

Blessings of the Temple



The temple is a sacred edifice, a holy place where essential saving ceremonies and ordinances are performed to prepare us for exaltation.

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The temple endowment blessings are as essential for each of us as was our baptism. For this reason we are to prepare ourselves that we may be clean to enter the temple of God.

The opportunity to enter the temple and to take upon ourselves the sacred covenants therein is one of the greatest blessings available to us in mortality. Then, after we take upon us those covenants, our obedience in living them daily stands as a demonstration of our faith, love, devotion, and spiritual commitment to honor our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Our obedience also prepares us to live with Them in the eternities. The temple's saving ordinances are essential to—and even the central focus of—the eternal plan of happiness.

The Temple Doctrine

The temple is truly a place where you are “in the world and not of the world.” When you are troubled and have crucial decisions that weigh heavily on your mind and soul, you can take your cares to the temple and receive spiritual guidance.



We need to acquire a testimony and a reverent feeling of the temple being the house of the Lord. To preserve the sanctity of the temple and to invite the Spirit to bless those who enter the holy

temple for their ordinances and covenants, we are taught that no unclean thing should enter the temple. Reverence in the temple is a vital element in inviting the Spirit to reside within it every hour of every day.

When I was a boy, my father brought me from Long Island, New York, to walk on the Salt Lake Temple grounds, to touch the temple, and to discuss the importance of the temple in my life. It was on that occasion that I made up my mind that someday I would return to receive the ordinances of the temple.

Throughout history, in every dispensation, the Lord has commanded prophets that temples should be built so that His people could receive temple ordinances. Moses and the Israelites were blessed with a portable temple, the tabernacle, where the sacred ordinance work under the law of Moses was performed—and where, on occasion, the Lord came to converse with Moses. King Solomon completed a beautiful temple in Jerusalem, which was later destroyed. Then,

during Christ's ministry, another temple in Jerusalem was being built.

We learn from the Book of Mormon that Nephi built a temple "after the manner of the temple of Solomon" (2 Nephi 5:16). Other Nephite prophets, including Jacob and King Benjamin, taught the people at the temple (see Jacob 1:17; Mosiah 1:18).

Significantly, when the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the Nephites in A.D. 34, He came to the temple (see 3 Nephi 11:1–11).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "The Church is not fully organized, in its proper order, and cannot be, until the Temple is completed, where places will be provided for the administration of the ordinances of the Priesthood."¹

The Kirtland Temple was the first temple in these latter days, and it played an important role in the restoration of priesthood keys. Joseph Smith, as a result of a prayer, was visited by Jesus in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836 (see D&C 110). The Savior appeared in glory and accepted the Kirtland Temple as His house. On that occasion Moses, Elias, and Elijah also appeared in order to commit the priesthood keys they held. Elijah restored the keys of the sealing power, as promised by Malachi, so that we could enjoy the fulness of the blessings of the temple in our lives.

Our pioneer ancestors completed the Nauvoo Temple and performed sacred ordinances therein. The Nauvoo Temple was the first temple in which endowments and sealings were performed, which proved a great strength to the pioneers as they endured the hardships crossing the plains to Zion in the Salt Lake Valley. They had been endowed with power



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in the holy temple. Husband and wife were sealed to each other. Children were sealed to their parents. Many of them lost family members to death along the way, but they knew that wasn't the end for them. They had been sealed in the temple for all eternity. Later, through revelation received by President Brigham Young, the Saints built more temples in the West.

Today there are 130 functioning temples, allowing faithful members of the Church around the earth to go to the house of the Lord to receive their temple ordinances and make covenants with Him.

The Temple Ordinances

The primary purpose of the temple is to provide the ordinances necessary for our exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Temple ordinances guide us to our Savior and give us the blessings that come to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Temples are the greatest university of learning known to man, giving us knowledge and wisdom about the Creation of the world. Endowment instructions give guidance as to how we should

conduct our lives here in mortality. The meaning of the word *endowment* is “gift.” The ordinance consists of a series of instructions on how we should live and covenants we make to live righteously by following our Savior.

Another important ordinance is being sealed for eternity in celestial marriage. This covenant of marriage allows children to be sealed to their parents and children born in the covenant to become part of an eternal family.

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us: “Whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens” (D&C 132:46).

When a couple is kneeling at the altar, as a sealer I am aware of my role as a representative of the Lord. I know that what is sealed on earth is literally sealed in heaven—never to be broken if those being sealed remain faithful and endure to the end.

