

**Sandy Utah Crescent Stake, 2018**  
**Temple Preparation in the Home**  
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under direction of the Stake Presidency

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**Please note:** This is not an official publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It is provided as a reference and study guide for members of the Sandy Crescent Stake, to be used with the LDS Scriptures and other resources such as “The Holy Temple,” by Boyd K. Packer, “The House of the Lord,” by James E. Talmage, and official online resources of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at LDS.org.

## Introduction

In his first address to members of the Church, President Russell M. Nelson chose to broadcast from the temple. He said: *“Now, to each member of the Church I say: Keep on the covenant path. Your commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with Him and then keeping those covenants will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available to men, women, and children everywhere. As a new presidency, we want to begin with the end in mind. For this reason, we're speaking to you today from a temple. The end for which each of us strives is to be endowed with power in a house of the Lord, sealed as families, (and remain) faithful to covenants made in a temple that qualify us for the greatest gift of God, that of eternal life. The ordinances of the temple and the covenants you make there are key to strengthening your life, your marriage and family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path.”*

Proper temple preparation can build faith in the Plan of Salvation and the role of temple ordinances and related covenants in that Plan. It will also improve a member's first-time

experience and the quality of their subsequent temple worship and temple service. In the Sandy Utah Crescent Stake we encourage every individual and family to prepare to experience the full blessings of the temple.

Following is a summary of key teachings/doctrines associated with the Priesthood and its' attendant ordinances, including the role of temples, with pertinent scriptures/references. Parents and leaders are encouraged to review all of the information and select, as guided by the Spirit, that which would be of greatest impact and value to their family or others being prepared to attend and worship in the temple. We similarly encourage inspired use of this information by ministering brothers and ministering sisters as they fulfill their responsibility to "help individuals and families prepare for their next ordinance (and) keep the covenants they have made." (Enclosure to First Presidency letter dated April 2, 2018)

It is also intended that familiarity with this information will assist in our responsibility to share the gospel. The eternal nature of the family is a compelling doctrine the Lord is using to draw His children on both sides of the

veil into His church and kingdom. As Sister Wendy Nelson recently taught the missionaries serving in the British Isles, many of the ancestors of the people they teach have accepted Christ after death and are cheering on the other side of the veil for the missionaries to reach their descendants. She told them to imagine 100 to 1,000 people surrounding them as they teach, pulling for them and their success in touching the hearts of these descendants.

### **Historical Evidences of Temple Worship**

There is significant Biblical and revealed history regarding Heavenly Father's making the Priesthood and priesthood ordinances available to His children beginning with Adam. Further, the Old Testament documents the choice of "temples" as a place where He could reveal Himself and make available His ordinances. Joseph Smith taught that "mountaintops" were used in the absence of a temple, when God desired to bestow the highest blessings associated with the Priesthood upon His children. (Joseph Smith cited Moses' forty day experience on Sinai.) (Exodus 24:12-18)

1. The English word "temple" comes from the Latin word "templum" and is

the equivalent of the Hebrew term “beth-elohim” (often shortened to “beth-el”), literally meaning “the house of the Lord.”

2. A temple has always been not just a place for God to reveal Himself to His children, but where necessary ordinances of the priesthood are performed. (The House of the Lord, James E. Talmage)
3. Adam...received this Gospel after the fall, and he received the Holy Priesthood in all its power and its keys and ordinances. He sealed these blessings upon his sons, Seth, Enos, Jared, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Enoch and Methuselah. All these men received this high and holy priesthood.” (Journal of Discourses 16:264, Wilford Woodruff)
4. “When Adam had been taught...and accepted the truth, he was baptized, even as men are baptized today, and he received all the other ordinances of the Gospel and was given full authority, through the priesthood conferred upon him, to officiate in God’s name in all matters pertaining, under the great Plan, to the welfare of man.” (Rational Theology, John A. Widstoe)

5. "And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam by an holy ordinance, and the Gospel preached, and a decree sent forth, that it should be in the world until the end thereof; and thus it was." (Moses 5:59)
6. "Now this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also." (Moses 6:7)
7. "There has been this chain of authority and power from Adam down to the present time." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.191; hereafter referred to only as "Teachings" with a page reference)
8. "There must be this chain in the Holy Priesthood; it must be welded together from the latest generation that lives on the earth back to Father Adam, to bring back all that can be saved and placed where they can receive salvation and a glory in some kingdom. This Priesthood has to do it; this Priesthood is for this purpose. " (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 623)
9. "And the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare His Gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch." (Moses

8:19) (See # 3 above for Enoch's ordination by Adam)

10. "Thus we beheld the keys of this Priesthood consisted in obtaining the voice of Jehovah, that He talked with him [Noah] in a familiar and friendly manner, that He continued to him the keys, the covenants, the power and the glory, with which He blessed Adam at the beginning;" (Teachings, p. 171)
11. "At the time of Noah, the inhabitants of the earth were destroyed, and the coming generations were the descendants of Noah...Noah, therefore, is as another first man to the human race. In the sequence of dispensations, he stands next to Adam. He possessed the keys of the Priesthood even as Adam, and from Noah divine authority descended to Melchizedek, and Melchizedek conferred the Priesthood upon Abraham. It was the earnest desire of Abraham to receive the Priesthood, and to practice...the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." (Studies in the Priesthood)
12. "And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be

ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers. It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time... [from] Adam, our first father, through the fathers unto me." (Abraham 1:2-5)

13. The descent of the Priesthood, and its attendant ordinances, from Adam to Melchizedek and Abraham, and then to Moses, is revealed in D&C 84:6-18. Abraham not only sought and received the priesthood, but also its highest ordinances and blessings. "He entered into celestial marriage." (Bible Dictionary, Abraham, Covenant of, p. 602)
14. Moses and Aaron both held the Melchizedek Priesthood, but the children of Israel's inability to live the laws of the Gospel, which their fathers

had enjoyed, led to their being given the “law of carnal commandments, including the law of sacrifice and burnt offerings; and then He established an order of the Priesthood to suit the conditions.” (Notes on Lesser Priesthood and Church Government)

15. “Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also: And the Lesser Priesthood continued, which Priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory Gospel.” (D&C 84:25-28; Exodus 34: 1-2)
16. “Nevertheless, though the Higher Priesthood had been taken from Israel as a body, it was not permanently taken from the earth. Between the time of Moses and the coming of Jesus Christ, there were at various times holy men, prophets of the Lord, such as Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Elijah, and others, who received the Holy Priesthood as part of their service of the Lord. Through them, the word of the Lord was transmitted from generation to generation. Elijah was the last prophet, before Christ, who held the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the Priesthood.” (History of the Church,

Volume 4, p. 207) (Along with the Higher Priesthood, it is probable that these significant Prophets all received the highest ordinances pertaining to the Priesthood, presumably on mountaintops, or other sacred locations chosen by Jehovah.)

17. "Why send Elijah? Because he holds the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the Priesthood; and without the authority [being] given, the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness." (Teachings, p. 172)
18. Although they had lost access to the higher ordinances and blessings, Moses and the Israelites were nevertheless commanded to build a portable temple called "the Tabernacle of the Congregation." (Exodus 25: 1-9)
19. Inasmuch as it was His house, Jehovah provided exact details/requirements for its construction. (see Exodus 25-31 and Exodus 38:8-38)
20. The Tabernacle was divided into two compartments which were separated by a "veil." The outer compartment was known as the Holy Place, and the inner as the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. (Exodus 36: 35,37) The only furniture in the Holy of Holies

was the “Ark of the Covenant.” (Exodus 25: 22) On the top of the “Ark” and forming a lid, was the “mercy seat”. The mercy seat, with the Ark beneath, served as an “altar” on which was sprinkled the blood of the sin offering (the highest atonement in Jewish law). (See “Tabernacle” in Bible Dictionary)

21. Aaron and his four sons were set apart to perform the priestly functions in the Tabernacle. Jehovah specified that holy garments were to be worn by Aaron and his sons as they ministered in the Tabernacle. (Exodus 28) Part of the headpiece worn by Aaron was a “plate of pure gold” with the engraving “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” (verse 36)
22. Along with being clothed in their sacred garments, Aaron and his sons were to be “washed and anointed” as they entered the Tabernacle. (Exodus 29:4-9)
23. Solomon’s temple was originally envisioned by David as a permanent place for Jehovah to reveal Himself and provide His ordinances. David’s unworthiness resulted in his being forbidden to build the temple, which

then fell to his son Solomon. (see 1 Chronicles 22,28, 29)

24. The location of His temples has always been important to the Lord. Jehovah revealed that Solomon's temple was to be built on Mount Moriah, which the well-considered first century historian Josephus regarded as the same mountain where Abraham was commanded to sacrifice Isaac. (Genesis 22:2 and Bible Dictionary, "Moriah") Accordingly, both Zerubbabel's and Herod's temples were also located on Mount Moriah. This sacred site in modern day Jerusalem is called Temple Mount.
25. The pattern of only using the finest materials and skills to build a house of the Lord was clearly established with Solomon's temple. (see 2 Chronicles 2 and 1 Kings 5-7)
26. The wickedness of the Jews led to the defiling and eventual destruction of Solomon's temple after only 30+ years of use, but after many years in exile, Zerubbabel and Jeshua were commanded to build a new temple. (Ezra 1: 1-4)
27. While not as grand and costly as Solomon's temple, Zerubbabel's temple followed a similar pattern as

revealed to David and Solomon. Similar washing, anointing and clothing ordinances were again practiced and there was once again a place where the Lord could reveal Himself and His ordinances.

