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Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints look upon their temples with great reverence. As set forth in scripture, a temple is a very sacred place, “a

## C H A P T E R F I V E S P I R I T U A L B L E S S I N G S

house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 109:8). In the temple solemn covenants are entered into and sacred exalting ordinances received. These and all





other saving ordinances of the gospel are also vicariously performed by living patrons in behalf of individuals who died without receiving these ordinances while they lived in mortality.

It is the Lord's house, consecrated to be holy and sanctified, a place where God's glory rests upon his people. Those who enter worthily, who are spiritually prepared, and who come hungering and thirsting after righteousness acknowledge that the temple is God's house, sanctified by his Holy Spirit, a place of his holi-

sacrifices and hardships endured by its builders. That such blessings were realized is recorded in numerous journals of which the following serve as samples.

Joseph Fielding described his impressions of the temple in December 1845: "I entered it for the first [time] and I truly felt as though I had gotten out of this World and on Friday, the 12th I and my Wife received our Endowment having formerly received it in the Days of Joseph and Hiram [*sic*] but it is now given in a

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**T**he Spirit, Power and wisdom of all felt satisfied that during the endowments of the Saints, we were

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ness (D&C 109:8–22). Here, many people routinely enjoy sacred spiritual blessings such as personal revelation. Their minds are enlightened and their understanding quickened to more fully comprehend God's purposes and the divine plan of salvation. Here individuals may experience the sanctifying, cleansing influence of the Holy Ghost. They may be blessed with a sweet assurance of comfort and peace. This was what made the temple at Nauvoo worth all the

more perfect Manner because of better Convenience."<sup>1</sup> Erastus Snow summarized the feelings of many as he testified: "The Spirit, Power and wisdom of God reigned continually in the Temple and all felt satisfied that during the two months we occupied it in the endowments of the Saints, we were amply paid for all our labor in building it."<sup>2</sup> His sister Eliza R. Snow observed: "Thanks be to God for the holy ordinances of His house and how cheerfully



grateful we ought to be that we are the happy participants of these great blessings.”<sup>3</sup>

Fourteen-year-old Elvira Stevens, orphaned in Nauvoo and traveling west with her sister and brother-in-law, crossed back over the Mississippi three times to attend the Nauvoo Temple dedication. The strong spiritual impressions she experienced in this sacred building had a lasting impact on her life. “The heavenly power was so great, I then crossed and re-crossed to be benefited by it, as young as I



here say that the spirit of the Lord was poured out upon those that were attending to the Ordinances of the holy priesthood.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1846 the total population of Church members living in and around Nauvoo was at the very most fifteen thousand to twenty-five thousand. This included both adults as well as children. Of this number 5,634 individuals received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple.<sup>7</sup> It is evident from these statistics that one out of every three or four members had partaken of

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was.”<sup>4</sup> Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy explained that it was as difficult to leave the temple as it was to leave her own home. Writing to her children, she declared: “Through all my sufferings I never doubted, but felt to cling to the gospel.” She went on to explain that the spiritual manifestations experienced in the Kirtland Temple and receiving her endowments in the Nauvoo Temple gave her the strength to endure.<sup>5</sup> Perrigrine Sessions testified: “I will

these sacred temple ordinances. This unusually high percentage leads to the conclusion that the vast majority of adult members and a number of the teenagers leaving Nauvoo for the wilderness of the West had received their temple blessings.”<sup>8</sup>

As the Saints journeyed on their westward trek into an unknown and uncertain future, these temple blessings for many made the journey of faith possible. Sarah Pea Rich expressed what this meant to her:



The work of giving endowments commenced. President Young chose many brothers and sisters to come to the Temple and assist in giving endowments. Among those chosen was Mr. Rich and myself. We were to be there in the morning and remain until work was done at ten or twelve o'clock at night if necessary. . . . We helped in the House of the Lord to give endowments for four months until the house was closed and we as a people commenced to prepare ourselves to depart to the Rocky Mountains.

