

Temples, Houses of the Lord Dotting the Earth

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As you come worthily and prayerfully to His holy house, you will be armed with His power.

Don't you love the beautiful words we just sang? "I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, ... upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."¹ The Lord is strengthening His Saints of all ages as they come to His holy house. From Kinshasa to Zollikofen to Fukuoka to Oakland, the youth, of their own initiative, are overflowing temple baptistries. In the past, most beloved ordinance workers had graying hair—but not anymore. Called missionaries, service missionaries, and returned missionaries are around every corner. Across the world, there is a growing feeling drawing us to the house of the Lord.

Just over a year ago, a dear family friend, age 95, living on the east coast of the United States, who had been taught by missionaries for 70 years, said to her daughter, "I want to go to the temple with you."

Her daughter replied, "Well, Mother, you first need to be baptized."

"OK," she replied, "then I want to be baptized." She was baptized. A few days later, she reverently entered the temple baptistry. And just over a month ago, she received her own endowment and sealing. "The knowledge and power of God are expanding; the veil o'er the earth is beginning to burst."²

Have you wondered why the Lord would direct His prophet to now dot the earth with His holy temples?³ Why would He, at this specific time, give the needed prosperity to His covenant people that through their sacred tithes, hundreds of houses of the Lord could be built?

This morning, President Dallin H. Oaks showed a beautiful visual of the temples being constructed across the world. Kathy and I were recently in the Philippines. Think of this miracle: The Manila Temple was dedicated in 1984. It would be 26 years before the second temple, in Cebu City, was completed in 2010. Now, 14 years later, 11 temples are being constructed, designed, or prepared for dedication. From the north to the south: Laoag, Tuguegarao, Santiago, Urdaneta, Alabang, Naga, Tacloban City, Iloilo, Bacolod, Cagayan de Oro, and Davao. It is breathtaking to see the wondrous works of God!

Across the globe, houses of the Lord are coming closer to us. Why in our day?

The Last Days

The Lord warned that in the last days, there would be distress among nations,⁴ people would “be lovers of their own selves,”⁵ “all things [would] be in commotion,”⁶ confusion would abound,⁷ and “men’s hearts [would] fail them.”⁸ We have certainly seen men’s and women’s hearts fail them: the enticements of the world, the distraction of alluring voices, the neglect of spiritual nourishment, the fatigue from the demands of discipleship.⁹ Perhaps you have been saddened as you have seen someone you love, who at one time spoke sincerely of his or her faith in Jesus Christ, bore witness of the Book of Mormon, and eagerly helped build the kingdom of God, suddenly move away, at least for now, from his or her beliefs and toward the sidelines of the Church. My counsel to you is don’t despair! All is well. For with God, nothing is impossible.¹⁰

With this prophesied commotion and disbelief in the world, the Lord promised that there would be a covenant people, a people eagerly awaiting His return, a people who stand in holy settings and are not moved out of their place.¹¹ He spoke of a righteous people resisting the deceptions of the adversary, disciplining their faith, thinking celestial, and trusting completely in the Savior Jesus Christ.

Why is the Lord now bringing hundreds of His temples closer to us? One reason is that amid the turmoil and temptations of the world, He has promised to strengthen and bless His covenant Saints, and His promises are being fulfilled!

Promises from the Kirtland Temple

How do these holy houses strengthen, comfort, and protect us? We find an answer in the pleadings of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. It was in this temple where the Saints sang, “We’ll sing and we’ll shout with the armies of heaven.”¹² The Savior Himself appeared, and prophets of old returned, bestowing additional priesthood keys to the restored gospel.¹³

On that sacred occasion in the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet prayed that in the Lord’s holy house, the Saints would be armed with the power of God, that the name of Jesus Christ would be upon them, that His angels would have charge over them, and that they would grow up in the Lord and “receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁴ These powerful supplications are fulfilled in our lives as we faithfully worship in the house of the Lord.

Armed with Power

In His house, we are literally endowed with heavenly power.¹⁵ Our faith in Jesus Christ and our love for Him are confirmed and fortified. We are spiritually assured of our true identity and the purposes of life.¹⁶ As we are faithful, we are blessed with protection from temptations and distractions. We feel our Savior’s love as He lifts us from our difficulties and sorrows. We are armed with the power of God.

His Name upon Us

In His holy house, we take His name more completely upon us. When we are baptized, we profess our belief in Him and our willingness to keep His commandments. In the temple, we sacredly promise, through our covenants, to follow Him forever.

The youth of this Church are incredible. In a difficult world, they take upon themselves the name of Christ. In Heber City, Utah, a public meeting was held to discuss the details of a temple planned for construction. Three hundred youth filled the adjoining park to show their support for the proposed temple. One young man, speaking to government leaders in an open forum, courageously explained, “I am hoping to be married in this temple. [The temple will help] me to keep myself clean and pure.” Another described the temple as a symbol of light and hope. Young men and women of the Church throughout the world are embracing the name of Jesus Christ.¹⁷

Angels with Us

In the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph prayed that “angels [would] have charge over [His Saints].”¹⁸ Regularly performing ordinances for our ancestors in the temple brings a sweet and sure confirmation that life continues beyond the veil.