28. The wickedness of the Jews eventually led to the defilement and virtual destruction of Zerubbabel's temple, and the Jews and Jerusalem becoming subjects of Roman rule.
29. Under Roman rule, Herod the Great (himself a professed follower of Judaism) was established as the King of Judea. Herod was a cruel, jealous leader who decreed the killing of Bethlehem's infants, intending to kill the prophesied Messiah or King of the Jews. (Matthew 2: 1-16)
30. Why Herod chose to rebuild the temple is not clear, but it is this Herod's temple that Jesus visited as a boy and, as the chosen Messiah, fittingly cast out those who were defiling His Father's house. (Matthew 21:12) He thereafter chose to heal the "blind and the lame that came to Him in the temple," (Matthew 21:14) It was in this temple that the veil was "rent" or, torn into two pieces, when the

Savior “yielded up the ghost” and died. (Matthew 27:50-51)

31. Herod’s temple was constantly “under construction” until it was destroyed (as foretold by the Savior) in the sacking of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
32. Other than on mountaintops and in the Americas, there was not a place for the Lord to reveal Himself and bless His children with His sacred ordinances until the restoration of the gospel and every necessary priesthood authority and key through Joseph Smith.

### **Temples in The Book of Mormon**

Nephi speaks of building “a temple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land...But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon.” (2 Nephi 5:16) There is also mention of other temples, including a temple in the land of Bountiful. To its grounds surviving righteous saints gathered after the terrible destruction that occurred when the Savior was crucified. (3 Nephi 11:1) However, we know little regarding the ordinances that were offered in these temples and have no indication of the Savior revealing higher

ordinances during His appearance. However, it is noteworthy that the Lord gave directly to Nephi, son of Helaman “power that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Helaman 10:7)

### **Work for the Dead before the Resurrection**

Work for the dead was not authorized or performed on mountain tops or in temples prior to the Savior’s crucifixion. However, upon His death His spirit entered the world of spirits wherein He appointed messengers and gave them authority “to carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men.” (D&C 138: 30) The remaining great work of linking ourselves to our ancestors, and then performing saving and exalting ordinances in their behalf, is a singular responsibility of our gospel dispensation, the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times, to which, under Adam, the Prophet Joseph Smith holds the keys.

### **Elijah**

Additional mention should be made of Elijah. Before the construction of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that

“Elijah was the last Prophet that held the keys of the Priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the Priesthood, in order that all the ordinances may be attended to in righteousness.” (Teachings, p. 172)

Elijah did appear in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836 to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and restored all the keys that he held in his dispensation. (D&C 110:13-16) This was also what Elijah did on the Mount of Transfiguration just prior to the Savior’s crucifixion when he (the New Testament uses his Greek name “Elias”) appeared to Peter, James and John and restored the same keys. (Matthew 17:1-4)

“Now for Elijah. The spirit, power and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, power and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the hearts of the children unto the fathers, even those who are in heaven.” (Teachings, p. 337)

“What is this office and work of Elijah? It is one of the greatest and most important subjects that God has revealed. He should send Elijah to seal the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children...I would refer you to the scriptures, where the subject is manifest; that is, without us, they could not be made perfect, nor we without them; the fathers without the children, nor the children without the fathers...I wish you to understand this subject, for it is important; and if you will receive it, this is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection; and here we want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those who dwell in heaven. This is the power of Elijah and the keys of the kingdom of Jehovah.” (Teachings, p. 337-338)

“The doctrine or sealing power of Elijah is as follows:--If you have power to seal on earth and in heaven, then we should be wise. The first thing you do, go and seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, and yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory...I will walk through the gate of heaven and claim what I seal, and those that follow me and my counsel.” (Teachings, p. 340)

## Sealing Power of the Melchizedek Priesthood

“It may seem to some to be a very bold doctrine that we talk of—a power which records or binds on earth and binds in heaven. Nevertheless, in all ages of the world, whenever the Lord has given a dispensation of the priesthood to any man by actual revelation, or any set of men, this power has always been given. Hence, whatsoever those men did in authority, in the name of the Lord, and did it truly and faithfully, and kept a proper and faithful record of the same, it became a law on earth and in heaven, and could not be annulled...” (D&C 128:9)

Only the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can proclaim that every ordinance we perform including baptism, confirmation, washing, anointing, endowment and temple sealing is being recorded and recognized in heaven, just as it is being recorded and recognized on earth. As President Boyd K. Packer wrote, “The sealing power represents the transcendent delegation of spiritual authority from God to man. The keeper of that sealing power is the Lord’s chief representative (Prophet) here upon the earth. That is the position of consummate trust and authority. We speak often of holding the key

to that sealing power in the Church. The words “seal” and “keys” and “priesthood” are closely linked together.” (Your Temple Blessings, Boyd K. Packer, p.82)

“I have found that many members of the Church have a very limited view of what the sealing power is. Since it is used most frequently in connection with temple marriages, the word “seal” has come to mean simply... sealing two people in the eternal marriage bond. It is also used to designate the ordinance by which children who are not born under the covenant are sealed to their parents. Other members of the Church have the idea that the sealing authority has to do solely with baptism for the dead. The authority is much more inclusive than that.

“The keys of the sealing power are synonymous with the keys of the everlasting priesthood. (Said the Savior to Peter) ‘I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven’ (Matthew 16: 13-19) (Your Temple Blessings, p.84-85)

“Those keys belong to the President of the Church...Nothing is regarded with more

sacred contemplation...Nothing is more closely held. There are relatively few men who hold this sealing power upon the earth at any given time—in each temple are brethren who have been given the sealing power. No one can get it except from the prophet, seer and revelator and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is more closely held than any other authority.” (Your Temple Blessings, p. 85)

It is through the sealing power that “all covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations” gain “efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead.” Conversely, “all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.” (See D&C 132:7)

What of a husband and wife whose marriage contract ended at death, who did not subsequently have vicarious temple ordinances performed on their behalf? Irrespective of the length, love, and number of children associated with their mortal marriage will they be permitted to live together as husband and wife in the world of spirits?