Many were the blessings we had received in the House of the Lord which has caused us joy and comfort in the midst of all our sorrows, and enabled us to have faith in God, knowing He would guide us and sustain us in the unknown journey that lay before us. For if it had not been for the faith and knowledge that was bestowed upon us in that Temple by the influence and help of the spirit of the Lord, our journey would have been like one taking a leap in the dark, to start out on such a journey in the winter as it were, in our state of poverty, it would seem like walking into the jaws of death. But we had faith in our Heavenly Father and put our trust in him feeling that we were his chosen people and had embraced his gospel and instead of sorrow we felt to rejoice.<sup>9</sup>

These people made many sacrifices for their religion. One such story is told by John R. Young in his memoirs: “Orson Spencer was a

*Figure 5.1 The Nauvoo Temple, tempura on muslin, ca. 1865, C. C. A. Christensen, courtesy Brigham Young University Museum of Art. All rights reserved. In the late 1870s, Christensen painted several panoramic murals. This section from one of the murals accurately portrays the completed Nauvoo Temple.*







graduate from an eastern college, who having studied for the ministry, became a popular preacher in the Baptist Church. Meeting with a 'Mormon' elder, he became acquainted with the teachings of Joseph Smith and accepted them. Before doing so, however, he and his highly educated young wife counted the cost, laid their hearts on the altar and made the sacrifice! How few realize what it involved to become a 'Mormon' in those early days! Home, friends, occupation, popularity, all that makes life pleasant, were gone. Almost overnight they were strangers to their own kindred."<sup>10</sup>

Orson and Catherine Spencer were highly educated, capable individuals. Orson was later appointed, in 1849, as the first chancellor of the University of Deseret (forerunner of the University of Utah). Catherine was an accomplished, refined lady from an affluent family in the East.<sup>11</sup> They were among the first to receive their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple, receiving them on 11 December 1845, the second day these ordinances were available.<sup>12</sup> They were sealed to each other in an eternal marriage covenant on 15 January 1846.

The Spencer family along with other Church members became victims of the mobs. During the wintry month of February, they were driven from the protection of their home to privations and hardships on the open plains of Iowa. Catherine Spencer, slender and frail, suffered greatly from the severe difficulties of camping on the open plains. Her delicate frame could not endure the exposure to cold, wet weather and lack of sleep. As her health deteri-

orated, she sank rapidly under the ever accumulating hardships.

The sorrowing husband wrote imploringly to the wifes parents, asking them to receive her into their home until the Saints should find an abiding place. The answer came, "Let her renounce her degrading faith and she can come back, but never until she does."

When the letter was read to her, she asked her husband to get his Bible and to turn to the book of Ruth and read the first chapter, sixteenth and seventeenth verses: "Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." Not a murmur escaped her lips. The storm was severe and the wagon covers leaked. Friends held milk pans over her bed to keep her dry. In those conditions, in peace and without apparent suffering, the spirit took its flight and her body was consigned to a grave by the wayside.<sup>13</sup>

Like so many of their fellow exiles, these were not ignorant, gullible radicals led blindly by emotion or fanaticism. Rather, they were sensible, educated, skilled, and refined individuals, motivated by solid faith, spiritual knowledge, and deep conviction, all of which had been fortified by experiences and sacred covenants entered into in the temple at Nauvoo.

While most spiritual experiences connected with the temple were those of lasting impressions or witnesses to the souls of faithful members, there were others more striking in





nature. Samuel W. Richards reported that on 22 March 1846: “[I] went to my Quorum Meeting in the temple. The whole Quo. being present consisting of 15 members. . . . Dressing ourselves in the order of the Priesthood we called upon the Lord, his spirit attended us, and the visions of heaven were opened to our view. . . . I beheld other things which were glorious while the power of God rested down upon me. Others also beheld angels, and the glory of God.”<sup>14</sup> John Pulsipher reported similar experiences. Summarizing his impressions of the temple, he stated: “It was accepted of the Lord, and His holy angels have ministered unto many therein.”<sup>15</sup> Perrigrine Sessions recorded that both in the morning and also in the evening of 3 February 1846 he witnessed “a flaim of fier sean by many to rest down upon the Temple.”<sup>16</sup> Thomas Bullock reported similar unusual spiritual experiences occurring on Sunday, 15 March 1846: “At sun down went to the Temple. 14 [fourteen people] partook of the Sacrament after which we had a most glorious time. . . . The power of the Holy Ghost rested down upon us. . . . And we continued our meeting until after midnight, which was the most profitable, happy, and glorious meeting I had ever attended in my life, and may the remembrance be deeply rooted in my soul for ever and ever.”<sup>17</sup>

He recorded the events as they met again the next evening, Monday, 16 March: “Went to the Temple to pray. While there heard that last night Chester Loveland was called out of bed by his mother in Law stating that the Temple was again on fire. He dressed as quick as light-

ning and ran out of doors and saw the Temple all in a blaze. He studied it a few seconds, and as it did not appear to consume any, and as there was no others running, he was satisfied it was the glory of God, and again went to bed. Another brother saw the belfry all on fire at a 1/4 to 10. He ran as hard as he could, but when he came to the Temple he found all dark and secure. . . . Thus was the Spirit, power and glory to God manifest, not only at the Temple while we were there but also in our families for which my soul rejoices exceedingly.”<sup>18</sup>