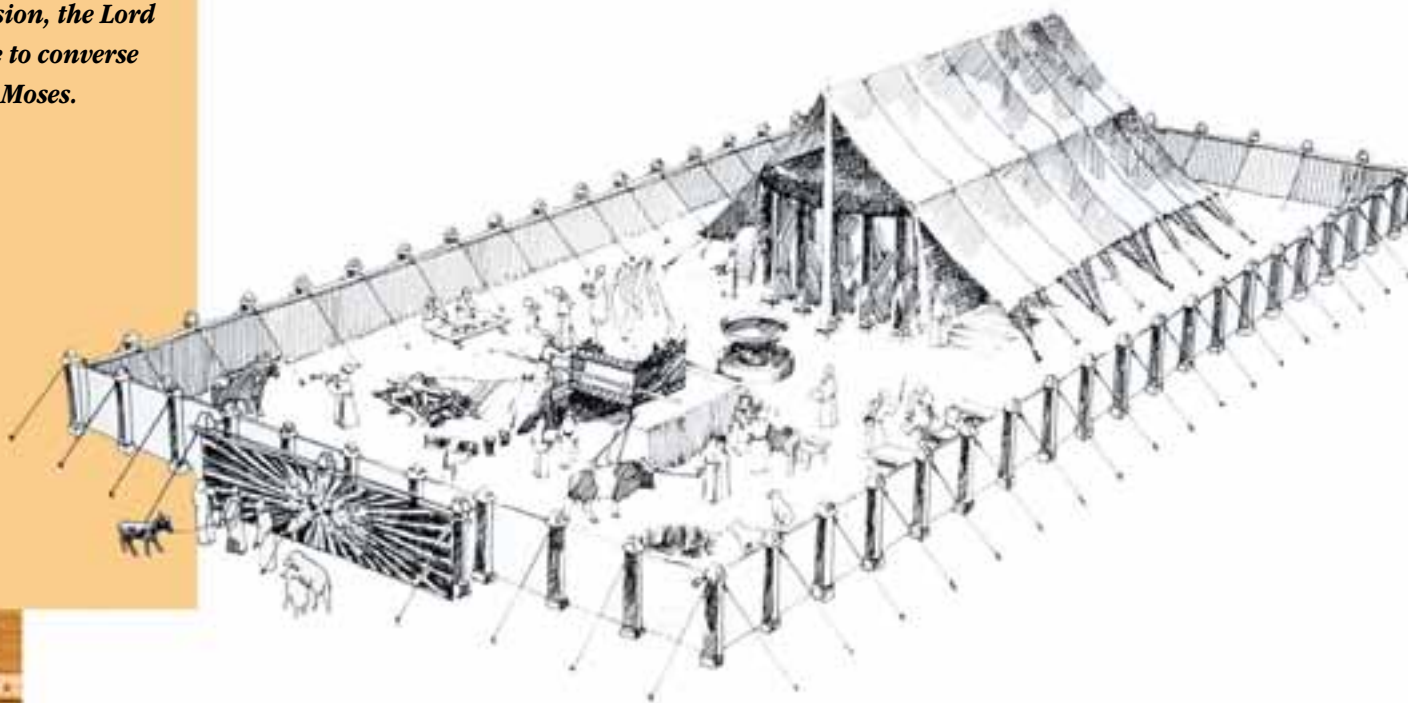


ILLUSTRATION BY TED HENNINGER

I have observed over the years many couples who have been able to maintain strong and vital marriages as they remain true to the covenants they take upon themselves in the temple. These successful couples have several things in common.

First, these couples know individually who they are—sons and daughters of God. They set eternal goals to once again live with our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. They strive to leave the ways of the natural man behind (see Mosiah 3:19).

Second, they know the doctrine and the importance of the saving temple ordinances and temple covenants and their necessity in achieving eternal goals.

Third, they choose to obtain the eternal blessings of the kingdom of God rather than the temporary possessions of the world.

Fourth, these couples realize that when they are sealed for time and all eternity, they have chosen an eternal companion—their days for courting others are over! There is no need to look any further!

Fifth, these couples think of one another before themselves. Selfishness suffocates spiritual senses. Communicating with the Lord in prayer, they grow together and not apart. They converse with each other, thereby never letting little things become big things. They talk early about the “little hurts” with little fear of offending. In this way, when the pressure in the kettle builds and the whistle goes off, there is no explosion of bitter feelings. It is so much better to let off a little steam before the top blows off the pressure cooker. They are willing to apologize and ask forgiveness if they have hurt the one they love. They express their love for each other and become closer. They lift and strengthen one another.



The Temple Blessings

The temple is a sacred edifice, a holy place, where essential saving ceremonies and ordinances are performed to prepare us for exaltation. It is important that we gain a sure knowledge that our preparation to enter the holy house and that our participation in these ceremonies and covenants are some of the most significant events we will experience in our mortal lives.

We voluntarily came from the presence of God the Father to this mortal probation with agency, knowing we would have “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). Our objective is to take upon us the whole armor of God and withstand “the fiery darts of the wicked” with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit (see D&C 27:15–18), to endure to the end, and to be worthy to stand and live in the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, for all eternity—to achieve what is called eternal life. ■

From a Brigham Young University devotional address given on November 15, 2005. For the full text of the address in English, see <http://speeches.byu.edu>.

NOTE

1. *History of the Church*, 4:603.