A powerful experience answering this question and confirming the importance of the

sealing ordinance was shared by Elder Rudger Clawson (who later became President of the Quorum of the Twelve). He spoke of a man who had been injured in building the Salt Lake Temple who was discouraged over what he could do in forced retirement. Elder Clawson counseled him to serve his ancestors in the recently dedicated temple. Eight years later he met the man again and noted the joy of his countenance. The man reported that he had followed the counsel and had gathered 800 names of his relatives and personally officiated in the temple for three hundred of those ancestors. He stated, "I am happy for the Lord has blessed me."

The man further explained that during his service for his ancestors "I saw in vision my father and mother who were not members of the Church, who had not received the Gospel in life, and I discovered that they were living separate and apart in the spirit world. When I asked them how it was that they were living separate, my father said: "This is an enforced separation, and you are the only individual that can bring us together; you can do this work; will you do it?" Elder Clawson concluded, this brother went "into the house of the Lord and there officiated for his parents who were dead, and by the ordinance of sealing "brought" them together and united

them in the family relation beyond the veil.”  
(Conference Report, October 1908, p.74)

### **Design and Function of Latter-day Temples**

With the atonement of the Savior complete, animal sacrifice was no longer relevant in the design of a temple. Latter-day temple design would include recognition of the Savior’s turning the key and opening the door whereby those in spirit prison could be taught His gospel and through repentance gain access to all of its ordinances including baptism, endowment and sealing. (D&C 138: 31-35, 58) Further, unlike in Moses’ day where access to the inner sacred places was restricted to the Levitical priests, latter day temples would be designed to permit the Father and the Son to reveal themselves to a “kingdom” of priests, each bearing the higher Melchizedek priesthood, and to their eternal companions and faithful children.

However, modern temple design and function has preserved key elements of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. There is a veil that symbolically distinguishes the most sacred areas of the temple. There is a Holy of Holies in the Salt Lake Temple to which only the President of the Church has a key. It is a

sacred place that the Prophet can retire to seek guidance from Him whose Church this is. (Come to the Temple, p. 4) It is also a place, as Elder Talmage wrote, that is “reserved for the higher ordinances in the Priesthood relating to the exaltation of both living and dead.” (The House of the Lord, p. 163)

As in ancient times, there are washing and anointing ordinances, however these are now performed symbolically. There is also special and sacred clothing worn by temple patrons while in the temple that would bear similarities, at least in name, to the clothing described by Jehovah to be worn by the Levitical priests. (See Exodus 28: 39-43, Exodus 39:27-30 and the “Sacred Temple Clothing” video at LDS.org)

### **Worthiness to Attend the Temple**

We believe that temples are literally houses of the Lord. We follow the Savior’s example of coming to a temple to worship our Father in Heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ. Just as the Savior was concerned enough about those who had chosen to defile His Father’s house that He drove them from the temple in Jerusalem, we have been commanded to ensure that only those who meet standards He has established enter His house.

We first demonstrate our profound reverence and love for Him and His Son Jesus Christ by our dress and grooming when we enter the temple. We delight in presenting ourselves in such a way that we would not be uncomfortable if the Lord himself were greeting us as we entered His house.

As soon as we enter we are asked to show our temple recommend. (Note: it is expected that an actual temple recommend will be used to teach.) On the front you will notice a name and a drawing of the Salt Lake Temple. As you turn it over you will notice the month and year it was issued and a membership number. A temple recommend is good for two years from the date it is issued. Members wishing to attend the temple meet at separate times with a member of their ward and stake priesthood leadership. In the ensuing interviews, they are asked by each leader the same questions. These questions are based on the standards established by the Lord through His living prophets and apostles for those wishing to attend the temple. (Beginning at age 12, limited use recommends are available to youth of the Church. These recommends require the same standards of worthiness but are received following a single interview with a ward leader.)

If our lives are not in harmony with His standards we will not receive a temple recommend at that time. Instead, we will be lovingly encouraged to make whatever corrections are necessary and return for a second interview.

But if we are living the Lord's standards the two leaders conducting the interviews sign the recommend to witness they have asked the prescribed questions and that they believe we are worthy. Along with their two signatures, you will note the member's signature. Our own signature may be the most important signature of the three as we are the ones in best position to know of our worthiness.

Once we show our temple recommend, we are able to enter any of the temples currently in operation around the world. And always remember that members are encouraged to hold a current temple recommend, even if immediate access to a temple is limited.

### **Dressed in White**

We then proceed to either the women's or men's locker rooms to change from our very best Sunday attire we wore to the temple, to the simple white clothing we wear in the

temple. Men wear a white shirt, white pants, white tie, white socks and white slippers. Women wear a simple white dress of their choosing, white hose and white slippers. White is a symbol of the purity and cleanliness with which we present ourselves to the Lord in His house. But the simple white clothing everyone wears bears another symbolic meaning and reminder. We know that we are all children of a loving Heavenly Father and irrespective of the color of our skin, the language we speak, the amount of money we earn, or our fame in the world, in His house we are equal in His sight and have equal claim on His blessings.