#### IMPACT ON DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

Revelation through the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning gospel principles and ordinances, much of which was closely associated with the temple, was the most important thing happening during the Nauvoo period of Church history. Doctrines of the Restoration had been revealed gradually to him, “line upon line and precept upon precept” (D&C 98:12). Under divine guidance, the Prophet gradually unfolded and taught those restored ancient doctrines and eternal truths to members of the Church as they became prepared to receive them. This was no easy task and a frustrating experience, as evidenced by his remarks and observations: “I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. How







many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen.”<sup>19</sup>

On another occasion the Prophet declared: “I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them. The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and

While his mind was very much exercised with regard to religious matters, he had what he termed a vision, in which it was told to him, among other things, that the true church of Christ would soon be established on earth as it was anciently. A number of religious “reformers” came out from the churches about this time, claiming to be the true church. David investigated their claims, but none of them satisfied him. In the spring of 1830, he borrowed a Book of Mormon of a neighbor and read it carefully and tes-

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intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it.”<sup>20</sup>

The set ways and traditional thinking of some converts were difficult to overcome. The experience of David Foote as he investigated Mormonism was not unusual. Dissatisfied with the creeds of the various churches, he sought to find the true church of Christ as it existed in the days of the Apostles. A son told his father’s story:

tified that it was a true record. But no Elder came to Dryden, and he knew nothing concerning the doctrine they preached. In the spring of 1832 he removed to Greenwood, Steuben county, N.Y. In the fall of 1833, two men professing to be ‘Mormon’ Elders came to Greenwood from Geneseo, Livingston county, N.Y. They held one or two meetings, and invited David and others to visit them at Geneseo. Accordingly, David and his brother-in-





law (Josiah Richardson), and his nephew (Moses Clauson), went to Geneseo in November, 1833, for the purpose of investigating the new religion. On arriving there, they found the large branch of the Saints somewhat divided, and some had been cut off from the Church, and among them the two Elders. . . . (The trouble in the branch arose with regard to the vision of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon of the three glories. Some could not receive it as from the Lord.) After Elder Murdock [the branch president]



in scope by later revelations found in sections 88, 131, and 132. It was very difficult for some members to comprehend or accept any doctrine concerning life after death differing from their basic previous understandings of heaven and hell. A study of Church history reveals that they were not alone in their point of view. Temple ordinances and doctrines also became a great stumbling block for many members both in Nauvoo and also earlier at Kirtland, Ohio. As explained by Elder George A. Smith, the

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had expounded the gospel to David, to his satisfaction, he was baptized and returned home rejoicing that he had found the true Church of Christ, as it was promised in his vision several years previously.<sup>21</sup>

This concept of three degrees of glory, upsetting to some early members, was outlined in section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The doctrine was further clarified and enlarged

temple ordinances, even as partially introduced in the Kirtland Temple, brought difficulties for some members. “Some apostatized because there was not more of it, and others because there was too much.” He went on to explain, that “if the Lord had on that occasion revealed one single sentiment more . . . I believe He would have upset the whole of us.”<sup>22</sup>

It was in Nauvoo—and directly related to the temple—that several doctrines, concepts,





and practices only partially revealed previously were now fleshed out and unfolded. Joseph Smith now taught them clearly to Church members through revelation and discourse. As Flanders noted: “The Nauvoo Temple was the focus of religious innovations which revolutionized Mormonism. Ordinances for the dead, as well as . . . ordinances for the living, including marriage for eternity, plural marriage, and other extraordinary familial arrangements, were introduced by Smith and Young in Nauvoo for temple observance. It is difficult to know which was conceived first—a temple needing special rites, or special rites needing a temple. At any rate the ‘temple work’ which became central to Mormon life in Utah had its beginnings in the Nauvoo Temple.”<sup>23</sup>

Some resisted change and were unwilling to accept these expanding gospel concepts. This was a time of sifting. Those unable or

unwilling to embrace the changes pulled away. Some dropped into inactivity, others left the Church, and still others openly opposed it. However, the vast majority of members accepted these doctrines, rejoicing in insights and understandings that greatly enriched their lives. They felt about them as Joseph Smith did when he declared: “This is good doctrine. It tastes good. I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. They are given to me by the revelations of Jesus Christ; and I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life as they are given to me, you taste them, and I know that you believe them. You say honey is sweet, and so do I. I can also taste the spirit of eternal life. I know it is good; and when I tell you of these things which were given me by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you are bound to receive them as sweet, and rejoice more and more.”<sup>24</sup>

