temple. Although a door hinge or a light fixture clearly has a lesser purpose than an altar in a sealing room, such lesser pieces contribute to the temple's ultimate, exalting purpose.

One of these lesser pieces has helped me learn an enduring lesson. I was in the Salt Lake Temple one day, preparing to leave the dressing room after participating in an ordinance for the dead. Noticing a drinking fountain, I realized I was thirsty, so I bent down for a quick drink. A message came into my mind:

You drink this water in the temple, but do you really drink the living water that is available here?

It wasn't a pounding condemnation—just a gentle rebuke and a soul-penetrating question.

My answer to that question was no. I wasn't completely drinking the temple's living water. I had to admit that my mind had wandered minutes earlier as I received ordinances for the dead. Although I had done a good work for people who needed my help, I hadn't allowed myself to receive all the help I needed.

Now, every time I go to a temple, I look for a drinking fountain and stop for a drink. I ask myself how deeply I am drinking from the fountain of living water. My answer: Still not deeply enough. But my thirst is increasing. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, in “Kansas City Missouri Temple: ‘Beacon of Divine Light’—an Offering of Hands and Hearts,” *Church News*, May 12, 2012, ldschurchnews.com.
2. Joseph Fielding Smith, in “Ogden Temple Dedicatory Prayer,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1972, 12.

INSIGHTS



How can we support others as they begin to age?

"A segment of our society desperately yearning for an expression of true love is found among those growing older, and particularly when they suffer from pangs of loneliness. . . . [Elder Richard L. Evans said of the aging:] 'What they need in the loneliness of their older years is, in part at least, what we needed in the uncertain years of our youth: a sense of belonging, an assurance of being wanted, and the kindly ministrations of loving hearts and hands; not merely dutiful formality, not merely a room in a building, but room in someone's heart and life. . . . We cannot bring them back the morning hours of youth. But we can help them live in the warm glow of a sunset made more beautiful by our thoughtfulness, by our provision, and by our active and unfeigned love.' "

President Thomas S. Monson, "Gifts," *Ensign*, May 1993, 61, 62.



Actors portray scenes from the life of Jesus Christ for online videos found at biblevideos.lds.org; several scenes from the last week of the Savior's life are shown in the article on page 40. In "The Mission and Ministry of Jesus Christ" (page 32), Elder Russell M. Nelson teaches five aspects of the Savior's ministry that we can emulate in our own lives.