### Covenants

In the context of the Gospel and the temple, a covenant is an agreement between God and man, however God, in his good pleasure fixes the terms, which man can then either accept and earn the blessings, or reject and thereby forfeit any right to the blessings. "The Gospel is so arranged that principles and ordinances are received by covenant, placing the recipient under strong obligation and responsibility to honor the commitment." (Bible Dictionary, p. 651)

The New and Everlasting Covenant, is the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and every ordinance, covenant, and promised blessing appertaining thereto. Temple marriage is part of the New and Everlasting Covenant, as is baptism and the endowment. "Everlasting" is one of God's names. His covenant with His children is also "everlasting" in that its promises and conditions have always existed and have always been the same. It is "new" each time it is revealed to another gospel dispensation (see p. 15, Work for the Dead).

### **Temple Ordinances**

The main religious ceremonies that occur in our temples are called "ordinances." It does not matter whether it is a large temple, or one that is smaller. Every temple offers and provides the same experiences and blessings. You should also understand that much, if not all, that occurs in the temple is of ancient origin. As described previously, scriptural evidence supports the existence of sacred and symbolic religious ceremonies revealed from the days of Adam and Eve, continuing down to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and from Moses to the days of Jesus Christ and His apostles.

President Russell M. Nelson has provided wonderful counsel regarding both the sacred

nature of temple ordinances and how to prepare to attend the temple for the first time. "Because the ordinances and covenants of the temple are sacred, we are under solemn obligation not to speak outside the temple of that which occurs in the temple. There are, however, some principles we can discuss.

"Each temple is a house of learning. There we are taught in the Master's way. His way differs from modes of others. His way is ancient and rich with symbolism. We can learn much by pondering the reality for which each symbol stands. Teachings of the temple are beautifully simple and simply beautiful. They are understood by the humble, yet they can excite the intellect of the brightest minds.

"Spiritual preparation is enhanced by study. I like to recommend that members going to the temple for the first time read short explanatory paragraphs in the Bible Dictionary, listed under seven topics: ("Anoint," "Atonement," "Christ," "Covenant," "Fall of Adam," "Sacrifices," and "Temple.") Doing so will provide a firm foundation." (General Conference, April 2001.) As you review these seven topics, you will also note scripture references that, when studied, will increase your understanding.

## **Baptism and Confirmation**

First is the ordinance of baptism and confirmation. We believe, as the Savior taught, that unless we “are born of water and of the Spirit, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) We follow the pattern set by the Savior when he traveled some distance to be baptized by full immersion in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, a man who had been given God’s priesthood authority to baptize. We baptize by full immersion and we do not baptize infants and young children. We do not believe a child is accountable before the Lord until he or she is eight years old and better understands right and wrong.

But we do not baptize 8 year old children, or converts, in the temple. That is generally done in one of our regular meeting houses containing a large rectangular font where children and adults can be fully immersed in the water by the one performing the ordinance.

At the lowest level of the temple is what we call the “baptistry.” It can generally be described as a basin of water resting upon the backs of twelve oxen, three of which face

north, south, east and west. Symbolism is used throughout the temple and the twelve oxen represent the twelve tribes of Israel. When Solomon was building the great temple most commonly referred to by his name, the biblical detailed description in 1 Kings 7:23-25 mentions “a molten sea” (obviously describing a metal bowl that held water) that “stood upon twelve oxen.” That ancient description is used in patterning the baptistry in our temples. The Bible teaches that the ordinance of baptism is in similitude, or to remind us, of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (see Romans 6: 3-11). Baptismal fonts are physically placed at the lowest level of the temple to help remind us of the important symbolic nature of the ordinance itself.

Who is baptized in our temples? An answer to that important question was taught by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:29. He had been speaking about the death and resurrection of Christ, by which our own physical death, as brought about by the fall of Adam, had been overcome. Paul then asked, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?”

We know that Paul’s simple yet profound rhetorical statement evidences a practice in his

apostolic day that Heavenly Father has restored to the earth in our day and time. The living serve as proxy and are baptized for a specific deceased person.

### **Work for the Dead,** **After Family History Research**

Members of our Church are intensely interested in identifying and linking themselves to their deceased ancestors through genealogical research. Although it has become one of the most popular hobbies or interests in the world, to us it is far more than a hobby. At April conference 1894, President Wilford Woodruff announced this revelation: "We want the Latter-day Saints from this time to trace their genealogies as far as they can, and to be sealed to their fathers and mothers. Have children sealed to their parents, and run this chain through as far as you can get it. ... This is the will of the Lord to his people." Perhaps our ancestors lived when or where there was no opportunity to learn of Jesus Christ. Perhaps they were not baptized in the proper manner (full immersion) or by proper priesthood authority as held by John the Baptist.