The sweeping doctrinal insights coming from the Nauvoo period and so closely interwoven with temple ordinances were numerous and varied. Though given on various occasions and at times under very trying conditions, they nevertheless emerged into a cohesive doctrinal plan of salvation and exaltation. Larry C. Porter and Milton V. Backman Jr., professors of Church history at Brigham Young University, observed: “As remarkable as the scope of the Nauvoo doctrines is their pattern. Where one might have expected disjointed results (given the press of time, leadership responsibilities, and persecution), there appears a pattern of profound consistency. Temple-related concepts dominate

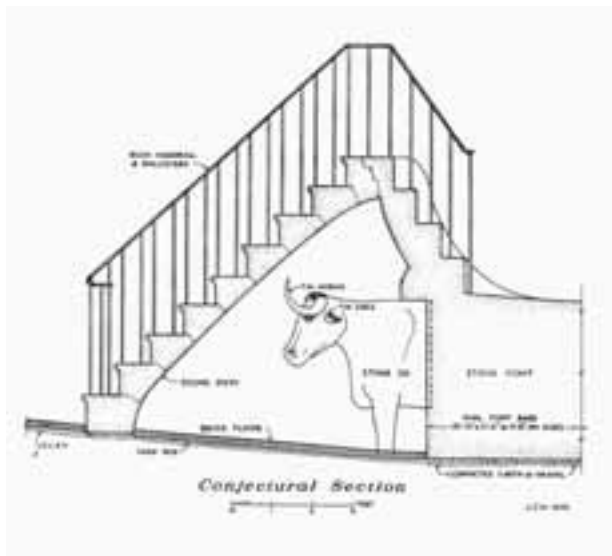


Figure 5.2 Conjectural Sketch of Stone Baptismal Font, drawing, 1970, LDS Church Archives. This sketch was produced by J. C. Harrington, who worked for Nauvoo Restoration, and was published in 1971 in his book, *Rediscovery of the Nauvoo Temple*, which he coauthored with his wife, Virginia Harrington.





and unify the Nauvoo doctrines as dramatically as the Temple dominated the Nauvoo landscape.”<sup>25</sup> “The Nauvoo doctrine of Joseph Smith presents a clear and distinctive pattern, harmoniously drawing together perspectives on God, humankind, and the eternal elements and purposes of life. . . . All of these teachings were related to each other, particularly through the Temple. They stand as solidly at the core of the Prophet’s revelations as the temple itself stood in Nauvoo.”<sup>26</sup>

Some of those doctrines and practices revealed during the Nauvoo period, which are now such a basic part of the Church, are briefly summarized as follows.

#### *Temple Ordinance Work*

The performance of temple ordinances both for the living and in behalf of the dead was the main reason for building the temple at Nauvoo. It was also the reason why, in the face of increasing opposition and persecution, members remained in the city until the temple could be used for performing these ordinances. As Brigham Young explained, “The main and only cause of our tarrying so long, was to give the brethren those blessings in the Temple, for which they have labored so diligently and faithfully to build, and as soon as it was prepared, we labored incessantly almost night and day to wait on them until a few days prior to our departure.”<sup>27</sup> Later the Church administered these same ordinances as temples were constructed in the West. Today these same ordinances are performed in temples throughout the world.

#### *Family History Centers*

Complementary and essential to the success of ordinances performed in numerous temples is the vast worldwide genealogical research effort being performed by thousands of Church members and Church service missionaries throughout the world. This and the hundreds of family history centers operating throughout the Church can all trace much of their beginnings to Nauvoo and the Nauvoo Temple.

#### *Temple Ordinance Workers*

Over one hundred temples are in operation throughout the Church with more in the process of construction, and many more planned or in various stages of development. These temples are staffed by ordinance workers who are called and set apart by their respective temple presidencies. In larger temples, hundreds of temple ordinance workers are required to administer and supervise the work. In addition to this, sealers are called and individually set apart by or under the direct supervision of the First Presidency of the Church. All of this had its beginning in connection with the Nauvoo Temple.

#### *Certifying Worthiness to Use the Temple*

In our day patrons who desire to participate in or receive the temple ordinances are carefully interviewed by a member of their bishopric and a member of their stake presidency. They are asked several questions to determine worthiness and readiness to enter the temple. A temple recommend is issued and signed by





these leaders as well as by the individual. This recommend certifies to temple workers that this individual is a member of the Church who is in good standing and worthy to enter the temple.