Although many of our experiences in the house of the Lord are too sacred to share publicly, some we can share. Forty years ago, while living in Florida, Kathy and I traveled to the temple in Atlanta, Georgia. On Wednesday night, May 9, 1984, as we completed a session in the temple, an ordinance worker approached me and asked if I had time to do just one preparatory initiatory ordinance. The name of the person I represented was unusual. His name was Eleazer Cercy.

The next day, the temple was full of Saints. As I prepared to perform my second endowment of the day, I was given the name of the person I would represent. Surprisingly, the name was the same individual from the night before, Eleazer Cercy. I felt the Spirit of the Lord as the endowment was completed. Later in the afternoon, still in the temple, Kathy saw an elderly family friend, Sister Dolly Fernandez, who now lived in Atlanta. With no male members of her family with her, she asked if I could possibly assist in the sealing of her father to her father’s parents. I was of course honored.

As I knelt at the end of the altar for this sacred ordinance, I heard once again the name that was now inscribed in my mind, her father, Eleazer Cercy. I fully believe that following this life, I will meet and embrace a man known in his mortal life as Eleazer Cercy.

Most of our experiences in the house of the Lord bring joyful peace and quiet revelation more than dramatic intervention. But be assured: angels do have charge over us!

A Fulness of the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost is given to us as we are confirmed a member of the Church. Each week as we worthily partake of the bread and water in remembrance of our Savior, we are promised His Spirit will always be with us.¹⁹ As we come with willing hearts to the house of the

Lord, the most holy place on earth, we grow up in the Lord and can “receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost.”²⁰ Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we are filled with peace and joy and unspeakable hope.²¹ We receive the strength to remain His disciples even when we find ourselves outside of holy places.

President Russell M. Nelson has declared: “Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and ... Jesus Christ ... preside over this Church in majesty and glory.”²² Dotting the earth with houses of the Lord is a mighty work and miraculous indication.²³

My beloved friends, if we are able and have not already increased our attendance at the temple, let us regularly find more time to worship in the house of the Lord. Let us pray for the temples that have been announced, that properties can be purchased, that governments will approve plans, that talented workers will see their gifts magnified, and that the sacred dedications will bring the approval of heaven and the visit of angels.

Promises

The temple is literally the house of the Lord. I promise you as you come worthily and prayerfully to His holy house, you will be armed with His power, His name will be upon you, His angels will have charge over you, and you will grow up in the blessing of the Holy Ghost.

The Lord promised, “Every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am.”²⁴ There are many different ways to see the face of Christ, and there is no better place than in His holy house.²⁵

In this day of confusion and commotion, I testify that the temple is His holy house and will help preserve us, protect us, and prepare us for the glorious day when, with all His holy angels, our Savior returns in majesty, power, and great glory. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. “How Firm a Foundation,” *Hymns*, no. 85.
2. “The Spirit of God,” *Hymns*, no. 2.
3. There are currently 182 operating temples. Six are under renovation. Seven are awaiting dedication, with one more awaiting rededication. There are 45 under construction and 94 more which have been announced or are in planning and design.
4. See Luke 21:10.
5. 2 Timothy 3:2.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 88:91.

7. Elder David A. Bednar said: “Gospel principles are for me and you what a helm is to a ship. Correct principles enable us to find our way and to stand firm, steadfast, and immovable so we do not lose our balance and fall in the raging latter-day storms of darkness and confusion” (“The Principles of My Gospel,” *Liahona*, May 2021, 126).
8. Doctrine and Covenants 45:26.
9. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).
10. See Luke 1:37.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 87:8.
12. *Hymns*, no. 2.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 110. Prior to this time, the Prophet Joseph Smith had received the Aaronic Priesthood and its keys from John the Baptist, and he had received the Melchizedek Priesthood and its keys from the Apostles Peter, James, and John (see Doctrine and Covenants 13:1; 27:12–13).
14. Doctrine and Covenants 109:15; see also verse 22.
15. President Russell M. Nelson said: “The temple can help us in our quest. There we are endowed with God’s power, giving us the ability to overcome Satan, the instigator of *all* contention” (“Peacemakers Needed,” *Liahona*, May 2023, 101).
16. See Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), Gospel Library.
17. Elder Colin Stauffer, personal correspondence, Jan. 30, 2024.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 109:22.
19. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79.
20. Doctrine and Covenants 109:15.
21. See Romans 15:13.
22. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96.
23. President Brigham Young said, “We will have hundreds of temples and thousands of men and women officiating therein for those who have fallen asleep, without having had the privilege of hearing and obeying the Gospel” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 312). And President Ezra Taft Benson said: “Our predecessors have prophesied that temples will dot the landscape of North and South America, the isles of the Pacific, Europe, and elsewhere. If this redemptive work is to be done on the scale it must be, hundreds of temples will be needed” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 247).
24. Doctrine and Covenants 93:1.

25. Elder David B. Haight said:

“It is true that some have actually seen the Savior, but when one consults the dictionary, he learns that there are many other meanings of the word *see*, such as coming to know Him, discerning Him, recognizing Him and His work, perceiving His importance, or coming to understand Him.

“Such heavenly enlightenment and blessings are available to each of us” (“Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 61).