We, their children, turn our hearts to them and search out their names. We are then able to bring their names to the temple, and in the baptistry, and other ordinance areas of the temple, serve as proxy for them. We enter the baptismal font, dressed in white. A person with proper priesthood authority performs the baptism. The name of our deceased ancestor is used. The same words and procedures used when we were baptized and confirmed are now used in first baptizing and then confirming our ancestors.

But we do not believe that our efforts on behalf of our ancestors are necessarily binding on them or in heaven. As we each have our God given right to choose between good and evil, so have they. But how do they learn about God's plan for them and the role of Jesus Christ in that plan? How do they learn about the necessity of baptism and confirmation? How do they learn about temples and the opportunity their posterity will have to serve as proxies for them in the temple baptistry, endowment and sealing rooms?

As He has done here on earth, God has provided the way for His children to be taught the true gospel of Jesus Christ in the place the spirits of His children go when their mortal

bodies are laid in the grave. This world of spirits is close to us. Peter, the Savior's chief Apostle taught that during the short period of time that the Savior's body lay in the tomb, His spirit did not rest but went and "preached unto the spirits in prison." (1 Peter 3:19) He further explained that "the gospel [was] preached to them that [were] dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Peter 4:6)

All of God's children, including our ancestors, when they pass through the veil we call "death," will have opportunity to be taught and can accept or reject the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. (At this point we invite a thorough teaching of D&C 138) These truths form the basis of Heavenly Father's great Plan for the salvation of His children and include the role of the Savior in atoning for their/our sins. These truths teach how His atoning sacrifice overcomes the physical death introduced by Adam's transgression, allowing all of God's children to receive a resurrected body. However, while resurrection is a gift to all, forgiveness for our own sins requires sincere repentance and obedience to God's commandments.

We believe many, if not all, of our ancestors, once they are taught of God's great Plan, will accept these truths and then turn their hearts to us, their children, anxiously awaiting the time that we will identify them through family history research, bring their names to the temple, and perform the necessary saving and exalting ordinances on their behalf. As we identify them and bring their names to the temple, they, in the world of spirits, will be able to come forth and claim the blessing of baptism, confirmation and other temple ordinances we have performed on their behalf. Truly, as Peter declared, "God is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34) (Under "The Sealing Power of the Melchizedek Priesthood" pp.20-21, note the experience shared by Elder Rudger Clawson evidencing an ancestor's heart turning to their children.)

Our living Prophet, President Russell M. Nelson recently taught the importance of Family History work by members of the Church. Said he, "While temple and family history work has the power to bless those beyond the veil, it has an equal power to bless the living. It has a refining influence on those who are engaged in it. They are literally helping to exalt their families. We are exalted when we can dwell together with our extended families in the presence of Almighty

God. The Prophet Joseph Smith foresaw our duty: “The great day of the Lord is at hand . . .,” he said. “Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple . . . a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.” (April 2010 General Conference)

### **Endowment**

(Partly taken from “About the Temple Endowment,” LDS.org)

Receiving our temple endowment should be one of the most sacred and powerful experiences of our life. It is deeply personal and meaningful for those who are prepared. Many members of the Church receive their endowment before a mission or marriage, while others simply have a strong desire to move forward along the gospel path. Regardless of the circumstances, it is important to realize that our endowment is more than just another step; it’s an essential and glorious part of your eternal journey.

Elder Russell M. Nelson reminded us that “every activity, every lesson, all we do in the Church, point to the Lord and His holy house. Our efforts to proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead all lead to the

temple. Each holy temple stands as a symbol of our membership in the Church, as a sign of our faith in life after death, and as a sacred step toward eternal glory for us and our families” (Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings, General Conference, April 2001).

Only in the temple can we receive the ordinances necessary for us to be exalted in the celestial kingdom. Temple ordinances, including the endowment, lead to the greatest blessings available through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and help us focus on the Savior, His role in our Heavenly Father’s plan, and our commitment to follow Him.

The word endowment means “a gift.” In this context, the temple endowment is literally a gift from God whereby He bestows sacred blessings upon us. The endowment can only be received in His way and in His holy temple. Gifts we receive through the temple endowment include:

- Greater knowledge of the Lord’s purposes and teachings.
- Power to do all that God wants us to do.
- Divine direction and protection as we serve the Lord, our families, and others.
- Increased hope, comfort, and peace.

- Promised blessings in this life and the next.

When each of us joined the Church, we received two ordinances—baptism and confirmation. Likewise, the temple endowment is also received in two parts:

In the first part, we privately and individually receive a preliminary ordinance called the initiatory ordinance. The initiatory ordinance includes special blessings regarding our divine heritage and potential and literally fulfills the Lord's command to build a "house...to my name" wherein your "anointings and your washings" can be performed. (D&C 124:37, 39)

In the second part, we receive the remainder of our endowment in a group setting along with others who are attending the temple. During this part, the plan of salvation is presented, including the Creation of the world, the Fall of Adam and Eve, the Atonement, the Apostasy, and the Restoration, as well as instruction on how all people can return to the presence of the Lord. Some of the endowment is presented through video and some by temple officiators.