The practice of certifying worthiness was in place at Nauvoo. Joseph Smith “had been strictly charged by the angel who had committed these precious things into his keeping that he should only reveal [the ordinances] to such persons as were pure, full of integrity to the truth, and worthy to be entrusted with divine messages.”<sup>28</sup> As the temple came near to completion, Church leaders gave continual stress to the spiritual character and worthiness of each member. In preparation for receiving the blessings of temple ordinances, members were urged to “complete the Temple, and conduct yourselves worthy of the endowment.”<sup>29</sup> The ordinances were to be bestowed upon “the members and elders who are prepared.”<sup>30</sup> Church members were urged to “lay aside lightness and prepare themselves for these things.”<sup>31</sup>

One basic requirement expected of all was the full and honest payment of tithing. Erastus Snow reported that the Prophet gave instructions that none should be allowed to participate in the privileges of the temple unless they could produce a certificate from the general Church recorder certifying that they had paid their tithing (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5).<sup>32</sup> The experience and report of George Whitaker was common with most members. “About the last of November the temple was so far along, having

the upper rooms finished, that they began to give endowments. Those [who] had paid their property tithing, that is, one tenth of the property they had brought with them, and also one tenth of their increase or labor, had the privilege of going through the temple. Everyone seemed to be trying to work and settle up their tithing that they might have the privilege of getting their endowments in the space of about ten weeks. I paid my property tithing and also my labor tithing and got my receipts for it, and had the privilege of going through the temple and getting my endowments a few days before they closed.”<sup>33</sup>

When ordinance work commenced in December 1845, those allowed to participate came by special invitation of Church leaders. Personal invitations were extended to some, and apparently a list was posted, as noted by Warren Foote on 19 January 1846: “Our names was put down on the list today to receive our endowments.”<sup>34</sup> No one was allowed into the building without an official invitation. Also, strict order and proper decorum were to be maintained within the sacred walls of the temple.<sup>35</sup> No records are available regarding any interviews to ascertain worthiness of participants prior to entering the temple. We do know that in the temple just prior to receiving their ordinances each member was examined or interviewed in rooms set aside for this purpose. Their commitment was determined, and it appears that each member was considered worthy if he or she “will walk according to the commandments, pay his tithing and seek after salvation.”<sup>36</sup>



## *The Gathering*

An essential part of the threefold mission of the Church is to testify of Christ and proclaim the gospel in all the world. It is an effort to bring all unto Christ and the fullness of his restored gospel. From its earliest beginnings, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been a missionary church. Today tens of thousands leave their homes each year for missionary service to most nations of the earth. This missionary effort is directly tied to the gathering of Israel in the latter days. An integral part in the Restoration of the gospel, this gathering is clearly prophesied in scripture (Deut. 30:1–3; Jer. 3:14–15; 16:14–16; 31:6–12; Isa. 2:1–4; 5:26; Micah 4:1–2; 1 Ne. 22:25; 2 Ne. 10:8; 21:12; 3 Ne. 20:18; 21:1). Gradually restored and unfolded, this fundamental gospel principle was first stressed less than six months after the Church was organized when the divine injunction was given “to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect” (D&C 29:7) “from the four quarters of the earth, even as many as will believe” (D&C 33:6). Six years later in the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith recorded that the essential keys of authority for this gathering were restored: “Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth” (D&C 110:11). On 11 June 1843 a meeting was conducted in the Nauvoo Temple on the temporary floor of the first story. No roof was on the building at this time, and the walls were not yet up to the level of the second floor. In this setting Joseph Smith was inspired to proclaim some of the fundamental reasons why the gathering should take place.

This subject was presented to me since I came to the stand. What was the object of gathering the Jews, or the people of God in any age of the world? . . .

The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose.

It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the

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gathering of the people in every age of the world. . . . Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, . . . for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.

It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments.

These things are revealed in the most holy place in a Temple prepared for that purpose. . . . Why gather the people together in this place? . . . To receive the ordinances, the blessings, and glories that God has in store for His Saints.<sup>37</sup>

For over one hundred years, converts gathered to “Zion”—first to Kirtland, then to Missouri, next to Nauvoo, and then thousands left their native lands to gather in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains. It was predicted as early as 1833 that sometime in the future, emphasis would change from both a spiritual and a physical gathering in a central location to a spiritual gathering in stakes (D&C 101:20–21). This predicted change was implemented during the administration of President David O. McKay, as stakes were organized in several countries outside the United States. Members of the Church were told to remain in their native lands and build up the Church in their local areas.