In conjunction with these ordinances, we are invited to make specific covenants with the

Lord. These covenants include obeying God and keeping His commandments, living the gospel of Jesus Christ, remaining morally pure and virtuous, and dedicating our time and talents to the Lord's service. In return, God promises wonderful blessings in this life and the opportunity to return to live with Him forever.

At the conclusion of the endowment, participants symbolically enter the Lord's presence as they enter the celestial room. There we can spend time to ponder, pray, rest, read the scriptures, or quietly discuss our experiences with family and friends. It is a place of peace, where we can also find comfort and divine direction.

Everyone participating in an endowment session is encouraged to carefully pay attention to what is being taught, but we are not expected to remember everything we hear. Temple workers will always be there to help and assist. Our experience will be more personal and meaningful when we go with the intent to be taught by the Holy Ghost. Do not worry about getting everything the first time. It is not a test, but an opportunity to feel closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. We should focus on what we feel and the spiritual impressions we receive.

The temple endowment is a necessary step toward salvation and returning to Heavenly Father, but it is also an opportunity to come closer to Jesus Christ—to know Him better and follow His example. Of course, all of the promised blessings of the endowment are dependent on our faithfulness.

After we have received our own endowment, we can return to the temple and participate in both initiatories and endowments for people who have died. As with all other ordinances performed in the temple, those who have died are aware of the service we have provided and can choose whether or not to accept what we have done on their behalf.

Our participation for the dead also allows us the chance to be reminded of our own blessings, instructions, and covenants. Each time we go, we will notice more ways the endowment relates to the plan of salvation and blesses our life. What we learn and feel will become clearer and more precious over time. With every visit, we will feel God's love and be reminded of what matters most. These additional visits will also help accomplish another important purpose of the endowment; to provide and teach what we must do and know to gain the ultimate blessing of

exaltation in the presence of Heavenly Father. President Brigham Young, the second Prophet of our Church, provided this meaningful instruction. "Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels...and gain your eternal exaltation..." (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 416)

As part of the gift of the endowment, a person receives the sacred opportunity and blessing of wearing thereafter sacred underclothing we call the "garment." "This garment represents sacred covenants. It fosters modesty and becomes a shield and protection to the wearer." (The Holy Temple, p. 75)

In a letter to priesthood leaders dated 10 October 1988, the First Presidency made the following statements regarding how the garment should be worn: "Church members who have been clothed with the garment in the temple have made a covenant to wear it throughout their lives. This has been interpreted to mean that it is worn as underclothing both day and night. This sacred covenant is between the member and the Lord.

Members should seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to answer for themselves any personal questions about the wearing of the garment. ... The promise of protection and blessings is conditioned upon worthiness and faithfulness in keeping the covenant.

“The fundamental principle ought to be to wear the garment and not to find occasions to remove it. Thus, members should not remove either all or part of the garment to work in the yard or to lounge around the home in swimwear or immodest clothing. Nor should they remove it to participate in recreational activities that can reasonably be done with the garment worn properly beneath regular clothing. When the garment must be removed, such as for swimming, it should be restored as soon as possible.

“The principles of modesty and keeping the body appropriately covered are implicit in the covenant and should govern the nature of all clothing worn. Endowed members of the Church wear the garment as a reminder of the sacred covenants they have made with the Lord and also as a protection against temptation and evil. *How it is worn is an outward expression of an inward commitment to follow the Savior.*”

## Sealing

The last significant function of the temple is to bind families together, forever. This occurs in beautifully simple rooms symbolically located on the highest level of the temple. We call these rooms “sealing rooms” and in the center of each of the rooms is an altar. Couples to be married themselves, or for their deceased ancestors, kneel at the altar dressed in the same ceremonial clothing worn as they were endowed.

One of the greatest teachings, powers, and authorities restored to the earth in our day is that through the ordinances of the temple, husbands and wives, parents and children can be eternally bound together. There is not a husband and wife anywhere in the world who have loved and served each other for the many years of their marriage, who have not hoped that they might be together after death. What parents, who have born, taught, and supported their children would ever view “heaven” as a desired place to live without their children’s presence. Yet, there is not a single government or religion whose prescribed marriage vows offer any more length to the marriage and family relationship than “till death do you part.”

In contrast, the marriages performed for both the living and the dead in our temples are for time and for all eternity. Further, the children born to that couple are promised and bound to them eternally. There is no more profound fulfillment of the Old Testament prophet Malachi's prophecy relative the turning of the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, than is accomplished in the sealing rooms of a temple. It is also important to note that although every major religion of Christianity, to Judaism to followers of Mohammed all believe in the eventual return of the Old Testament prophet Elijah, only our church teaches that he has already returned, and with his return, restored the sealing power used in our temples today to bind a man and woman together forever along with all of the children subsequently born to them.

There is another sealing occasion when a family has joined the Church after having their children. We have described a couple kneeling at the altar to be married, and know that their children, born after their marriage, are automatically sealed to them. But what of a couple, with children, who join the Church later in their lives or who, although members, were not initially married/sealed in the temple. In these instances, the parents are first

sealed using the exact same procedure and wording as the young couple. The children are then all brought into the room and after kneeling and joining hands with their parents and siblings at the altar, each child, by name, is sealed to their parents.

Through a similar approach, members of the church can come to the temple with their ancestral names and serve as proxy, first for their ancestral parent's sealing, and then as proxy for each of the identified and named children.

Imagine the joy among departed couples/parents, when first they are sealed by proxy to each other, and then, by proxy, their children are sealed to them (see Elder Rudgar Clawson, p. 21). It is potentially one of most powerful spiritual moments in all of our temple worship experiences, and underscores the importance of the temple sealing ordinances within the family of God.

### **Temple Worship**

The Lord inspired Joseph Smith's dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, which is now the 109<sup>th</sup> section of The Doctrine and Covenants. In the early verses of this remarkable prayer, important teachings are

given regarding the value and importance of coming to the temple to “worship.” In verse 5, the Prophet prayed, “thou knowest that we have done this work out of our poverty...that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people.” What is the nature of that “manifestation?” The Lord answers in verses 12-16, “that thy glory may rest down upon thy people, and upon this thy house...that it may be sanctified and consecrated to be holy and that thy holy presence may be continually in this house. And that all people who shall enter...may feel thy power, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness. And do thou grant, Holy Father, that all those who shall worship in this house...may...receive a fullness of the Holy Ghost...and be prepared to obtain every needful thing...that this house may be a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of glory and of God, even thy house.”

This inspired dedicatory prayer complements perfectly the Savior’s profound intercessory prayer that was offered in the presence, and in behalf, of His eleven apostles just prior to His crucifixion. But not just for the apostles, “but for them also which shall believe on ‘Him’ through their word.” (John 17:20)

“Glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent...And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was...I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil...And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love

wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (See John 17:2-26)

Every time we come to the temple, whether to fulfill an assignment, serve as a worker, attend a wedding, or serve as proxy for a deceased family member; whatever the reason, if our attitude, dress and demeanor is one of profound worship and reverence, we will come to better know and love the Lord through that particular experience. Through the promised “fullness of the Holy Ghost,” (D&C 109:15) the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost will purge out any desires we might have to sin. The revelatory power of the Holy Ghost will teach and reveal light and truths important in strengthening not only our testimony of the Savior and His gospel, but those of the members of our family. And, the comforting power of the Holy Ghost will bring peace to even the most troubled soul. Ultimately, through the blessings and experiences resulting from our temple service and worship we will gain the precious gift of charity and love as our Father and His Son love. (John 17:26 and Moroni 7:45-48)

The Apostle Peter spoke of the Lord giving us “exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:4). Becoming “divine” in

our nature perfectly summarizes the ultimate blessing resulting from temple worship.

### **Conclusion**

President Howard W. Hunter only addressed the Church once as our Prophet and President. Speaking from a specially designed chair, after years of unrelenting physical pain, testing and trials, which included the death of his first wife, he said: *“I invite all members of the Church to live with ever more attention to the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially the love and hope and compassion he displayed.*

*“In that spirit I invite the Latter-day Saints to look to the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of your membership. It is the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church worthy to enter the temple. It would please the Lord if every adult member would be worthy of – and carry – a current temple recommend. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families.*

*“Let us be a temple-attending people. Attend the temple as frequently as personal circumstances allow. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that*

*your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing.”* (October 1994 General Conference)

A child, born to parents who were previously sealed in the temple, is literally born on the covenant path. Until that child reaches eight years of age and becomes accountable before the Lord, “they are not capable of committing sin.” (Moroni 8:8) “Behold, I say unto you, that little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through mine Only Begotten: Wherefore, they cannot sin, for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me.” (D&C 29:46-47)

Children deserve and need to experience the righteous example of their parents “staying on the covenant path” through: attending the temple frequently; dressing to reflect the sacred nature of the temple garment; sharing their meaningful temple experiences in family home evenings; providing their own names for use in the temple through their personal family history efforts; and, teaching their children about the purpose and meaning of the temple and its ordinances.

We began with the January 16, 2018 counsel and promises from our living Prophet, President Russell M. Nelson. *“The end for which each of us strives is to be endowed with power in a house of the Lord, sealed as families, (and remain) faithful to covenants made in a temple that qualify us for the greatest gift of God, that of eternal life. The ordinances of the temple and the covenants you make there are key to strengthening your life, your marriage and family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path.”*

We conclude with these comments from President Russell M. Nelson in the April, 2018 General Conference. Said and promised the Lord’s prophet: *“Nothing opens the heavens quite like the combination of increased purity, exact obedience, earnest seeking, daily feasting on the words of Christ in The Book of Mormon, and regular time committed to temple and family history work.*

*Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. But in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without*

*the guiding, directing, comforting influence of the Holy Ghost.*

*“Our message to the world is simple and sincere: we invite all of God’s children on both sides of the veil to come unto their Savior, receive the blessings of the holy temple, have enduring joy, and qualify for eternal life.*

*My dear brothers and sisters, construction of [new] temples may not change your life, but your time in the temple surely will. In that spirit, I bless you to identify those things you can set aside so you can spend more time in the temple. I bless you with greater harmony and love in your homes and a deeper desire to care for your eternal family relationships. I bless you with increased faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a greater ability to follow Him as His true disciples.”*

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