This change of emphasis was explained by President Harold B. Lee: “Today we are witnessing the demonstration of the Lord’s hand even in the midst of his Saints, the members of the Church. . . . Her boundaries are being

enlarged, her stakes are being strengthened. In the early years of the Church specific places to which the Saints were to be gathered together were given, and the Lord directed that these gathering places should not be changed, but then he gave one qualification: ‘Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion.’ (D&C 101:21).”<sup>38</sup>

Elder Bruce R. McConkie made some thought-provoking comments pertinent to this subject: “Now I call your attention to the facts, set forth in these scriptures, that the gathering of Israel consists of joining the true church; of coming to a knowledge of the true God and of his saving truths; and of worshipping him in the congregations of the Saints in all nations and among all peoples. . . . The place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala; the place of gathering for the Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. . . . Every nation is the gathering place for its own people.<sup>39</sup> Elder McConkie explained later: “Whenever the growth of the Church in any area is sufficient, a stake of Zion is organized, thus making that area, in the general sense of the word, a part of Zion. The gathering of Israel . . . as of now is into the stakes of Zion wherever they may be. ‘For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness’ (D&C 82:14). . . . This process of gathering the







*Figure 5.3 Nauvoo Temple on the Hill, detail copy of daguerreotype, 1846–47, LDS Church Archives. Charles W. Carter, a member of the Church and collector of early Church drawings and photographs, collected this old daguerreotype in the 1930s. This daguerreotype is believed to have been taken by Lucian Foster during the fall or winter of 1846–47. This detail from the daguerreotype shows the old armory next to the Nauvoo Temple. It is believed that several other daguerreotypes, including the Chaffin daguerreotype (see Figure 5.4) were taken from the second floor of this armory. This view looking toward the northeast shows mostly deserted homes and structures of old Nauvoo.*

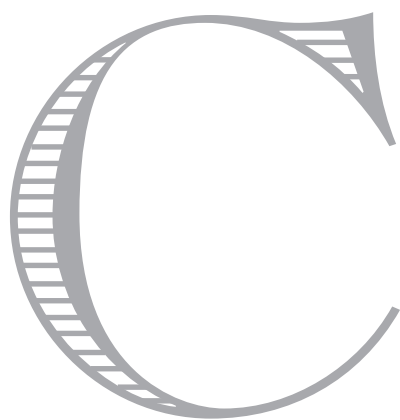




righteous together into the stakes of Zion will continue until stakes are organized in many nations.”<sup>40</sup>

Today, the gathering has come full circle as stakes of the Church are organized in numerous countries, to be followed by the building of temples in those lands. These temples are built to bless the lives of those who have gathered with the fullness of gospel ordinances. The goal, as stated by President Gordon B. Hinckley, is that members throughout the

that clearly provides sensible answers to life’s most basic questions. Many of these doctrines were partially revealed earlier in New York and Ohio. But it was in Nauvoo through revelations and discourses closely associated with temple ordinances that the Prophet Joseph Smith clarified and revealed those newly restored doctrines in their fullness. From descriptions and public statements made about the Nauvoo Temple ordinances, we learn that they offered understanding about the eternal origins,



## celestial marriage and temple ordinances. In the temple, to each other for time and

entire world will have full access to all of the privileges and blessings of temple ordinances.<sup>41</sup>

### *Man’s Destiny and Relationship to Deity*

From childhood through old age, Latter-day Saints sing with deep feeling the hymns “O My Father,” “I Am a Child of God,” and “Families Can Be Together Forever.”<sup>42</sup> These hymns and others like them express a comprehensive unifying philosophy of life based upon a theology

purposes, and destiny of human existence. Rising out of those concepts was an enlarged understanding of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, the character of God, our personal relationship with Deity as literal sons and daughters of God, and our ultimate potential to become like God our Eternal Father. As T. Edgar Lyon noted: “It marks a permanent theological landmark in the development of the doctrine of the Godhead among Latter-day





Saints and . . . has done much to clarify the understanding of the Saints and their relationships to their Eternal Father.”<sup>43</sup>

These insights unfold light and understanding on the premortal existence of humankind, the creation of this earth, the Fall of Adam, the significance of the Atonement and the role of Jesus Christ in the plan of salvation, the nature and significance of covenants with God, and the ultimate destiny and possibilities of man. T. Edgar Lyon, commenting on the

the degrees of exaltation or damnation.”<sup>44</sup>

Celestial marriage and temple sealings are the highest of temple ordinances. In the temple, husbands and wives can be married to each other for time and for eternity. Sealed together by divine authority, a married couple and the resulting family unit become eternal. As these illuminating concepts were explained and unfolded to Parley P. Pratt, he registered his feelings concerning the personal significance of these new understandings: “My dearly beloved brother,

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# le sealings are the highest of temple husbands and wives can be married for eternity.

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Nauvoo sermons and writings of Joseph Smith, noted: “We might figuratively say that he took a huge canvas and on it, as would a master artist, painted a panorama of the pre-mortal life of man and his progress to a mortal existence, in which his preexisting spirit was clothed in a mortal body. Then he presented glimpses of the disembodied state following death, the re-embodiment of the spirit and body through the resurrection, and the various estates attained in

Joseph Smith, had . . . lifted a corner of the veil and given me a . . . glance into eternity.”<sup>45</sup>

He taught me many great and glorious principles concerning God and the heavenly order of eternity. It was at this time that I received from him the first idea of eternal family organization, and the eternal union of the sexes in those inexpressibly endearing relationships which none but the highly intellectual, the refined and pure in heart,





*Figure 5.4 Photographic Reproduction of the Nauvoo Temple, daguerreotype, ca. 1846, Louis Rice Chaffin, International Society of Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. This is the clearest daguerreotype print of the temple now available for study. It was taken by Louis Rice Chaffin with the camera facing in a northeastern direction. Because some of the temple windows are open, the daguerreotype is believed to have been taken sometime during the summer or warm weather months of 1846. Since Chaffin went west with the other exiled members of the Church, this daguerreotype would most likely have been taken prior to 17 September 1846, when the last Church members were driven from Nauvoo. An angelic weather vane is clearly visible at the top of the steeple in enlarged copies.*

know how to prize, and which are at the very foundation of everything worthy to be called happiness.

Till then I had learned to esteem kindred affections and sympathies as appertaining solely to this transitory state, as something from which the heart must be entirely weaned, in order to be fitted for its heavenly state.

It was Joseph Smith who taught me how to prize the endearing relationships of father and mother, husband and wife; of brother and sister, son and daughter.

It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore.

It was from him that I learned the true dignity and destiny of a son of God, clothed with an eternal priesthood, as the patriarch and sovereign of his countless offspring. It was from him that I learned that the highest dignity of womanhood was, to stand as a queen and priestess to her husband, and to reign for ever and ever as the queen mother of her numerous and still increasing offspring.

I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this grovelling sphere and expand it as the ocean. I felt that God was my heavenly Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion; a kind ministering angel, given to me as a comfort, and a crown of glory for ever and ever. In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also.<sup>46</sup>

### *Eternal Marriage and Equality of the Sexes*

Joseph Smith confided to a group of close friends that “those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory.”<sup>47</sup> During the Nauvoo period a revelation was received clearly explaining that no individual can enter the highest degree of celestial glory alone. One must be united with an eternal companion by entering into the new and everlasting covenant of eternal marriage (D&C 131:1–4; 132:4–24). From this revelation and the doctrinal understandings

No individual can enter the highest degree of celestial glory alone.





revealed through temple ordinances, we have received a clear understanding relative to the roles of men and women. Their roles are complementary and equal. As declared by Elder John A. Widtsoe: “The place of woman in the Church is to walk beside the man, not in front of him nor behind him. In the Church there is full equality between man and woman.”<sup>48</sup> President Gordon B. Hinckley, describing the relationship that should exist between husband and wife, stated: “Marriage, in its truest sense, is a partnership of equals, with neither exercising dominion over the other, but, rather, with each encouraging and assisting the other in whatever responsibilities and aspirations he or she might have.”<sup>49</sup> James E. Talmage explained how these insights came from the temple ordinances: “It is a precept of the Church that women of the Church share the authority of the Priesthood with their husbands, actual or prospective; . . . there is no grade, rank, or phase of the temple endowment to which women are not eligible on an equality with men. . . . The married state is regarded as sacred, sanctified, and holy in all temple procedure; and within the House of the Lord the woman is the equal and the help-meet of the man. In the privileges and blessings of that holy place, the utterance of Paul is regarded as a scriptural decree in full force and effect: ‘Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord’ (1 Cor. 11:11).”<sup>50</sup>

#### SPIRITUAL LEAVEN

So much of the rich, spiritual heritage enjoyed by present-day members of the

Church, both in doctrine and devotion, has come from the Nauvoo period of their history. The revelations given at Nauvoo and contained in the Doctrine and Covenants (sections 124–32) are rich in content and doctrine. All of them are directly associated with the Nauvoo Temple and temple ordinances. These revelations, along with the ordinances and many discourses given by Joseph Smith, combine to make this a most important and fruitful period of doctrinal understanding. The impact of the Nauvoo Temple has been and continues to be very significant. As noted by President James E. Faust: “The spiritual leaven given in the Nauvoo Temple blesses us today in an ever-increasing measure. It spreads to every house of the Lord in the world so that all who hunger and thirst for the fullness of God’s word may be filled.”<sup>51</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Joseph Fielding, “‘They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet’—The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,” *BYU Studies* 19, no. 2 (winter 1979): 158–59.
2. Erastus Snow Sketch Book, 95, Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections, Brigham Young University.
3. Eliza R. Snow to Phebe Snow, 6 April 1868, Eliza R. Snow Papers, LDS Church Archives.
4. Elvira Stevens, as quoted by Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 23.
5. Nancy Naomi Alexander Tracy, as quoted by Madsen, *In Their Own Words*, 248.
6. Perrigrine Sessions, *The Diaries of Perrigrine Sessions*





(Bountiful, Utah: Carr, 1967), B-45.

7. B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Period 2: Apostolic Interregnum* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1932), 7:542-80. The number of endowments performed on each day are listed in these pages. Added together, these figures total 5,634. These ordinances even extended to some youth, as evidenced by the testimony of George Washington Bean: "Early in January, 1846, Ephraim K. Hanks, William Coray and I worked in the outer court of the Temple running a windlass, drawing up the wood and water needed to carry on, the endowments then being administered in the upper story of the Temple. We worked there for about six weeks, and then we workers received our endowments, although I was not yet fifteen years of age." *Autobiography of George Washington Bean*, comp. Flora Diana Bean Horne (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing, 1945), 23.

8. Bean, *Autobiography of George Washington Bean*, 23.

9. Sara Dearmon Pea Rich, "Reminiscences of Sara Dearmon Pea Rich," 65-66, LDS Church Archives.

10. John R. Young, *Memoirs of John R. Young, Utah Pioneer, 1847* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1920), 17. Orson Spencer was a graduate of Union College and Baptist Literary and Theological Seminary in New York. In Nauvoo he was appointed as professor of foreign languages and was "well qualified to conduct his classes."

11. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1930), 4:118.

12. Roberts, *History of the Church*, 7:543.

13. Young, *Memoirs of John R. Young*, 17-18.

14. Diary of Samuel Whitney Richards, 1:7-8, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

15. John Pulsipher, as quoted by E. Cecil McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1962), 95.

16. *The Diaries of Perrigrine Sessions*, 43.

17. Thomas Bullock, as quoted in Gregory R. Knight, "Journal of Thomas Bullock, 1816-1885," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 1 (winter 1991): 61-62.

18. *Ibid.*, 62.

19. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 6:185; Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 319.

20. *Ibid.*, 5:402; also, Neal A. Maxwell, *Meek and Lowly* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 74.

21. Andrew Jenson, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1901), 1:374-75.

22. *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86), 2:215.

23. Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 209.

24. Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:312; Words of Joseph Smith, 352.

25. Larry C. Porter and Milton V. Backman Jr., "Doctrine and the Temple in Nauvoo," *BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1-2 (winter and spring 1991): 43.

26. *Ibid.*, 54.

27. Brigham Young to James Emmett, 26 March 1846, Brigham Young Papers, as cited in Richard E. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 20.

28. Elizabeth A. Whitney, "A Leaf from an Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent* 7 (15 December 1878): 105.

29. The Prophet, 22 February 1845.

30. *Times and Seasons* 6 (14 January 1845): 780.

31. *Ibid.*, 6 (15 July 1845): 973.







32. *Journal of Discourses*, 19:337.
33. George Whitaker as quoted in Madsen, *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 52.
34. Autobiography of Warren Foote, 73.
35. Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 118.
36. Increase Van Deusen, *A Dialogue* (Albany: C. Killmer, 1847), 3.
37. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:423–27; Words of Joseph Smith, 212–13.
38. Harold B. Lee, “Strengthen the Stakes of Zion,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 4.
39. *Ibid.*, 4–5, quoting Bruce R. McConkie.
40. Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 578.
41. Hinckley, “New Temples to Provide ‘Crowning Blessings’ of the Gospel,” 87–88.
42. *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), 292, 300, 301.
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49. “A Person’s Behavior Governed by Beliefs, Pres. Hinckley Says,” *Church News*, 14 March 1992, 11.
50. James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 79.
51. James E. Faust, “Eternity Lies before Us,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 20. 6

